1994


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The stylistic mechanics of implicitness: Entailment, presupposition, and implicature in the work of Ernest Hemingway and Tim O’Brien

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THE STYLISTIC MECHANICS OF IMPLICITNESS:
ENTAILMENT, PRESUPPOSITION, AND IMPLICATURE
IN THE WORK OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY AND TIM O'BRIEN

A Dissertation

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in
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ABSTRACT

The discipline of linguistics has identified three patterns through which unstated information may be conveyed: entailment, presupposition, and implicature. Using these theoretical constructs, analysts may determine systematically how propositions which are never asserted may nonetheless be communicated. In the old writers' maxim "Show me; don't tell me," "showing" corresponds to implicit communication of unstated material, while "telling" corresponds to the overt assertion of the proposition of interest.

Examination of texts by Hemingway and O'Brien reveals carefully controlled use of the linguistic strategies of implicitness to suspend meaning between and behind the fixed points of the words on the page. This implicitness relates to the ambivalence both authors felt toward their artistic projects: Hemingway with regard to expressing emotion and O'Brien with regard to telling the truth about Vietnam.

The linguistic mechanics of implicitness may explain the intuitions of Reader-Response Theory that meaning occurs in the interaction of reader with text. They are also related to Gestalt theory, quantum mechanics, and vorticism.
I. INTRODUCTION

A. General Remarks

A writer encodes certain propositions in words printed on a page. But the propositions expressed on the page are not the only ones conveyed to the reader. By some synergistic process, the reader garners proposition that are not expressed in words; it is the purpose of this dissertation to illuminate that process which is so fundamental to the experience of literature.

To accomplish this purpose, I will in this first section consider the difference between *telling* and *showing* in literature. These terms have been used by writers (and, more rarely, by critics) as shorthand labels for two types of rhetorical approach. We will see how this rhetorical terminology emerged from the ordinary meanings of the words *tell* and *show* to represent the difference between explicit expression of the proposition of interest (telling) as
compared to the absence of such explicit expression (showing). I will next introduce the linguistic concepts entailment, presupposition, and implicature as ways to understand the communication of unexpressed propositions.

In the following two sections, I will use the theory of linguistic implicitness to examine the writing of two authors who are noted for "showing, not telling," Ernest Hemingway and Tim O'Brien. Both of these writers developed prodigious mastery of linguistic implicitness, which may have helped them to resolve the urgent ambivalence they felt about writing, Hemingway with regard to expressing emotion and O'Brien with regard to telling the true story of the Vietnam war.

In the final section, I will briefly consider how the theory of linguistic implicitness may interconnect with other theories (vorticism, reader-response, quantum mechanics, and Gestalt) and will suggest directions for further research.

"Show—Don't tell." Although almost simple-mindedly easy to say, the terms of the maxim have proved hard to define. What precisely is meant by "showing"? What is meant by "telling"? The distinction has been conceptualized in different ways at different times. Although formulations have emphasized different features of contrast between showing and telling, there is no doubt that analysts of style have long been perceiving and attempting to describe some kind of
fundamental difference in rhetorical presentation. This difference is important in creating the esthetic experience of literature.

It is possible that linguistics may offer a crisp theoretical means to distinguish between something that could be called "showing" and something that could be called "telling": If the proposition of interest, that is, the proposition that the author must convey to the reader, is actually asserted by the author in words on the page, that content is told. If that proposition does not appear in the words on the page, then it is shown.  

For example, when the author of Genesis writes "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Chap. 1, verse 1), the proposition *God created heavens and earth* is the proposition of interest. It is of interest because it is the information needed to legitimize this particular god's claim to relevance and authority in the lives of humans. It provides a rationale for the "plot" of Genesis; if it is not conveyed to the reader, the text that follows will fail to make sense. If we examine the words on the first page of a Bible, we do in fact find printed there a version of the

---

1 I will hold to the conventional distinction that an utterance is an event—an occasion of language use by a particular person at a particular time. A sentence (which may be expressed by an utterance) is a more abstract concept—a sequence of words put together by the grammatical rules of a language. A proposition (which may be asserted, questioned, denied, etc. by a sentence) is a portion of the meaning of a sentence which describes a state of affairs (Hurford and Heasley 15-19).
proposition of interest: the author asserts, "God created the heavens and the earth." So, we can say that the propositional content of interest is told.

On the other hand, in Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, one of the propositions of interest is *Jake Barnes is impotent because of a war injury*. This information provides a rationale for the plot of the book; if it is not conveyed to the reader, the text will not make sense. And yet, if we search the pages of the book, we will not find any sentence that looks remotely like *Jake Barnes is impotent because of a war injury* until the twelfth chapter (and even here it is not asserted, but questioned). So, how does the reader make sense of the first one hundred and fifteen pages of text? If this proposition is conveyed, it is not conveyed by *telling* but by *showing*.

If the difference between telling and showing is reduced to the presence or absence of explicit assertions of the propositional content of interest, then linguistics has a good deal to offer in analyzing the stylistic mechanics of showing. This is because three basic strategies of recovering propositions that are not asserted have been well described: entailment, presupposition, and implicature. With these conceptual tools it will be possible to explain in a precise way how authors perform the miracle or parlor trick of causing readers to know with reasonable certainty things that are never said.
Entailment, presupposition, and implicature are all systems of filling in the blanks, of supplying missing information, of making up what isn't explicitly asserted. Awareness of how these strategies interact to support implicitness in literature highlights the parallels between literature and other arts: the artist provides a skeleton of stimulus (the painting, concerto, novel or other form), around which the mind of the receiver operates to "fill in" a good deal of perception that is not contained in the physical stimulus.

Consider representational painting, for example, an art which is dependent on understanding the ways in which the visual mind builds up images from incomplete sensory stimuli. A painter may use a patchwork of coarse strokes of several colors which will later be perceived to be a color that is not in fact physically present on the canvas. Instead of "photographically" reproducing small details, a master painter is likely to strategically create blurs that viewers will perceive as details or movement.

Or consider music. When a note is played on a conventional musical instrument, the fundamental tone associated with that note is heard, but it is not the only tone that is heard. Other tones accompany it in a principled pattern that is governed by physics and describable by mathematics. Much of the patterning of music is anchored to the relationships between the fundamental, the note that is
sounded, and its "overtones," those notes that sound with it. When recording technicians are given the task of recording musical notes at the extremes of the scale—perhaps the lowest base notes of a large organ—they may not even attempt to record the fundamental. It may be outside the capabilities of their equipment. What recordists will do instead is to set recording levels to capture the overtones of that note. When people listen to the recording, they will perceive the tone that is not recorded in much the same way that, in viewing a painting, they will perceive colors that are not physically there. That is, they will hear the overtones but will themselves supply the missing tone, the tone that should be there according to the mind's expectations of what fundamental is needed to explain these overtones.  

Popular culture also gives evidence that "filling in the blanks" is one of the mind's favored ways of entertaining itself. Consider silent movies. Very little of the dialogue in them is actually spelled out in the text frames. The actors just chatter away inaudibly. The viewer generally understands perfectly because of skillful interpretation of context, gestures, facial expression, and lip movements. The makers of the movie supply the rudimentary skeleton of stimuli on the screen; the viewer spins out a web of

---

2 I am indebted to Mark Andrews for his lucid explanations of "filling in the blanks" in music and painting.
understanding based on the dry bones of visible on-screen action. (And, of course, the "movement" we perceive in the "movies" is itself contributed by the viewer's mind, filled in between rapidly changing still photographs.)

For example, there is a scene in Chaplin's *The Gold Rush* in which one of the prospectors shuts a door behind Chaplin's back. When the door closes, the Little Tramp jumps. With the two visual cues, the door closing and the Tramp's start, the viewer "fills in" information and imagines the sound of the door slamming loudly. Because of the limitations of the medium at the time of filming, the film-maker could not make viewers hear or perceive the startling slam of the door, but could induce them to imagine that they had heard it.

But even when not motivated by such technical gaps, many genres of popular entertainment can be analyzed as offering participants some sort of opportunity to "fill in" missing information for the sheer pleasure of it. Children's "connect-the-dots" games, coloring books, and jigsaw puzzles all have this in common. Mystery stories, cross-word puzzles, riddles, and game shows likewise feature this trait. Take, for example, a common children's "connect-the-dots" game, as shown in Figure 1.1. A set of points is marked by dots on the page. These dots are the purely physical stimulus, analogous to the daubs of paint on a canvas or the vibrations emitted by a stereo speaker. The dots are numbered in the sequence in which they should be
Figure 1.1 Children take pleasure in drawing lines between the numbered dots to make the image emerge.

connected. A child interacts with the physical stimulus on paper, following the recognized convention of connecting consecutively numbered dots by drawing lines between them. When the lines are drawn, an image emerges on the paper—in this case, a seal. We will see how closely this parallels
the interaction of a reader with a text, in which certain discrete propositions function as "points" between which the cooperative reader draws "lines" of meaning which cause an image or story to emerge.

**FILL IN THE DOTS**

![Figure 1.2](image) Users of coloring books and paint-by-numbers sets entertain themselves by filling in blank outlines with color, making the forms emerge more vividly.

Similarly, in activities such as the one in Figure 1.2, children are confronted with a grid or random-looking swirl
of lines, in which some forms are marked with a dot or number. The child-artist, correctly recognizing the marks as signals to "color in this region," fills in the areas and recovers the hidden image—in this case, a cat.

An example from the adult world of "filling in the blanks" may be seen in common newspaper cross-word puzzles. Millions of busy adults spend many hours each week laboring to complete cross-word puzzles. They do this without pay and for no apparent material gain; the process itself is evidently satisfying enough to merit the time and mental exertion. Devotees of this pass-time triangulate between three sets of given stimulus: two sets of clues ("Down" and "Across") and the physical layout of white and black boxes on the page. Between these fixed points, the cross-word puzzler attempts to "fill in" the empty spaces, the unknowns of the cross-word "text." In these and many other examples of the ways in which humans structure their idle time and call it "fun," a certain incomplete skeleton of stimulus is fleshed out by the user, whether by supplying missing lines, colors, words, or—as we will see in the case of literature—propositions.

The evidence of the arts and popular culture is that human beings take pleasure in filling in the blanks in their experience. Scientific consensus is also inclining more and more towards accepting that the human mind/brain, given certain patterns of stimulus, will necessarily fill in
missing pieces. Perception, it is becoming clearer, is not equal to sensation. Kant's insight that the mind is active, not passive, in the construction of knowledge is the cornerstone to a vigorous new science of cognitive psychology. The practitioners of this young science are gathering increasing stores of data related to the "remarkable degree to which stimuli are transformed, elaborated, and related to each other before intelligent action occurs" (Flanagan 177). They assume, with Kant, that "we supply form and structure to experience by way of a rich system of a priori mental structures" (Flanagan 182). Entailment, presupposition, and implicature may represent, in the linguistic domain, exactly the sorts of "a priori mental structures" that supply structure to the discontinuous propositions explicitly represented on the literary page. This is of great relevance to recent literary theory which has focussed on the ways in which readers respond to words on the page to "create" a text inside their heads. The writer who chooses not to tell the propositions of interest explicitly can--by using entailment, presupposition, and implicature--convey them covertly by presenting the linguistic equivalent of the carefully situated numbered dots. The reader will connect these dots, the picture will emerge, and we will say that the author "showed" but did not "tell"--in other words, implied but did not assert.
Using the concepts of entailment, presupposition, and implicature, analysts of style can show with some precision how it is that authors do this. Furthermore, these concepts help us to see that the reader's creation of literary experience is coherent with other ways in which humans construct perceptions. It may even be possible to argue that the pleasure that human beings find in "filling in the blanks" arises because the human mind is designed to do so, and this capacity may be a part of the experience of literary esthetic pleasure.

There are writers who are noted specifically for their ability to embed implicit material in their stories. These include Ernest Hemingway and Tim O'Brien, two writers who also had cause to be extremely ambivalent about the project of "telling" stories. It is my intent to demonstrate, primarily using texts from these two authors, that literary showing can provide a way to resolve the stylistic tug-of-war between telling and not telling. I hope to show that literary implicitness works by the presentation of a set of carefully selected propositions which invite the reader to supply additional propositions "between them," as it were, in much the same way that a child connects the dots in a coloring book to make the image appear. This process of filling in what is missing between discontinuous bits of information always occurs; what distinguishes "told" stories from "shown" stories is that where the principal propositions
that make up the plot are asserted by the author on the page, we say that the story is told. Where the principal propositions, the propositions of interest, are supplied by the reader, we say the story is shown.

Before venturing a linguistic explanation of showing and telling, let us first look at the way the concepts have been used by stylists to differentiate between rhetorical approaches. We can start by examining the words' use in ordinary English. From there, we can see how they developed into quasi-technical terms that indicate the level of explicitness of a text.

Using the words in their everyday sense—that is, not using them as literary or rhetorical terms—showing and telling seem to differ along two related dimensions. First, there is the issue of being a speech act or a non-speech act: telling is done through the medium of language, while showing is not. For example, I can tell you that your house is on fire by saying to you the words, "Your house is on fire," or I can show you that your house is on fire by pointing. I can also show you that your house is on fire by physically pulling you into the room where flames, smoke, and an unmistakable crackling roar will ensure that the proposition is conveyed.

This points up the second dimension of difference between showing and telling: distance. Showing consists of
bringing some physical reality into perceptual range of a perceiving intelligence. For example, if I show you a picture of my family, I must bring that picture into your perceptual range; if I leave it in my pocket, or hold it behind your back, or hold it in front of you, but ten miles away, I have not shown it to you. Telling, on the other hand, requires the person doing the telling to be within perceptual range of a perceiving intelligence (this requirement distinguishes it from saying), but it implies no necessary proximity between the perceiving intelligence and the subject of the telling. For instance, I can tell you about events in a far galaxy, but the only way I can show you those events is by placing a large telescope in front of you, effectively bringing that galaxy within your perceptual range. (Notice that perceptual range is not always equivalent to simple physical proximity.) I can also tell you events that never happened. The only way I can show you events that never happened is by making them happen, for instance on a stage or television screen, and placing that happening within your ken—in which case, of course, it can no longer be said that they never happened. In both showing and telling, perceptual proximity is necessary between the perceiving intelligence and the active communicator; I can neither show you nor tell you anything if you cannot see me, hear me, or in any way perceive my message. The distinguishing feature is that in showing, the object (what
is being shown) must also be within perceptual range, while
in telling it may be within range, out of range, or non-
existent. So showing implies a certain closeness between the
thing being shown and the intelligence to which it is being
shown which telling does not imply.

In staged drama, as well as in ritual from which drama
sprang, it is possible to both show and tell in this non-
technical sense. For instance, on a stage it is possible to
show, that is, to place within the perceptual range of
perceiving intelligences which we call audience, the dead
body of Romeo. It is likewise possible to tell that audience
that "...never was a story of more woe than this of Juliet
and her Romeo" (Romeo and Juliet Act V, Scene III, Lines 309-
310). The showing of the body can be done without words,
with physical placement and gestures. The telling can only
be accomplished using words, as long as we restrict ourselves
to the ordinary, concrete sense of showing and telling.

Sir Walter Scott provides an early example of this non-
technical meaning of showing and telling:

Action, and tone, and gesture, the smile of the
lover, the frown of the tyrant, the grimace of the
buffoon,—all must be told [in the novel], for
nothing can be shown. Thus, the very dialogue
becomes mixed with the narration; for he must not
only tell what the characters actually said, in
which his task is the same as that of the dramatic
author, but must also describe the tone, the look,
the gesture, with which their speech was
accompanied,—telling, in short, all which, in the
drama, it becomes the province of the actor to
express. ... Description and narration, which
form the essence of the novel, must be very

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sparingly introduced into dramatic composition. . . (184)

In this passage, Scott remarks on the necessity of telling and the impossibility of showing in the novel. Later, we will encounter other authors calling for the opposite—"everything must be shown"—but, using the ordinary non-technical definition, Scott is able to say quite reasonably that it is impossible to show in a novel in the way that an actor can show, that is, by pointing, gesturing, and physically demonstrating actions and conditions on the stage. After all, no specter arises from a book to point out the physical realities of a story. The message of a book is conveyed entirely by words, which we have seen are proper to telling and not to showing (in their original senses).

Clearly, there has been some evolution in the meanings of the terms show and tell. Writers have abstracted some essence from the natural sense of these words to represent a related distinction between two rhetorical approaches. This has left us with a technical as well as ordinary definition for each of these terms. From showing's non-speech character, there has evolved a sense of showing that embraces more or less all instances in which information is conveyed without being put into words. Conversely, telling then covers all instances of information that is conveyed by being put into words. Of course, in a book all information is
ultimately conveyed through words. However, analysts have discerned a difference; some things are "more told" than others. Some information is explicitly told by an author/narrator. Some information is not told by the author but is nonetheless inferred or somehow experienced by the reader. For instance, consider the following explanation of the difference between showing and telling, written by two professors of journalism:

Gay Talese could have started his story on gangster Frank Costello by telling readers that Costello grew up in a New York City slum but was now a wealthy man. Instead, he showed it—crisply, succinctly and with careful detail:

He never dreamed that, as Frank Costello, he would someday spend $50 for a hat, $350 for a suit, and be capable of forgetting $27,200 in the backseat of a New York taxicab.


This reference to showing as opposed to telling is typical in that the authors of the stylebook present a proposition that

--- Or, as Janet Burroway puts this in her chapter "Seeing is Believing: Showing and Telling" in Writing Fiction:

In order to move your reader, the standard advice runs, "Show, don't tell." This dictum can be confusing, considering that all a writer has to work with is words. What it means is that your job as fiction writer is to focus attention not on the words, which are inert, nor on the thoughts these words produce, but through these to felt experience, where the vitality of understanding lies. (61)

Notice also Burroway's interest here in something analogous to distance between reader and experience, a pseudo-spacial quality that she conceives of as being susceptible of obstruction, by words or thoughts.
they believe Talese wishes to convey—Costello grew up in a New York City slum but is now a wealthy man—and show that this proposition is absent from the page. In other words, no version of Talese's proposition of interest is expressed in his text, and so on some level it can be described as being conveyed "not through language," in other words, shown.

On the other hand, from the proximity implication of show has evolved a sense of showing that refers to ways in which authors minimize the distance of their readers from the subjects of their texts. Conversely, telling covers instances of heightened distance between reader and subject. Of course, the rhetorical position of a narrator is completely irrelevant to the literal distance between a reader and the subject of the text, for instance, between a reader of The Sun Also Rises and the actual location of Pamplona, Spain. However, some illusion of distance or proximity seems to be part of the experience of literature. Perhaps it could be called psychic distance or rhetorical distance; some things seem "more immediate" than others. For instance, consider the following excerpt from the same stylebook for journalists quoted above:

When you tell a reader something, you stand between the reader and subject and offer judgments:

The man was angry.

This "descriptive" sentence actually obstructs reader involvement. You've observed the man and concluded he was angry. You tell your readers a summary of what you observed rather than showing

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them the scene and letting them come to their own conclusions. When you present a scene or offer details that allow the reader to observe what you have observed and force the reader to make judgments, you involve the reader. Once again, you bridge the gap between the audience and experience. (Kessler 155-156)

Notice the reference to a spacial intuition of a "gap" that may either be "bridged" or "obstructed," depending on which rhetorical approach is taken. Also notice the reference to active reader involvement.

The special, rhetorical distinction between showing and telling we have been discussing is most often encountered in textbooks and classes relating to journalism, creative writing, and composition, not literature or theory. This reflects the fact that it is used more often by active professional writers than by the critics of their writing. The same trend can also be traced in the general reference works that list showing versus telling as a topic: practical handbooks for writers tend to include it, while dictionaries of literary-critical terminology tend not to.

For example, "show don't tell" is an entry in the 1990 Writing A to Z, a handbook produced by the publishers of Writer's Digest. (Writer's Digest is a popular magazine for writers and aspiring writers.) Writing A to Z gives the following definition

**Show don't tell.** A common admonition from editors to beginning fiction writers who fail to use dialogue and action to reveal a character's emotions, relying instead solely on narration. It is the difference between actors acting out an event, and the lone playwright standing on a bare
stage recounting the event to the audience. *(See: Emotion in writing.)*

Note that this definition is in terms of the pragmatic direction of editors to their writers. Notice also the reference to the dramatic versus narrative distinction, a distinction that is often assumed to be identical to showing versus telling. (Also significant is the implied connection to conveying emotion in writing, which we will consider when we take up the "showing" of Ernest Hemingway.)

In an even more recent (1993) basic "how-to" work, the editors of *The Writer* (*Writer's Digest's* closest competitor) offer an article entitled "The Essence of Storytelling: Dramatize, Dramatize." In this essay, Elizabeth Forsythe Hailey (author of *A Woman of Independent Means*) quotes the advice of Henry James: "Dramatize, dramatize" (119). She follows this by offering the ". . . secret of dramatizing: show, don't tell" (120). She relates this "dramatizing" or "showing" to "enlisting the imagination of your audience, forcing them to do some of the work and in effect making them accomplices in the conspiracy that is fiction" (119). (Later, I will show how Hailey's conception of "forcing [the audience] to do some of the work" is--like Kessler's concept of reader "involvement"--directly relevant to the linguistic definition of literary showing.)

Some texts mention the show/tell distinction without even attempting a rudimentary definition of it. For an
example of this, see The St. Martin's Guide to Writing, one of the most popular freshman college composition textbooks. The Guide devotes almost a page to the concept, but the closest it comes to a definition is in the opening lines of the section:

There are two ways a writer can communicate [the significance of an event]: by showing us that the event was important or by telling us directly what it meant. Most writers do both. Showing is the heartbeat of an essay about a remembered event, for the event must be dramatized if readers are to appreciate its importance and understand the writer's feelings about it. (Axelrod 36-37)

The existence of the original and obvious non-technical meanings of the terms evidently leads Axelrod and Cooper to assume their rhetorical meanings are equally self-evident, a dubious assumption, especially considering primary audience of The St. Martin's Guide.

In contrast to the sorts of craft-oriented writer's handbooks mentioned above, literary-critical "companions," dictionaries, and encyclopedias tend to ignore the terms show and tell, perhaps due to their deceptive one-syllable simplicity. Holman and Harmon's A Handbook to Literature, one of the few such books that engage the concept, offers the following rather disparaging entry:

**Showing Versus Telling:** An empirical concept, unsophisticated but still useful, that emphasizes the superiority of dramatization, demonstration, enactment, and embodiment over the mere telling of a story. In To Have and Have Not, for example, Hemingway could have told us something rather abstract—"Shots were fired"—but he chose instead to make us see and hear: "The first thing a pane
of glass went and the bullet smashed into a row of bottles on the show-case wall to the right. I heard the gun going and, bop, bop, bop, there were bottles smashing all along the wall."

This is very different from the definition of showing that is exemplified by the Scott passage cited above. The broken pane of glass and bullet-smashed bottles, which Holman and Harmon so confidently produce as an illustration of showing, would be seen as telling by Scott: the author does not show or point to any shards of glass; he tells the reader that "... a pane of glass went and the bullet smashed into a row of bottles on the show-case wall to the right" (470). It is clear that between the time of Scott and the present, an evolution has occurred that allows show to have a specialized, technical meaning, in addition to its everyday, non-technical one.

Notice also that the only author chosen to exemplify showing versus telling is Ernest Hemingway. It will become evident why, for linguistic as well as historical reasons, Hemingway is the perfect exemplar of this technique. Also, once again we see showing equated with dramatization, which is opposed to telling (or narration). In fact, if we were to widen out our review of the show/tell distinction to include all consideration of dramatization versus narration, we would find our search penetrating both deeper into literary criticism and further back in time, at least as far back as Aristotle, Horace and Longinus.
But even without thus broadening our search, we do find some critical use of the "unsophisticated but still useful" concept of showing versus telling. Most notably, Wayne Booth made it a keystone of his classic work, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. In his view, the distinction originated with James and Flaubert, who saw the concept as an essentially descriptive one. In the eyes of later, lesser stylists (many of whom Booth quotes), the enunciations of the concept by James and Flaubert came to be seen as prescriptive, with *showing* being good and *telling* being bad. Booth sees such ham-handed evaluation as being simplistic:

> In serious college textbooks one soon found and still finds the *telling*-*showing* distinction presented as a reliable clue to the miraculous superiority of modern fiction. (26)

He presents "showing" as a value in modern fiction that moderns assume to be an absolute value, a positive in all times and places. He shifts the discussion towards considering the presence or absence of the author in the text, and not towards the linguistics of the show/tell distinction.

This brief discussion of the opposition of showing and telling in literature reveals that the differentiation is used, sometimes by literary critics, but most often by writers and teachers of writing. Perhaps the fact that a concept has been more useful to writers than to critics is not, after all, a valid reason to ignore it. It is possible that the fact of utility to the productive artist may argue
a closer fit between the concept and the creative process than exists for many more winningly complex critical constructs.

B. Linguistic Theory

Speakers and writers can do various things with propositions. They can question them. They can deny them. They can command them. And they can assert them. For instance, working with the proposition you go home, a person can perform a number of acts, including:

- QUESTIONING: Are you going home?
- DENYING: You're not going home.
- COMMANDING: [You] Go home!
- ASSERTING: You are going home.

Asserting is roughly equivalent to stating or saying that something is so, but it is possible to define the term more precisely. A direct assertion is a representative speech act expressed in a declarative sentence that occurs when the following conditions are met:

The speaker or writer believes that the receiver of the communication does not know/believe the proposition expressed by the sentence.

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4 The ensuing discussion of linguistic theory is largely based on Chapters 2 and 3 of Frank Parker and Kathryn Riley's *Linguistics for Non-Linguists*, 2nd ed.
The communication counts as an attempt to get the receiver of the communication to know/believe the proposition expressed by the sentence.

Any proposition may be asserted. (Parker 18)

Assertions are acts of claiming that a thing is so or that a certain state of affairs prevails in the world. As such, they are the most basic form of storytelling, of saying that something happened. "Once upon a time, there lived a beautiful princess" is an assertion.

Assertions are not the only way to communicate propositions, however. In another famous story beginning, the first paragraph of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart," ("True!—nervous—very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad?") it is never asserted that you will say I am mad. The proposition is instead questioned. But, in spite of the fact that the proposition is not asserted, in spite of the fact that the writer does not perform the speech act that is defined as an attempt to get the reader to know/believe the proposition, still the reader does come to know/believe the proposition. How does this happen?

Three concepts will be needed to explain the dynamics of literary implicitness, this phenomenon whereby the unsaid is communicated. Two—entailment and presupposition—originate in the area of semantics and have to do with the logic and truth conditions of propositions. The other—implicature—originates in the area of pragmatics and has to do with
conventions of how language is used to communicate. What these concepts have in common is that they all deal with situations in which more is communicated than is explicitly said. To be more precise, entailment, presupposition, and implicature are all mechanisms by which the receiver (reader or listener) of a verbal communication may (by logic or convention) derive propositions that are not explicitly asserted.

I will define the two semantic concepts first, the two which depend on logic and truth conditions for their functioning. These are entailment and presupposition. Truth conditions are the circumstances under which propositions can be judged to be true or false. Truth conditions are discussed as relationships between the truth values of different propositions.

1. Entailment

One sort of relationship is that of entailment. One proposition entails another if the truth of the first proposition ensures the truth of the second proposition and the falsity of the second proposition ensures the falsity of the first proposition. Consider the following sentences: (a) Barbie is divorced and (b) Barbie was once married. Here, the proposition expressed in (a) entails the proposition...
expressed in (b): the truth of (a) ensures the truth of (b)—if Barbie is divorced, then Barbie must necessarily once have been married. Likewise, the falsity of (b) ensures the falsity of (a): if Barbie was never married, then she necessarily cannot be divorced. The relationship is represented in Figure 1.3.  

![Figure 1.3](image)

**Figure 1.3** A schematic representation of the truth relations involved in entailment.

Entailment is usually a unidirectional relationship between two propositions. In the above example, proposition (b) does not entail proposition (a): the truth of (b) does not ensure the truth of (a) and the falsity of (a) does not ensure the falsity of (b). That is, if it is true that Barbie was once married, this does not necessarily ensure that she is divorced—she may still be married, or she may be a widow. Likewise, the falsity of the proposition Barbie is

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5 Figures 1.5-1.8 are adapted from Frank Parker's and Kathryn Riley's *Linguistics for Non-Linguists*, 2nd ed, 48-49.
divorced does not prove that she was never married--she may still be married.

Although entailment is usually a unidirectional relationship, there are sentences that express propositions that mutually entail each other. These sentences are said to be **paraphrases** of each other. An example of this bidirectional entailment can be found in the two propositions *Poor Jud is dead* and *Poor Jud died*. Regardless of the order in which we consider them, the truth of each ensures the truth of the other. Also, if either is false, the other must also be false. The relationship is in Figure 1.4.

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Truth</th>
<th>Falsity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor Jud is dead.</td>
<td>Poor Jud died.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENTAILS</td>
<td>ENTAILS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Jud died.</td>
<td>Poor Jud is dead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Falsity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

**Figure 1.4** A schematic representation of the truth relations involved in mutual entailment, or paraphrase.

In the simple examples I have just used, the entailment relationship rests on the meaning of the words in the propositions: by virtue of their meanings as English words, *divorce* requires someone to have been married and *die* requires someone to be dead. This sort of entailment is what
allows writers to restate the same propositions in a variety of ways without boring readers with overt repetition.

Another type of entailment which may serve literary purposes is entailment based on a syllogistic truth. For example, if a proposition of the type If (a) is true, then (b) is true is conjoined to a proposition specifying that (a) is in fact true, then the conjunction of the two propositions can be said to entail the third proposition, (b) is true. In literature there are cases in which the reader supplies the major premise, and the text supplies the minor premise. The proposition which asserts the conjunction of the two premises entails the conclusion, the entailed proposition which is never asserted, never told. For instance, consider the song lyric

The path was deep and wide
from footsteps leading to our cabin.
above the door there burned a scarlet lamp.

The reader, prompted by an assumption of relevance which we will discuss later as Grice's maxim of relation, will supply a major premise regarding the significance of a scarlet lamp (something like If there was a scarlet lamp above the door, then a prostitute lived there). The text supplies the minor premise, There was a scarlet lamp above the door. The conjunction of the two propositions, one from the reader's extratextual knowledge and one from the text, becomes the proposition which entails the implicit proposition of
interest, A prostitute lived in our cabin. The implicit proposition is then confirmed in the next line of the lyric, "Yes, I'm the son of Hickory Holler's tramp," which manages to be both explicit and ambiguous (due to the lexical ambiguity of the word tramp). In this way, without transgressing against the "community standards" of what can be said and sung over the radio, the story of what it is like to be the son of a prostituted woman can be told. In addition, the song's audience engages in active participation, "filling in the blank," effectively co-writing the lyric with the author. This sort of deductive logic that joins propositions asserted by the author with propositions already possessed by the reader will be discussed further in the section on implicature. It is sufficient at this point to distinguish that there are some entailments that can be read by the reader without any additional information at all: if I remark to you that "Poor Jud is dead," you do not require any further contextual information to be aware that poor Jud died.

2. Presupposition

Another sort of relationship between propositions exists when the falsity of one of them renders the other without a truth value. This relationship is called presupposition.
Proposition (a) presupposes proposition (b) if the falsity of (b) renders (a) without a truth value, that is, the falsity of (b) makes it impossible to judge (a) true or false. For example, the proposition (a) *God is good* presupposes proposition (b) *There is a God*. If (b) is false and there is no God, then it makes no sense to say that (a) *God is good* is true or false— for either to be the case, a God would have to exist and have or lack the property of goodness. The relationship is represented in Figure 1.5.

![Figure 1.5 A schematic representation of the truth relations involved in presupposition.](image)

A proposition and its denial, that is, the negation of that proposition, have exactly the same presuppositions. For example, the proposition (a) *God is not good* also presupposes (b) *There is a God*— if (b) is false and there is no God, then it cannot make sense to say that *God is not good* is either true or false. It is neither; it is without truth value. The relationship is represented in Figure 1.6.

Presupposition is at the heart of the joke that is classically used to teach the concept of "double-bind," "Have
Truth

God is not good.

No truth value

PRESUPPOSES

There is a God.

Falsity

Figure 1.6 A schematic representation of the truth relations involved in the presupposition of the denial of a proposition.

you stopped beating your wife?" This yes-no inquiry questions the truth value of the proposition You have stopped beating your wife, a proposition which presupposes that you did at some point beat your wife. Because a proposition and its negation have the same presuppositions, it doesn't matter how you respond; in either case—"Yes, I have stopped beating her" or "No, I haven't stopped beating her"—the presupposition is the same. Similarly, in the "Tell-Tale Heart" example above, it is through presupposition that Poe's narrator convinced us that we would say he was mad.

Both entailment and presupposition are strategies in which a receiver (that is, a listener or reader) can be given one proposition and derive another. Given a statement (a), an active receiver can logically deduce an unspecified number of entailments and presuppositions (b). In this way, entailment and presupposition function as ways in which receivers can infer information that is not explicitly asserted. Because these strategies are held by readers and writers in common, they may be used in systematic ways on
both sides of the communication act—by authors in constructing texts and trying to shape the experience of readers and by readers constructing meaning and trying to interpret the communication of authors.

3. Implicature

   a. General Remarks. Passing from semantics to pragmatics, we take up the concept of implicature. Implicature is not based, like entailment and presupposition, on the necessary operations of logic. Instead it is founded on conventions, the habitual socially accepted ways of using language to communicate.

   Implicature was first described by the language philosopher Paul Grice in his 1975 article "Logic and Conversation." He observed that a statement can imply a proposition that is not explicitly asserted by that statement and that--and this is what distinguishes implicature from entailment and presupposition--is not a necessary logical consequence of that statement. He called this phenomenon implicature.

   At first blush, implicature seems like an idiosyncratic phenomenon. Consider exchanges such as the following:

   (a) "When are you going to see Jurassic Park?"
(b) "When Hell freezes over."

(a) "I'm going to dinner at Chez Nous tonight."
(b) "Carry some Rolaids with you."

(a) "Where is the remote-control?"
(b) "Where did you see it last?"

Although the communication in each of these cases is perfectly clear—the respondent is not going to see Jurassic Park, has a low opinion of the cuisine at Chez Nous, and does not know where the remote-control is—these propositions are not asserted by the (b) utterances. Neither does any paraphrase of these propositions appear in the words of the (b) utterances. Nor do the (b) utterances entail or presuppose the propositions that are in fact the intended answers to the questions. In fact, imperatives and questions such as we see in the (b) utterances of the second and third example do not have truth values at all, so they are not even eligible for the tests that define entailment and presupposition. How then are the propositions of interest conveyed?

Grice's theory of implicature succeeded in providing a framework of rules by which these sorts of apparently idiosyncratic phenomena could be seen as systematic. He began by proposing an over-arching Cooperative Principle, which stated that participants in a successful conversation
cooperate with each other. The pursuit of conversation is like a business partnership in which the partners have agreed (implicitly and unconsciously) to be bound by a contract or set of rules. Grice called these specific rules maxims and identified four of them: the **maxim of quality** (statements should be true), the **maxim of quantity** (statements should be informative), the **maxim of manner** (statements should be clear), and the **maxim of relation** (statements should be relevant). Grice did not say that participants in conversation always obeyed these maxims; in fact, he observed that they often violated them. What he suggested however was that, within the contractual framework of the Cooperative Principle, people tend to act as if the maxims have been followed. This assumption that the maxims have been followed, regardless of appearances, requires the receivers of apparently aberrant communication to search out or create contexts in which the questionable statements can be seen as adhering to the maxims. This imaginative construction of ways in which a statement can be seen as true, informative, clear, and relevant is a creative act in which a bridge is built between propositions by information supplied by the receiver (listener/reader). In other words, like entailment and presupposition, implicature also functions as a way in which receivers can infer propositions which are not stated.

In 1986, Wilson and Sperber pointed out that deductive reasoning does play some part in recovering implicatures.
Deductive reasoning is the same sort of processing which allows a hearer/reader to recover unstated information by entailment and presupposition. The essential difference between the two situations is that in entailment and presupposition, deduction can operate on the utterance alone and successfully retrieve the implicit proposition. In implicature, on the other hand, deduction must operate on the utterance and at least one proposition from the context of the utterance. So, it is not the processing which distinguishes them so much as the type of input for the processing.

I will consider how this works in more detail. But it should be noted first that Paul Grice outlined his theory of implicature with respect to conversation only. However, for the purposes of analyzing implicitness and the show/tell contrast in literature, I have collapsed the distinction between written communication and conversation in the confidence that there exists between writers and readers a contractual agreement that is at least analogous, and possibly identical, to Grice's Cooperative Principle. As evidence for the utility of blurring this distinction between writing and talking, I offer the recent productivity of Grice's theory in the study of business and technical communication, where the Cooperative Principle has been applied to written and spoken communication interchangeably (Parker and Campbell 298 and 308-309). Also, the interest of
late within literary critical theory in how readers "construct their own texts" is an open invitation for strong and relevant input, such as Grice's, from the area of linguistics.

So, bearing in mind that Grice originally applied his concepts to conversation while I intend to apply them indiscriminately to written and spoken communication, let us examine his theory more closely and consider some examples of how implicature conveys information that is not explicitly expressed.

b. The Maxim of Quality. The maxim of quality leads participants in communication to expect that all contributions to the exchange should be true and based on evidence, that is, statements should be of good "quality."

Take, for example, the following exchange:

Speaker A: President Clinton is certain to provide nationalized health insurance.
Speaker B: Sure. And every twenty-fourth of December a fat man with a white beard climbs into a reindeer-powered sleigh and flies around delivering toys to all the good little children in the world.

---

6 Although all written implicatures are essentially messages from the writer to the reader, it may occasionally be useful to distinguish between implicatures directed by the persona of the narrator to the reader only and other implicatures directed by one fictional character to another (which the reader will, in the role as witness, also receive).
Speaker B does not abide by the maxim of quality; B's contribution is not on the surface either truthful or based on reasonable evidence of truthfulness. But the hearer of B's utterance expects that in some way the statement is true. In what way can it be true? Not on the level of explicit and literal content: The proposition expressed by the statement is not true. So the receiver of the statement is required to do further processing to find a way in which the utterance is of good quality, that is, true. The creation of additional material is required.

The receiver of B's statement is in possession of several bits of knowledge. He or she knows the statement. He or she knows the statement is false. He or she knows the speaker of the statement also believes it to be false. And he or she possesses the maxim, the expectation that the utterance in its overall effect will be true according to the knowledge of the speaker. Based on this knowledge, the receiver abandons the default assumption that the content of the statement is literally true and creates, probably unconsciously, a new item of information, one that will satisfy the maxim and make sense of the communication. In this example, the construction of new information might run along these lines:

Speaker B said something we both know to be false.

Using the conjunction and, Speaker B is equating the truth value of the first statement with the truth value of the second statement, which is known to be false.
Therefore, Speaker B believes the first statement to be false.

When the net effect of the utterance is taken as Speaker B disbelieves the previous statement, then B's contribution can be easily taken as truthful, of good "quality," and compliant to the maxim. This sort of processing can help to explain why utterances such as B's in this example are generally well-understood, although they are not literal or explicit communication.

Consider another instance. In her short poem "Comment," Dorothy Parker writes:

Oh, life is a glorious cycle of song,
A medley of extemporanea;
And love is a thing that can never go wrong;
And I am Marie of Roumania.

For her effect here, Parker is depending on, although flouting, the maxim of quality, just as Speaker B did in the previous example. She is stating a proposition contrary to fact in her final line: she is not Marie of Roumania—her readers know this (her poem is signed with her own name) and she knows they know this. So what is going on here?

Parker's short poem consists of four simple assertions, all of the same structure, $a$ is $b$.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$a$</th>
<th>$b$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>life</td>
<td>glorious cycle of song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[life is]</td>
<td>medley of extemporanea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>love</td>
<td>thing that can never go wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>author</td>
<td>Marie of Roumania</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the reader proceeds through the sequence, carried by the momentum of rhyme, meter, and the conjunction and, the perfectly parallel propositions are categorized as being similar, members of the same rhetorical set. When at the end the writer apparently violates the maxim of quality, the reader searches for or creates a context in which the aberrant proposition would be appropriate. Such a context might hold if the statement were included in a list of other fantastic, unbelievable statements. This interpretation would work, would satisfy the maxim and make sense of the communication, but it requires readers to go back and re-cast their responses to the previous lines. Because of this, the flagrant falsehood of the last line serves to cancel the first three lines. What seems at first blush to be an ecstatic Hymn to Life, becomes the grumping of a cynic, and in this way, by violating Grice's maxim of quality, the poem achieves a surprising juxtaposition of opposites and arrives at its humor. As Stanley Fish says in *Is There a Text in this Class*, "... everything a reader does, even if he later undoes it, is a part of the 'meaning experience' and should not be discarded" (3-4). In later textual analyses we will see a number of instances of this sort of retroactive processing where at a certain point readers receive information which affects their understanding of previously acquired information.
c. The Maxim of Quantity. The maxim of quantity operates similarly. This maxim requires that participants in communication make their contribution exactly as informative as is required for the purposes of the exchange at the point at which it occurs. In other words, each participant should offer only as much information as is immediately required, neither more nor less. For example, if Speaker A asks Speaker B, "Whatcha reading?" and Speaker B replies "A book," then B appears to be violating the maxim of quantity: B's contribution has not satisfied A's request for information. 7

Because B's communication does not appear on the surface to adhere to the maxim of quantity, A must abandon the default assumption that the literal and explicit content is the communication that is intended. A must create a scenario in which B's utterance contains exactly the information B wants A to have. A is in possession of several bits of information that can help accomplish this construction. A knows B is reading, knows that readers sometimes resist being interrupted, knows that reading matter has titles and descriptive terms that are easily stated, and knows that B has chosen not to use any of these, but instead to give A information that A has already gathered visually. A is also in possession of the maxim of quantity, the expectation that B's utterance will in fact be exactly as informative as it

7 This example is adapted from Parker and Riley's *Linguistics for Non-Linguists*, 2nd. ed, 13.
needs to be. Utilizing these items of information, A may construct something like *B did not give me the information I asked for*. There must be a reason. Perhaps *B does not want me to know what he or she is reading*. If the net effect of B's statement is taken to be *B does not want me to know what he or she is reading*, then the statement can be seen as compliant with the maxim of quantity, as B is successfully communicating the information that is necessary at this point in the exchange, that is, that he or she does not intend to share the information requested.

There is at least one more possible construction that a could be placed on B's utterance: that B simply did not want to talk to A and was opting out of the exchange by giving an insufficient answer to A's question. In such a case, the point would not be that B did not want A to know what he or she was reading. Instead, B would be vetoing the Cooperative Principle contract itself, and announcing by non-compliance with the basic ground-rules of conversation that no conversation would be forthcoming. This also would comply with the maxim of quantity—it would be information required at this point in the exchange.

The equal plausibility of these two interpretations illustrates a characteristic of implicatures: Usually, more than one implicature can validly be drawn from violations of the maxims. For example, consider the following dialogue.

Speaker X: Gerry is cooking for us tonight.
Speaker Y: We should stop for a little snack, then.

In this exchange, X might reasonably infer that Gerry is a bad cook. Or, just as reasonably, X might infer that Gerry prepares small portions. Contextual knowledge might make one or the other assumptions more likely, but it is important to note that implicatures are not logically required by the statements on which they are based, and so are often potentially multiple. In practice, conversations are usually held between persons that share a lot of common contextual information and this shared background minimizes misinterpretations of ambiguous implicatures. This is fortunate, as ambiguity is usually troublesome in conversation.

In literature, on the other hand, authors and readers still share some contextual cultural information (such as language conventions, historical knowledge, etc.), but usually have much less common context than conversational participants. Writers and readers are not usually located in the same place or time, and are thus denied all the basics of shared physical environment. Also, they may well not be of the same race, religion, class, nationality, or gender. So an author and a reader may not even share the fundamentals of worldview. In such a communication situation, shared context is much reduced, and implicatures, which often rely on context to pin down their meanings, become tricky, multi-
valued phenomena. However, writers who are also artists may value a rhetorical device that is potentially multi-valued by definition, because it allows for multiple messages to be carried by one text, creating interesting artistic possibilities. 8

The maxim of quantity allows two types of violations: those based on giving too much information and those based on giving too little information. For an example of the former sort, consider Robert Heinlein's *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*. At the beginning of the book, when he is introducing his main characters—one of which is a newly-awakened computer—Heinlein gives us this dialogue:

"Hi, Mike."
He winked his lights at me. "Hello, Man."
"What do you know?" . . .
"'In the beginning,'" Mike intoned, "'God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And--'" (10)

The machine character, Mike, violates the maxim of quantity by giving too much information, more than is called for at that point in the exchange.

"Hold it!" I said. "Cancel. Run everything back to zero." Should have known better than to ask wide-open question. He might read out the entire *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Backwards. Then go on with every book in Luna. (10)

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8 Of course, excessive or uncontrolled ambiguity in literature, as in most other writing situations, may yield a meaningless text and so is likely to be negatively valued.
Mike's purpose in violating the maxim is not to convey an implicature. It is a childlike experiment in humor-by-rule-breaking. "'You asked what I knew.' His binary read-out lights rippled back and forth—a chuckle" (10). The author, though, has his own purpose in creating the violation of the maxim—to demonstrate his character's factual knowledge and social (i.e., pragmatic) incompetence. But for Heinlein, it is not enough to implicitly convey information by implicature. Unlike some of the authors we will examine, Heinlein immediately follows his effective implicature with an explicit assertion of the implied content:

He was the weirdest mixture of unsophisticated baby and wise old man. No instincts (well, don't think he could have had), no inborn traits, no human rearing, no experience in human sense—and more stored data than a platoon of geniuses (11).

So, even though Heinlein may have implicitly conveyed information about Mike by creating a violation of the maxim of quantity, he redundantly conveyed the same information in an "expository" passage. This sort of redundant explicitness may affect the degree to which Heinlein is credited with being an "artist."

To understand the possibilities of violations of the maxim of quantity based on too little information, consider the following lines from a popular song from Leonard Bernstein's West Side Story.

There's a place for us,
a time and place for us,
peace and quiet and open air
wait for us somewhere.
In this song, the singer (speaker) confidently affirms the existence of "a time and place for us" as if this time and place were known by personal experience. Then, after a moving description, this imagined space is also identified as being "somewhere." As the song is about the "time and place for us," is in fact a series of descriptions of that space, the specification of its location is very much within the purposes of the communication. The fact that its location is not identified and the indefinite somewhere is used raises the implicature that the singer-speaker does not know where such a place might be. This juxtaposes the confident explicit propositions asserted in the song (There's a place for us, etc.) with the implicit uncertainty of I don't know where such a place might be. The juxtaposition of the contrasting confidence and uncertainty contributes to the wistfulness of the song. (Similar effects with violations of the maxim of quantity may be examined in similar songs: "Somewhere, My Love," "Somewhere, Over the Rainbow," "Goodnight, My Someone," and "Some Enchanted Evening.")

d. The Maxim of Manner. The maxim of manner deals not with the quality or quantity of information, but with the manner of its presentation. This maxim leads conversational participants to expect each other's contributions to be expressed in a manner that is appropriate to the purposes of
the exchange. It predicts clarity and a tone that is consistent with the context of the communication. It requires that participants avoid excessive vagueness, ambiguity, or prolixity. Likewise, it dictates avoidance of unnecessary preciseness. Whenever implicatures are triggered by oddities of style of presentation, the maxim of manner has been flouted.

Consider, for example, the following request of one of Joey's parents to the other.

*Would you keep an eye on Joey while I make a trip to the oytaay orestay?*

The speaker uses "pig Latin" to express toy store, which is not the simplest way of saying it. The maxim of manner appears to be violated by this indirectness. The violation invites the hearer to create a context in which such indirectness is the appropriately direct manner of communication.

The receiver of the above request possesses several items of information from which to construct the required inference. She knows that there is a child in the house who cannot spell. She knows the maxim. From the knowledge that she already possesses, she is able to construct more information, information that is neither contained in the utterance nor logically deducible from the utterance alone. Her reading of the implicature might go something like this:

*Pig latin is not the normal manner of communication.*
There must be a reason that my partner used such a roundabout manner.

Joey cannot understand pig latin, while I can.

The message must be intended for me alone.

My partner does not want Joey to know he is going to the toy store.

Notice that if she responded to the above statement with a loud, cheerful "Sure--I'd be glad to watch Joey while you go to the toy store," there would be trouble between the two speakers. The receiver of the communication would have failed to act on a request that, though unstated, was certainly communicated, the request that she not let the child know the first speaker was going to the store.

For another example of a violation of the maxim of manner, consider Dorothy Parker's 1928 review of The House at Pooh Corner for the "Constant Reader" column of The New Yorker. This was a mismatch of reviewer and reviewed that could only be measured in light years. Parker thought Milne's work saccharine, to put it gently. She ends her review with

... it is that word "hummy," my darlings, that marks the first place at which Tonstant Weader Fowed up.

Florid Victorian capitalization is unusual in The New Yorker, as is baby-talk. Readers of the column would be aware of these violations of the maxim of manner. They would also be aware of the Constant Reader's negative opinion of Pooh from having read the preceding paragraphs of the review. They
would, through familiarity with the reviewer's regular work in the same magazine, probably know of her cynical and urbane tendencies. Using their knowledge of the context of the statement, they would probably be successful in constructing information which is not explicit on the page, by way of reasoning something like this:

New Yorker reviews do not normally come in baby-talk.

There must be a reason for this violation of the maxim of manner.

The reviewer's manner of speaking would be appropriate for communicating with particularly sickeningly sweet children, children so sweet, they may not even exist.

Perhaps Milne's book would only be suitable for such children.

The communication is clear: Thumbs down on Milne. But, in addition to successful communication, the juxtaposition of sophisticated cynicism with babyfied goo lends the review its final punch.

e. The Maxim of Relation. Grice's final maxim is relation. This maxim requires each participant's conversational contribution to be relevant. Examine the following exchange:

Speaker X: Would you like a beer?
Speaker Y: Is the Pope Catholic?
On the surface, Speaker Y does not abide by the maxim of relation; the propositional content of Y's contribution is not relevant to X's question. But anyone in possession of the maxim of relation will expect Y's contribution to be in some way related to X's question. To force Y's contribution into the expected conformity with the maxim, a listener will have to construct information which is not expressed in the words of the utterance. Further processing may come up with something like this:

*Y has responded to my question with an unrelated question.*

*There must be a reason for this seeming irrelevance.*

*If I were to answer Y's obvious question, I would have to say "Yes."*

*If Y responds to my question by forcing me to say "Yes," then "Yes" is the answer Y is communicating.*

*Y wants beer.*

If the overall effect of Y's utterance is seen as *Y wants beer*, then it can be seen as complying with the maxim of relation—it is indeed relevant to the current purpose of the exchange.

When Grice first proposed this maxim, he admitted that its apparent simplicity might conceal conceptual problems: "questions about what different kinds and focuses of relevance there may be, how these shift in the course of a talk exchange, how to allow for the fact that subjects of conversation are legitimately changed, and so on" (46).
Since 1975, there has in fact been considerable refinement in the understanding of relevance. In 1986, Wilson and Sperber defined relevance in this way:

A proposition P is relevant in context \{C\} if and only if P has at least one contextual implication in \{C\}. . . . The contextual implications of a proposition P in a context \{C\} are all those conclusions deducible from the union of P with \{C\}, but from neither P alone nor \{C\} alone. (54-55)

They suggested that the relevance of P increases with the number of contextual implications it yields and decreases with the amount of processing required to yield them. They assume that the universal goal of cognition is to acquire relevant information—the more relevant, the better. Based on this, they assume that speakers try to be as relevant as possible and that hearers bring this assumption to every utterance they process—essentially a restatement of Grice's maxim of relation. But they go further. They state that

. . . all Grice's maxims can be replaced by a single principle of relevance—that the speaker tries to be as relevant as possible in the circumstance—which, when suitably elaborated, can handle the full range of data that Grice's maxim's were designed to explain. (54)

It must be granted that the work of Wilson and Sperber may handily provide the apparatus for dealing with very broad discussions of relevance. It should also be noted that, even intuitively, the maxim of relation may seem to subsume the other maxims. We could see the construction of implicatures by readers and hearers as attempt to create relevance for
anomalous manners of presentation, quantities of information, or outright falsities. It can further be acknowledged that implicatures are often drawn from overlapping violations of different maxims. For instance, the Santa Claus and national health example which I analyzed above as a violation of the maxim of quality could conceivably be analyzed as a violation of the maxim of relation: What is the relevance of Christmas to nationalized health? Furthermore, as I will discuss in my conclusion, it is possible that the maxim of relation may be the specifically semantic manifestation of a more general principle of human perception, the Gestalt principle of continuity.

Those things being said, I will choose to operate within Grice's original framework of four maxims for two reasons. First, this allows for continuity with previous work analyzing implicatures. Second, the four maxims provide a rational grouping of effects that matches the level of detail required by literary discourse analysis.

In this introductory chapter, I have introduced a linguistic categorization of the ways in which information can be conveyed from one person to another in verbal communication. First, a proposition may be explicitly asserted ("told" or "stated") or it may not be asserted. Of the propositions that are not asserted but are still conveyed (i.e., implicit), some are necessary logical consequences of other
propositions and some are not. The propositions that are necessary logical consequences of other propositions are entailed or presupposed by the explicit propositions. The propositions that are not logically required by the explicit propositions are implicatures. Implicatures can be divided into four types, those based on violations of the maxims of quality, quantity, manner, and relation. A schematic depiction of these relationships is given in Figure 1.7.

Figure 1.7 A schematic representation of the concepts introduced in this chapter.

I have tried to define the concepts of entailment, presupposition, and implicature with some degree of specificity. The purpose of this attempt at precision is to prepare a system of concepts that can be used with confidence in analyzing literary texts, with a view to understanding how readers read unstated content. In the next section, we will
apply these concepts to the work of one of the great masters of literary implicitness, Ernest Hemingway.
II. THE RECONCILIATION OF A STYLISTIC DILEMMA:

HEMINGWAY'S IMPLICITNESS

A. General Remarks

Through the years, scholars have shared a consensus about a certain quality in the writing of Ernest Hemingway, although they often speak of it using differing terms. Hodgart speaks of "stoicism and dignity" in 1957 (93). A decade later, Stuckey refers to Hemingway's "tersely mannered prose" (167) and his "tight-lipped narrative style and frequent use of understatement" (169). The passing of another decade finds Carabine discussing his "understatement and compression" (302). In the 1980's, Ardat comments on the "hard and lean quality" of the author (11), Leech and Short state that he "does not tell us what to feel, but our imaginations work on these details" (183), and most recently Beegel has researched "the celebrated economy of his published work" (11). I believe that these, and the countless other scholars who have noted related characteristics of Hemingway's style, have observed a unified phenomenon. It is my intention to use the concepts of entailment, presupposition, and implicature, borrowed from linguistics, to illuminate this, to show what this "economy"
consists of, and how and why this author does not "tell us what to feel."

I will assert that Hemingway was faced by a stylistic dilemma: he wanted to convey emotion, but he also held beliefs that inhibited the direct communication of emotion. I believe that he creatively resolved the conflict by relying heavily on these three techniques of implicitness for the communication of propositions that are not actually contained in the words on the page.

This assertion requires two disclaimers. First, we must note that Hemingway is not always implicit in conveying emotion; sometimes he is direct and explicit, as in *The Garden of Eden* where he states, about the protagonist, "He was shocked at the dead way she looked and at her toneless voice" (117). Here, he explicitly tells the reader the emotion experienced by the character: shock. The second disclaimer is that I make no pretense that this is the only significant element in his style. The influences affecting the writing of Ernest Hemingway are complex. While a linguistic theory of implicitness cannot explain everything about his style, it can certainly aid our understanding of certain features.

We will begin with a discussion of Hemingway's stylistic problem and its roots in his acceptance of certain social and esthetic ideals.
B. The Conflict

Consider the writing riddle that Hemingway posed to himself, that is, to express emotion, but not to express emotion.

1. Factors Favoring Expression of Emotion

Speaking generally and intuitively, the communication of complex, realistic, intense feelings from writer to reader appears to be a defining value of literature, at least in our culture. A glance at a mixed bookshelf may reveal volumes that convey no emotional message; these are items that we would probably not esteem as literature: phone books, field guides, fiction of the James Bond variety, textbooks, and so on. Our intuitive evaluation of a piece of work depends to some extent on the force of its emotional message.

More specifically, the value of truthfully communicated emotion is especially emphasized in Hemingway's esthetics. He spoke of knowing that he was writing well when he read a section to his wife and "it raised goose bumps on Miss Mary's arms"—presumably an autonomic manifestation of emotion. Rovit and Brenner state that Hemingway "... seems, indeed, to have made the stimulation of an emotion in the reader a
cardinal point in his aesthetic" (15). They also refer to the "primacy of feelings in his notion of morality as well as art" (15), and his attempt "to capture emotional intensity in time" (33). Beegel asserts quite simply that "For Hemingway as well as Eliot, art was 'making emotion'" (90). But "making emotion" cannot be a direct process in a writer who has significant injunctions against the expression of feelings.

For contrast, I will examine for a moment some samples of writing where emotional content is presented explicitly. I will include here only two out of many possible examples.

The first is from James Joyce, whose native Irish tradition is not notoriously anti-emotional, as are some of the traditions that shaped Hemingway. In the text, a boy is experiencing physical pain (from a disciplinary beating), a scene that it is possible to imagine Hemingway writing about (but how differently!). This comparison is also interesting because we know that Hemingway knew and read Joyce and thought his subjectivity "terrible" (Carabine 305).

... a loud crashing sound and a fierce maddening tingling burning pain made his hand shrink together with the palms and fingers in a livid quivering mass. The scalding water burst forth from his eyes and, burning with shame and agony and fear, he drew back his shaking arm in terror and burst out into a whine of pain. His body shook with a palsy of fright and in shame and rage he felt the scalding cry come from his throat and the scalding tears falling out of his eyes and down his flaming cheeks. (Joyce 50-51)
In this passage, highly subjective adjectives—describing states that can only be known to the narrator and cannot be observed by others—such as fierce, maddening, tingling, and burning, join with the similarly subjective naming of emotional states, such as shame, agony, and fear, to produce direct and explicit telling of internal experiences.

The second example is from an author whose cultural tradition does include a version of non-expressive ideal which I will discuss below, the reserved "stiff upper lip" of England, but who may have been granted a special dispensation to express feeling because of her gender. From Virginia Woolf:

The strange thing, on looking back, was the purity, the integrity, of her feeling for Sally. It was not like one's feeling for a man. It was completely disinterested, and besides, it had a quality which could only exist between women, between women just grown up. It was protective, on her side; sprang from a sense of being in league together, a presentiment of something that was bound to part them (they spoke of marriage always as a catastrophe), which led to this chivalry, this protective feeling which was much more on her side than Sally's. (Woolf 50)

This example not only expresses emotion, it does its best to specify an exact nuance of emotion through careful description. Clearly, Hemingway would have written nothing remotely resembling this passage.
2. Factors Favoring Non-Expression of Emotion

The forces pushing Hemingway away from direct and explicit emotional expression were of two sorts, social and literary.

a. Social Values. To examine the social inhibitions against communicating emotions, it would be useful at this point to introduce the Spanish term *pudor*. It has no precise English equivalent, but Larousse gives the following definition:


The word denotes "body modesty," but extends freely to include "emotional modesty" as well. As a principle, it dictates that it is admirable to cover oneself, not to display one's private parts, to maintain reticence regarding the self. *Pudor* is an element of Spanish *machismo*, the cultural ideal that is so often discerned in Hemingway. It has parallels in the ideal types of other cultures that he was familiar with: the stiff upper lip of the English, the
strong silent type of the American West, the stoicism of some Native American cultures. 9

The positive social value of pudor pervades Spain and has been important in setting a general tone of suppressed, but nevertheless deep, emotion in Spanish letters, music, dance, and bullfighting (Bousoño). Consider, for example, the restraint and understatement of the poetry of Antonio Machado, the rigid discipline of flamenco guitar, the tightly controlled postures of the flamenco dancer, and the surface emotionlessness of the matador.

And "... one country Hemingway loved above all others, a country whose capital was 'the best city in the world,' a country that fed his soul and gave sustenance to his most intimate longings: his 'beloved Spain.'" (Broer, v). It is only to be expected that the social values of his "beloved Spain" should help to shape his work.

Whether Hemingway "learned" artistic pudor from Spain, or came to Spain with a temperament already formed and predisposed to appreciate traits that affirmed his own natural tendencies is a moot question. A typical Nature VS Nurture issue, it can lead to interesting speculation, but is

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9 Pudor is not related etymologically to pundonor 'honor, dignity' which is also a concept frequently connected with Hemingway. Pundonor is a shortened form of punto de honor 'point of honor.' Pudor, in contrast, derives from the Latin pudere 'to cause shame.' The apparent similarity between pudor and pundonor is merely coincidence.
not critical to the purpose at hand. The point here is that Hemingway's values are reflected by Spanish values, for whatever reason, and the latter may be used to get a clearer picture of the former.

Hemingway himself was aware of his aversion to direct emotional expression. For example— one of many possible examples— he tells us in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," through the words of the white hunter (who is presented as admirable): "Doesn't do to talk too much about all this. Talk the whole thing away. No pleasure in anything if you mouth it up too much."

For contrast, we may also look at his scathing description of the eminently demonstrative Italians:

There is no doubt but that the Reds of Genoa— and they are about one-third of the population— when they see the Russian Reds, will be moved to tears, cheers, gesticulations, offers of wines, liqueurs, bad cigars, parades, vivas, proclamations to one another and the wide world and other kindred Italian symptoms of enthusiasm. There will also be kissings of both cheeks, . . . toasts to Lenin, shouts for Trotsky, attempts by three and four highly illuminated Reds to form a parade at intervals of two and three minutes, enormous quantities of chianti drunk and general shouts of 'Death to the Fascisti!' ("Genoa Conference," dispatch of 13 April 1922)

For Hemingway, only buffoons would show emotion in so open a fashion. "Real men" would not. Note that the prohibition is not against having emotion, but against displaying it.
b. Literary Values. If the sociological-psychological value, *pudor*, is one force acting against overt expression of emotion in Hemingway, the literary-esthetic value "show, don't tell" is another. "Show, don't tell" objectivism is so deeply ingrained in our esthetics at the end of the twentieth century that violations of it are often regarded as slips of the writer's hand. If, however, we look at the history of the novel, we find that this was not always so. Consider the overt description, or "telling," of emotion by Jane Austen, for example. At the point in the development of the novel when Hemingway appears, he did have a choice, and he came down forcefully on the side of "showing" his emotional effects. He was not alone. Several writers who served as Hemingway's teachers—Moise, Pound, Eliot, and Fitzgerald—were making similar choices. Others, writing in the same general time period, such as Joyce and Woolf, opted differently.

What Carabine refers to as Hemingway's "artistic determination to make rather than describe" (303) may have been related to his journalistic apprenticeship; it is said that Lionel Calhoun Moise, one of his early mentors, often counseled, "Pure objective writing is the only true form of storytelling" (Fenton 41). If "pure objective writing" can be construed to mean "the direct reporting of observable facts," its primacy as a stylistic value would have complicated impacts on a writer like the Hemingway of the
early 1920's who was shifting his allegiance from journalistic stories to emotion-based fiction. In journalistic stories, the point of the story, the information that must be conveyed to the reader, the proposition of interest, is itself often an observable fact: \( X \) blew up; \( Y \) died; \( Z \) fought. But in emotion-based fiction, the proposition of interest is often not directly observable: \( Q \) loved \( R \) and then \( Q \) stopped loving \( R \); \( J \) was bitter and despairing, but found peace; \( K \) was innocent and idealistic, but is no longer. If the proposition of interest is an observable fact and stylistic value dictates only the reporting of observable facts, then implicitness is not strictly speaking necessary.\(^\text{10}\) If the proposition of interest is not an observable fact, and stylistic value dictates only the reporting of observable facts, then implicitness will be required. When Hemingway approached the task of writing \textit{The Sun Also Rises} in 1925, the constraints of journalistic writing under Moise's guidance were not far in his past.

A later mentor, Ezra Pound, also directed his attention towards "showing" instead of "telling" by praising "the natural object" and "direct treatment of the 'thing'" (Allen and Tallman 36 and 38). When the young Hemingway went to Paris in 1921, he took with him a letter of introduction from

\(^{10}\) Although implicitness may still be required in such genres as riddles and mystery stories.
Sherwood Anderson to Pound, the founder of the Imagist movement. The two men met in 1922 and, by Hemingway's own admission, Pound began to teach him to write. (Hemingway reciprocated by teaching the older man to box [Baker 86].) Even though by this time the Imagist movement was in decline, Pound still strongly valued objectivism, concrete detail, economy of language, and brevity of treatment. His focus on these issues, weighted by his prestige as a writer, reinforced the young Hemingway's predilection for "showing" emotion rather than "telling" it (Beegel 90).

Pound also introduced Hemingway to the work of T. S. Eliot, another former Imagist who was steering away from "telling" emotion. It was Eliot who was credited with coining the term "objective correlative" (although the concept had been explored by a number of writers since Poe and the phrase itself had been used by Washington Alston in his 1850 Lectures on Art). Eliot had first defined it in 1919 in the essay "Hamlet and his Problems" in this way:

"The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an "objective correlative": in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked. (quoted in A Dictionary of Critical Theory, "Objective Correlative," 309)

In spite of Eliot's "scientific" air of pseudo-precision here, there has been considerable controversy about what he actually meant by this. However, there can be little doubt
that the foundation of his preachment was the "evocation" of emotion through the showing of "external facts," a message that could not fail to encourage the young Hemingway's embrace of the "show, don't tell" modus operandi.

Assessing Hemingway's links with Pound and Eliot, Beegel says:

The objectivism of Pound, Eliot, and Hemingway, anticipating William Carlos Williams' cry of "no ideas but in things!" depends on omission for its success. The underwater part of the iceberg is the emotion deeply felt by reader and writer alike, but represented in the text solely by its "tip"--the objective correlative. The "omitted part" of a story, Hemingway wrote, "should make people feel more than they understand." (Beegel 91, with the Hemingway quotation being from A Moveable Feast)

A final Name among the company of those who exhorted Hemingway to implicitness is F. Scott Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald, who was already an accomplished and acclaimed novelist when the two men met in late April of 1925, was a mentor and friend to Hemingway during the critical period of 1925-1926, when The Sun Also Rises was being shaped. Later, their relationship would be complicated by quarrels, competitiveness, gossip, and Fitzgerald's alcoholism. However, the brief period of good graces was important, because during this time Fitzgerald helped the newer author to find publications that would print his stories and also helped him by reading and making editorial comments on his work. This short honeymoon period included the time when Hemingway was composing The Sun Also Rises.
There is evidence, in a note responding to some of Maxwell Perkin's complaints about *Gatsby*, that Fitzgerald independently developed his own "theory of omission":

*I myself didn't know what Gatsby looked like or was engaged in + you felt it. If I'd known + kept it from you you'd have been too impressed with my knowledge to protest. This is a complicated idea but I'm sure you'll understand.*  
(Fitzgerald writing to Perkins around 20 December 1924. Kuehl and Bryer 89-90)

Bruccoli took this letter to mean that Fitzgerald's theory of omission anticipated Hemingway's, but Beegel pointed out that there is published evidence (discussed below) that Hemingway was thinking in these terms at least as early as 1923. The relationship of Fitzgerald's implicitness to Hemingway's was not so much one of anticipation as of synchronicity.

In her study of Fitzgerald's recommendations for the Hemingway story "Fifty Grand," Beegel found that

*In the early days of their acquaintance, Fitzgerald's chief function as Hemingway's mentor was to teach him to cut, to encourage him to let go of material. . . . Fitzgerald pushed "Fifty Grand" toward economy by excising superfluous material that did not do enough to warrant its inclusion, and urged Hemingway to adhere strictly to his own "theory of omission."*  
(30)

In pursuit of this fidelity to "omission," Fitzgerald also prescribed significant cuts of expository material from *The Sun Also Rises*. Even though the book was already in galleys, Hemingway made the cuts, which indicates that Fitzgerald's understandings strongly paralleled his own.

The will of these and other early modern authors to "make rather than describe"--to show, not tell--prohibited
the writing of direct expressions of emotional states, such as "she was sad" or "I was sad (terrified, in pain, in love, etc.)" because such expressions are inevitably descriptions, authorial comments ("tellings") about the created world. As such, they were seen to distance the reader from the story in a way that "tears ran down his face" or "her hands shook" do not. So, Hemingway's adherence to the principle of "show me, don't tell" me that was so much in the Zeitgeist when he was setting his artistic project ended by reinforcing the avoidance of direct emotional expression already dictated by pudor.

To summarize, Hemingway was driven as a writer to communicate deep emotion to his readers. He was also driven not to communicate emotion by his pudor and his stylistic decision to show, not tell.  

C. The Solution: Implicitness and the Iceberg

To resolve the conflict between the need to express emotion and the need not to express it, Hemingway developed

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11 The tension between the contradictory drives, to express emotion and not to express emotion, is reminiscent of the conflict between directness (for brevity and efficiency) and indirectness (for tact and politeness) in professional writing, specifically business letter writing. Just as speech act theory has yielded insight on the dilemma of the business writer (Riley), it can cast light on Hemingway's version of the be direct, be indirect conflict.
a technique of omitting explicit mention of important material, while presenting other information that would invite the reader to infer the missing pieces. In this way, the emotional content of stories could be expressed, that is communicated, while it was never expressed, that is, explicitly stated. This has become known as his "iceberg theory," and is very largely dependent on entailment, presupposition, and implicature.

1. Hemingway's Statements of Iceberg Theory

The import of anything Hemingway said about writing is magnified by the fact that he thought it was dangerous for him to talk or write about writing. As George Plimpton summarized it, Hemingway "... stressed that the craft of writing should not be tampered with by an excess of scrutiny" (220). The writer seems to have had a terror of becoming self-conscious about his work, of becoming too aware of his own technique to perform it. This is an interesting fear. There are certainly things that cannot be done while thinking about them, either because complex decision trees must be processed more rapidly than linear rational thought allows (e.g., bullfighting, simultaneous interpreting), or because self-conscious thought interferes with autonomic processes that are required for the activity (sex, falling asleep).
For Hemingway, there may well have been an analogical relationship between writing and these sorts of activities. Hemingway told and wrote the following anecdote, which he later said was a "lovely revelation of the metaphysics of boxing" ("The Art of the Short Story," 91).

Up at the gym over the Garden one time somebody says to Jack, "Say Jack how did you happen to beat Leonard anyway?" And Jack says, "Well, you see Benny's an awful smart boxer. All the time he's in there he's thinking and all the time he's thinking I was hitting him" (typescript of the deleted opening of "Fifty Grand," Folder 388, Ernest Hemingway Papers, JFK Library. Transcribed and quoted by Beegel).

Hemingway clearly had reservations about the advisability of "thinking" too much.

Further motivating his reticence about writing may have been an awareness that explaining his craft would have forced him back into a developmentally earlier relationship with it. It has been shown in studies involving airline pilots, chess players, and nurses that there is a point in the development of a skill-set when advanced practitioners leave the rules behind them (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1980; Dreyfus, 1981; and Benner). At that point, they stop making decisions based on conscious processing and rule-following and begin to make better and quicker decisions, unconsciously. They are often unaware of the rationales for their own actions, and they may have difficulty explaining them to less skillful colleagues. This is the reason that the true masters of a craft are often not its best teachers. Moderately advanced practitioners who are still consciously following a set of teachable rules and
can explain their own decision-making processes are better able to communicate their strategies to novices.

Hemingway was a master practitioner if ever there was one. For him, after he had worked out his guiding principles, returning to the rules to explain some effect to a novice writer or thick-headed critic may have felt dangerously like a step backward to where individual elements of style lay disconnected, like loose bricks on the floor. Questions about writing "spooked" him, he told Plimpton (220).

In addition, there is Hemingway's pudor-based prejudice against "talking about things." We have many instances of Hemingway, in his own voice or in the persona of a fictional character, talking about not talking about things. For example, in an early draft of "Big Two-Hearted River," Hemingway says in the voice of Nick Adams, "Talking about anything was bad. Writing about anything actual was bad. It always killed it" (The Nick Adams Stories 237-238, quoted in Svoboda 18). This idea first appeared in print in the ending of The Sun Also Rises (Svoboda 18), as Jake and Brett sit in the bar of the Palace Hotel, carefully not discussing Romero's love for Brett: "'You'll lose it if you talk about it.' 'I just talk around it.'" (The Sun Also Rises 245). Many other passages could be cited that illustrate the concern that talking about something will kill it or cause it to be lost. This particular formulation of Hemingway's
reserve is ambiguous. It seems to refer, at least part of the time, to the phenomenon of discharging or dissipating emotional energy through talk, a release that forestalls building up an emotional charge sufficient to spark artistic creation. But it may also carry a second meaning, parallel to the first, which is Hemingway's belief that when you explicitly say something in fiction, then you lose the ability to create it. The first meaning is psychological, the second is stylistic. The two issues are related, but they are not identical and should not be confused.

Whatever his many reasons for reserve about the writing process, the fact that he had such strong inhibitions about saying anything at all suggests that what he did say about writing was important. What he said more than once, and in different ways, is especially important. I will review here briefly some of the things that he said in writing about his "iceberg theory," his technique of omission.

Perhaps the most well-known of Hemingway's statements about writing was in his 1958 Paris Review interview, conducted by George Plimpton. This occurred less than three years before his death. At Hemingway's insistence, he was given ahead of time a list of the questions that would be asked, and he was later given the chance to polish his answers in writing (Plimpton 220). Because of these opportunities for forethought and revision, we can assume that his comments in this probing interview were not
flippant, spur-of-the-moment, off-the-cuff answers. We can assume they must be taken seriously.

In the now-famous interview, Hemingway said:

If it is of any use to know it, I always try to write on the principle of the iceberg. There is seven-eighths of it underwater for every part that shows. Anything you know you can eliminate and it only strengthens your iceberg. It is the part that doesn't show. If a writer omits something because he does not know it then there is a hole in the story. (235)

This was a close restatement of an image that he had presented in 1932, almost a quarter century earlier:

If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of movement of an ice-berg is due to only one eighth of it being above water. A writer who omits things because he does not know them only makes hollow places in his writing. (Death in the Afternoon 192)

Even earlier, in the 1925 first draft of The Sun Also Rises, Hemingway was working out the same principle even as he worked out the shape of the novel that was to make his reputation and influence prose style for the rest of the century. "... none of the significant things are going to have any literary signs marking them," he said. "You have to figure them out by yourself" (Holograph first notebook, 194-1 in the JFK Library Hemingway Collection, quoted in Svoboda 12). And, before that, his interest in conveying information without "literary signs" is latent in the early name he gave to the pieces that later became segments of In Our Time:
"Unwritten Stories," that is, stories that are conveyed outside the channel of the words (92 in the JFK Hemingway Collection).

Also, writing in A Movable Feast in 1964 but referring back to the 1923 composition "Out of Season," he said that he had omitted the real ending of this early story on his "new theory that you could omit anything you knew and the omitted part would strengthen the story and make people feel something more than they understood" (75).

Beegel (12) plausibly suggests that the "germ" of Hemingway's iceberg theory came from Hadley Richardson, the woman who was to become his first wife. Not coincidentally, Richardson was a pianist; she was trained in an art which depends on realities such as if one note is played, other notes are also perceived, and if certain sequences of notes are played, other notes are strongly expected. In an August 1921 letter to Hemingway, Richardson (speaking of his fiction) said

> If only one could feel as if a light broke over many things; if one could find the scheme behind any subject tackled. I found something like that in music a little once, but you've got a magnificent grip on it--a magnificent grip on the form back of the material no matter how strange it is, like icebergs. (Hadley Richardson to Hemingway, 8 August 1921, quoted by Griffin Along with Youth 212-213,250)

So, we find in Hemingway a man who valued reticence about writing and in writing. How did he achieve this reticence?
D. Analysis of Hemingway Texts in Terms of Presupposition, Entailment, and Implicature

In spite of problems attending manuscript studies of an author whose discards and editorial deletions are jealously guarded as potentially remunerative literary properties, Hemingway's process of composition has been reasonably well documented by scholars such as Reynolds (1976), Svoboda (1983), Balassi (1986), and Beegel (1988). They have clearly established that Hemingway usually wrote far more than appeared on the published page, and then edited by cutting. Their studies of what Beegel (1988) dubbed Hemingway's "craft of omission" have tended to focus on what exactly was deleted, under whose influence, under what circumstances, and why. If novels were houses, then these manuscript studies would focus on analyzing the discarded lumber piles of a master builder to learn how the boards were cut, shaped, and finally used to construct the final product.

It is not my intention here to address that same well-covered material again. Rather than examine how the master craftsman shapes his materials and brings them together, I would like to examine the physics of the building itself: why a vertical wall does not fall down, how a bearing wall supports weight that is not directly above it, why rain does not come in under the door, the way triangular supports
increase the strength and stability of a structure, what holds the roof up, and so forth--the mysteries that contribute to framing the empty space that becomes the edifice. As novels are not, in fact, houses, the "physics" I intend to bring to bear on them is linguistics, particularly semantics and pragmatics. To demonstrate that the "physics" I am using has continuous applicability across time, I will examine in some detail Hemingway's last-published novel and his first great success.

1. The Garden of Eden

The bulk of the examples in this first section of textual analysis will be taken from The Garden of Eden, the latest of Hemingway's posthumous publications. It was chosen because the principal plot is essentially an emotional story, although there is an action and adventure story concerning an elephant hunt embedded within it. It is also a novel with a high degree of sexual content. Both of these characteristics may predispose this novel to require implicitness to help the author communicate what he does not choose to "tell" explicitly. In addition, because of the circumstances of its publication, consideration of linguistic implicitness may raise interesting questions about assigning authorship to this work.
Because *The Garden of Eden* is relatively new—it was published by Hemingway's heirs in 1986—and less well-known than his other works, it will be necessary to summarize the plot briefly, to provide context for the examples:

David and Catherine are happy newlyweds until Catherine begins to "change," cutting her hair very short, dressing in men's clothing, liking to "be the boy" in sex, and eventually taking a female lover, Marita. Catherine's sanity becomes increasingly brittle and she becomes increasingly jealous of David's work (writing) until she burns the only manuscripts of his most precious work. She leaves. He stays with Marita, finds peace, and discovers that he is able to re-write the lost story perfectly from memory.

Now, let us consider the implicitness strategies one at a time, with examples of how Hemingway used them to convey emotion without explicitly stating it.

Early in the novel, the protagonist, David, talks to himself internally while he watches his wife sleep. (I have numbered the sentences for ease of reference.)

(1) The young man lay awake and thought about the day. (2) It is very possible that I couldn't get started, he thought, and it probably is sound to not think about it at all and just enjoy what we have. (3) When I have to work I will. (4) Nothing can stop that. (5) This nonsense that we do is fun although I don't know how much of it is nonsense and how much of it is serious. (6) Drinking brandy at noon is no damn good and already the simple aperitifs mean nothing. (7) That is not a good sign. (8) She changes from a girl into a boy and back to a girl carelessly and happily. (9) She sleeps easily and beautifully and you will sleep too because all you truly know is that you feel good. (10) You did not sell anything for money, he thought. (11) Everything she said about the money was true. (12) Actually it was all true. (13) Everything was free for a time.
(14) What was it that she had said about destruction? (31)

Consider first the presupposition behind sentence (2).

Presupposition: Proposition (a) presupposes proposition (b) if the falsity of (b) renders (a) without a truth value, that is, the falsity of (b) makes it impossible to judge (a) true or false.

In this example, sentence (2) expresses our proposition (a): David couldn't get started. Actually, it not only expresses it, it asserts a truth value for it: neither true nor false but "probable." One of the presuppositions of this proposition is There is something for David to start, which we might call (b). The falsity of our (b) would leave the (a) statement meaningless: if it is not true that there is something for David to start, some task at hand, then it makes no sense to say that it is true, false, or probable that he could not start it. In this way, the reader

12 It might be well to be explicit about this term "reader" which I will use so freely. I intend "reader" to mean roughly the same thing that Fish specified in Is There a Text in This Class?:

"... some one who (1) is a competent speaker of the language out of which the text is built up; (2) is in full possession of 'the semantic knowledge that a mature... listener brings to his task of comprehension,' including the knowledge (that is, the experience, both as a producer and comprehender) of lexical sets, collocation probabilities, idioms, professional and other dialects, and so on; and (3) has literary competence. That is, he is sufficiently experienced as a reader to have internalized the properties of literary discourses, including everything from the most local of devices (figures of speech, and so on) to whole genres." (48)

In addition, for simplicity, I will specify that I am discussing a first-time reader—not a re-reader nor a student that has been "prepared" for a text by a teacher or a set of
supplies the information that is not stated: there is a job which David should be doing.

By this point in the story, the reader knows that David is a writer. We might say that the proposition *David is a writer* already exists in the context of the book. By examining one of the entailments of this proposition, it is possible to extract an idea of the identity of the job that David should be doing.

**Entailment:** Proposition (a) entails proposition (b) if the truth of proposition (a) ensures the truth of proposition (b) and the falsity of proposition (b) ensures the falsity of proposition (a).

One of the propositions entailed by *David is a writer* is *David's job is to write*. It is through this type of implicitness that the reader of this passage is able to identify just what, in fact, the passage is about.

Now consider the implicatures raised by the string of apparent irrelevancies in this passage.

**The Maxim of Relation:** Make your contribution relevant to the current purposes of the conversation.

What is the connection between sentence (1) and sentence (2), thinking about the day and wondering if he could get started writing if he tried?

(1) The young man lay awake and thought about the day. (2) It is very possible that I couldn't get started, he thought, and it probably is sound to

Cliff Notes.
not think about it at all and just enjoy what we have.

The reader's mind seeks the missing link between the two, and infers that there is some sort of equation: for David, thinking about the day is the same as wondering if he could get started writing. Thus the implicature is raised that writing has been on his mind all day, but not discussed because there is something else that takes priority over his need to write. The larger context of the passage reveals that this impediment to writing is his wife's desire to continue their idyllic honeymoon. The reader gains information about his emotional weakness that is nowhere explicitly stated.

What is the relation between the emphatic double assertion of sentences (3) and (4) on the one hand, and the apparently irrelevant sentence (5), on the other—between thinking that nothing can stop his writing and thinking about "this nonsense that we do"?

(3) When I have to work I will. (4) Nothing can stop that. (5) This nonsense that we do is fun although I don't know how much of it is nonsense and how much of it is serious.

The reader assumes that the maxim of relation is in effect and draws the implicature that "this nonsense" is on some level threatening the writing. Again, information is conveyed that is not explicitly stated.

How is drinking brandy at noon, sentence (6), related to the ideas of fun and seriousness in sentence (5)? Perhaps
drinking brandy at noon is very serious, perhaps gravely serious for the writing. Once more, important information about the character is communicated without being contained in the actual words on the page.

The author continues to build the almost imperceptible structure of implicature. How is Catherine's changing back and forth in sentence (8) related to her sleeping in sentence (9)?

(8) She changes from a girl into a boy and back to a girl carelessly and happily. (9) She sleeps easily and beautifully and you will sleep too because all you truly know is that you feel good.

The close juxtaposition of Catherine's peaceful sleep with her gender transformations suggests, via the maxim of relation, that she is peaceful about her sexual needs in a way that her husband, who is not sleeping, is not. What implicature must we construct to connect the idea of feeling good in sentence (9) with the idea of selling things for money in sentence (10)?

(9) She sleeps easily and beautifully and you will sleep too because all you truly know is that you feel good. (10) You did not sell anything for money, he thought.

David has just married a very wealthy woman and has a book going into its second printing. The denial in sentence (10) that he sold anything strongly suggests that somewhere, unspoken, there exists the proposition David sold out, sold his soul, sold himself for money. The mechanism by which this suggestion is planted is the maxim of manner, which
dictates that communication be made with the least possible circumlocution. All negative statements contain at least one complication more than their corresponding positive statements: negation itself. The extra convolution of negation is generally justifiable by the fact that negative statements deny or contradict some implicit or explicit positive proposition in the immediate context, in this case, a proposition like David sold himself "to feel good."

Most dramatic of all, set off by a paragraph break, is the reference to destruction in sentence (14).

(14) What was it that she had said about destruction?

The reader is forced by the maxim of relation to draw the implicature that all of it, the fun and the seriousness of drinking brandy and the changes and the feeling "good" and the money, is connected to destruction in the mind of David Bourne.

Looking at this same passage we see several violations of the maxim of quality, as well.

The Maxim of Quality: Make your contribution true according to your knowledge.

The character is not speaking the truth when he says in sentence (9) that all he truly knows is that he feels good. Just thirteen pages previously, his internal monologue is so distraught that it comes to us as a minimally punctuated run-on: "... and his heart said goodbye Catherine goodbye my lovely girl goodbye and good luck and goodbye." (18).

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Just six pages previously, his conflict with his wife almost surfaces into a fight: "'Please let's not fight.'" (25).

In sentence (11) there is another violation of the maxim of quality.

(11) Everything she said about the money was true. The protagonist does not believe that what his wife said about money— that it didn't matter and that they should use her money to continue to travel idly, without working or settling down—is true. And, sentence (13) simply doesn't sound like something that this character would believe in.

(13) Everything was free for a time.

So why does he tell himself these falsehoods, which are highlighted by his use of the word "truly"? The Cooperative Principle urges us to find a way in which to see these statements as true, perhaps to believe that the protagonist sees them as true. This suggests that the events of the plot are so deeply threatening to him that he is unable to become aware of his own feelings about them and resorts to self-deception. This raises the emotional stakes, because the character is in the grip of feelings with which he cannot cope. (For contrast, imagine a 1980's California David who can simply tell his wife, "Gee, I feel really threatened when you do that." The emotional tension would evaporate immediately.) Thus, implicatures based on violations of the maxim of quality give the reader
information about the emotional state of the character without any need for explicit statement.

The Maxim of Manner: Make your contribution in a clear, unambiguous, concise, orderly fashion appropriate to the current purposes of the exchange.

To examine violations of this maxim, we will look at another passage further on in the first half of the book.

(Catherine speaks first.)

(1)"I want to do what you want. (2) I can't be more compliant than that can I?"

(3)"Nobody wants you to be compliant."

(4)"Can we stop it? (5) All I wanted to be was good today. (6) Why spoil everything?"

(7)" Let's clean up here and go."

(8)" Where?"

(9)"Anywhere. (10) The god damn cafe."

The manner in which David suddenly inserts "god damn" in sentence (10) is inconsistent with the content of the dialogue, which in this exchange has been neutral in tone and contained no exclamatory phrases. The cooperative reader looks for a way in which this sudden change in tone is appropriate and assumes that there is considerable underlying tension between husband and wife, anger, perhaps, or desperation, to justify the shift. In this way, emotional information is relayed to the reader without overt expression.

Another violation of manner occurs when Catherine speaks in sentence (5) of "being good," an expression normally used
by or about children, not adult women. This raises the implicature that her mental state is in some way becoming childlike and vulnerable. It reinforces the suggestion planted earlier in the book where she says "Can I?" and then quickly changes it to "May I?" (76) which is another childlike mannerism. These clues subtly foreshadow the gradual disintegration of her personality.

The Maxim of Quantity: Make your contribution exactly as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange.

About halfway through the book, Catherine tells David that she kissed Marita and liked it.

"So now you've done it," David said carefully, "and you're through with it.'
"But I'm not. I liked it and I'm really going to do it.'
"No. You don't have to." (113)

The author never tells the reader, in the discussion that goes on for another page and a half, exactly what "it" is that she is really going to do. The absence of mention, the unmentionableness of "it," is sufficient to communicate to the reader that "it" is homosexual sex with Marita.

The violation of the maxim of quantity in this episode continues. Catherine visits Marita, and then returns to the room she shares with David, to find him gone. The chapter ends as she looks at herself in a mirror.

Her face had no expression and she looked at herself from her head down to her feet with no expression on her face at all. The light was nearly gone when she went into the bathroom and shut the door behind her." (115)
Even though she has had two experiences that we might expect to have powerful emotional repercussions, Hemingway gives us no clue to her emotional state, and rubs our noses in the fact that he is withholding this information, by repeating that she had no expression on her face at all. The cooperative reader strives to construct the logic behind this apparent omission. What implicature is raised by this violation of the maxim of quantity? Is this a suggestion that she has no feelings and is revealing the flat affect of a psychotic? Or is this just to suggest that her feelings are so alien to us, as they are to her husband, that they are completely incomprehensible?

The cumulative effect of these sorts of implicitness strategies can be very pronounced. There is an early passage in the book (13-18), too long to quote here, where so much material is revealed implicitly that the protagonist passes from tranquility to despair in five pages without anything much happening explicitly, other than his wife's getting a haircut.

On page thirteen, he is happy:

He had many problems when he married but he had thought of none of them here nor of writing nor of anything but being with this girl whom he loved and was married to and he did not have the sudden deadly clarity that had always come after intercourse. (13)

By page eighteen, he is saying goodbye to the relationship:
"Let's lie very still and quiet and hold each other and not think at all," he said and his heart said goodbye Catherine goodbye my lovely girl goodbye and good luck and goodbye."

The chief vehicle for the information that reveals this change in the main character is implicature. At no point does Hemingway explicitly reveal David's emotional state with regard to the central conflicts of the book.

While we are examining some of the ways in which Hemingway uses implicature to reveal emotion without violating pudor or the doctrine of "show me, don't tell me," let us also look at how violations of Grice's maxims are used by the author to create special effects in his writing, such as to create the impression that a character is drunk. This occurs in The Garden of Eden when David finds Catherine in a café drinking illegal absinthe:

"I had to drink up fast before because two G.N.'s were in," the girl said.
"G.N.'s?"
"What you macallits nationals. In khaki with bicycles and black leather pistol holsters. I had to engulf the evidence." (39)

The character of Catherine is not given to expressions like "G.N.'s" (for Guardias Nacionales), "what you macallits", or "engulp." There is a shift in manner, emphasized when the author tells us she is "speaking too loudly," that must be explained. The reader thus discovers, without the author needing to state it, that she is drunk.

Violations of the maxim of manner may create another special effect, the impression that a character is thinking
or speaking in another language. This occurs with great subtlety in *The Garden of Eden*, but can be more plainly exemplified in an earlier work, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, where Hemingway encodes Spanish in archaic English analogs of the *tu*-form:

"I must not. If thou dost not love me."
"I love thee."  (70).

The reader easily discerns that there must be a reason for such a glaring violation of manner, and uses the context to correctly infer that this represents literal translation of Spanish speech.

A third special use of implicature is the delicate transmission of sexual plot material, such as occurs in *The Garden of Eden*, when David is lying in bed with his wife:

He lay there and felt something and then her hand holding him and searching lower and he helped with his hands and then lay back in the dark and did not think at all and only felt the weight and the strangeness inside and she said, "Now you can't tell who is who can you?"  (17)

There are some notable gaps where relevant information is missing from this passage. David felt "something"--what did he feel? Catherine's hand held "him"--what part of him (that can be held in one hand) did she hold?--and searched "lower"--lower than what? David "helped" her--to do what? He felt "the weight and strangeness"--of what? And, most important, he felt it "inside"--inside what? These reticent violations of the maxim of quantity trace the outlines of a form of
sexual encounter that is literally "unspeakable" to David, anal penetration of the male.

We must remember that Hemingway was writing in a time when there was considerable censorship, both self-censorship and the external kind, and he chose to present stories that carried considerable sexual content (abortion, impotence, etc.). He used implicature to convey this material to "those who had ears to hear" without offending (much) the delicate sensibilities of those who did not.

As his comments about his iceberg theory show, Hemingway was very conscious of omitting material from his exposition and allowing the reader to "figure thing out." Linguists have shown that there are principled, rule-governed ways in which receivers of communication "figure things out," or "fill in the blanks." These include identifying entailments, presuppositions, and implicatures. After reviewing The Garden of Eden for the presence of these strategies, we can conclude that Hemingway did indeed use them to aid his exposition of emotional material without betraying the ideals of pudor (emotional modesty) and of "show, don't tell" objectivism. He also manipulated implicature to produce other effects, such as the impression that a character is drunk or is speaking in another language, and the delicate communication of sexual plot material.

If we can stipulate that the story-telling in The Garden of Eden is largely dependent on implicitness, this may have
interesting repercussions on the issue of authorship of this work. What happens in the linguistically-based implicitness that I have described is that an author chooses a limited number of propositions to present in words on the page, propositions that will invite or force the reader to know other, crucial, propositions that do not appear on the page. But, in this work, the choice of which propositions to "tell" was not made by the original writer of the material but by someone else, without the writer's consent and against his expressed wishes. 13

To understand this separation between the writing of The Garden of Eden and the choosing of the written words to finally appear in the published work, we should examine the circumstances of its publication, always remembering that Hemingway generally wrote more than he published and then sculpted his works by cutting them. He began the work that later became The Garden of Eden in 1946 and worked on it, off and on, for the last fifteen years of his life. He died by his own hand in 1961, leaving at least three unfinished versions of the manuscript. In 1985, Tom Jenks, a young editor at Scribner's, was presented with over three thousand pages of uncut Hemingway, enough to fill two shopping bags,

13 Writing to Charles A. Fenton, Hemingway said, "Writing that I do not wish to publish, you have no right to publish. I would no more do a thing like that to you than I would cheat a man at cards or rifle his desk or wastebasket or read his personal letters" (quoted by Updike 85).
and invited to find a book among them. He carved out a clear, clean text of sixty-five thousand words, and it was published under Hemingway's name. No mention was made of Jenks anywhere on the book, although a short publisher's note admitted to "some cuts." Some cuts. Carlos Baker's biography reveals that, at one point, one of Hemingway's own revised drafts of the work ran to 200,000 words. Jenks cut two-thirds of the manuscript (Updike 86 and Doctorow 44).

This ratio of discards is not unheard of for Hemingway; his prize-winning *The Old Man and the Sea* was also a tiny fraction of the text he actually wrote. But in those earlier cases it was the writer himself who made the cutting decisions; in this case, it was a stranger.

The significance of editorial cutting is different for explicit stories than for implicit stories. In a story that resides largely in the explicit propositions on the page, an editor's cuts may amount to quantitative condensation: the decision of how much of the story gets to the reader. But in a highly implicit text, the situation is different. Because much of the story resides in the relationship between expressed propositions, the decision of which propositions to put on the page actually creates story content. The editor's decision is the equivalent of the decision which dots to use in a child's connect-the-dots game—which dots are used governs the shape of the picture that emerges.
In poetic "cut-outs," poems that are created by cutting words out of naive texts such as newspapers or magazine articles, we attribute authorship to the poet that does the cutting, not to the writer of the matrix text. I have followed the conventions throughout this discussion and spoken of Hemingway as the "author" of *The Garden of Eden*, because he "wrote" it. But perhaps we should remember that highly implicit texts are like spider-webs that readers spin between certain fixed points supplied by authors. The person who chooses what and where these fixed points will be is to a great degree responsible for the shaping of the story. To put it another way, if a statue is made from a modeling compound created by one artist, but the hollows in the form are scooped and gouged away by another artist, which of them do we call the sculptor?

2. *The Sun Also Rises*

Having examined a text from the end of Hemingway's career, we will now pass to a text from the beginning. *The Sun Also Rises* is of special interest to analysts because it was one of the foundation-stones of the modernist style. The book was written in 1925 and published in 1926, when Ernest Hemingway was still a "promising" young writer. It was his first full-length novel and first major critical success. It
was written during the brief period that the celebrated F. Scott Fitzgerald stood in the position of mentor to the rising young Hemingway, and Fitzgerald had significant influence in shaping the book (Beegel 13). It had a fairly high degree of sexual content, although it had fewer on-stage bedroom scenes than The Garden of Eden. It is the text on which Hemingway worked out his iceberg theory.

Following the iceberg theory, Hemingway constructed The Sun Also Rises to depend on propositions that are not explicitly stated in the text. That is, neither the propositions nor any paraphrase of them appear among the words on the page. Some of these propositions are of relatively minor importance in reading the book, having to do with the detailing, the elaboration of the fictional world within the book. Others are critical to the plot, the movement of the story. For example, one of the principal problems of the book is that the narrator, who is in love, is also impotent. Of course, this is never stated directly.

The centrality of implicitness in this work, as well as its position in the history of modernism and in Hemingway's development as a writer, make it an extremely interesting text from which to tease out the mechanics of Hemingway's implicitness. Technically speaking, what underlies his iceberg? Instead of taking the linguistic implicitness strategies one by one, as I did in the discussion of The Garden of Eden, I will examine in detail how they work
together to allow the author to do what E. L. Doctorow identified as one of "the writing strategies he would follow for life: when composing a story, he would withhold mention of its central problem" (1).

Consider, as a case study, the "central problem" of Jake Barnes's impotence. On page fourteen, at the beginning of Chapter 3, readers have no clue that this will be Jake's problem, the trouble that will make the book happen. A scant thirteen pages later, readers are privy to all the information they will need to make sense of the plot. And this change occurs without any explicit telling of the problem. Instead, Hemingway shows a carefully chosen collection of fictional information from which the readers can derive a network of entailments, presuppositions, and implicatures. In this way, readers smoothly recover the information that is absent from the page, probably unaware of the processing they are contributing as they "construct their own text." What Hemingway writes onto the page is the tip of his iceberg; what he doesn't tell but forces the reader to know (by entailment, presupposition, and implicature) is the hidden bulk.

Using the linguistic concepts that I've introduced, I would now like to examine this passage carefully, disentangling what is supplied by the author and what is supplied by the reader. I will use something akin to the procedure prescribe by Stanley Fish in his essay "Literature
in the Reader: Affective Stylistics" (Is There a Text in This Class? 21-67). What he recommends is analysis of texts as they unfold to readers: "an analysis of the developing responses of the reader in relation to the words as they succeed one another in time" (27).

Essentially what the method does is slow down the reading experience so that 'events' which does not notice in normal time, but which do occur, are brought before our analytical attentions. It is as if a slow motion camera with an automatic stop-action effect were recording our linguistic experiences and presenting them to us for viewing. (28)

This inch-by-inch analysis will certainly "slow down" the reading--to the point of tedium, in fact--but in this "slow motion," I hope to illustrate how the linguistic processes under discussion are instrumental in creating an over-arching artistic effect.

So--what happens in the mysterious thirteen pages that so shift the footing of the book? I will offer a rapid summary of the action, and then a more detailed examination of the way that action advances. First, the synopsis:

Jake, sitting in a sidewalk café, picks up a prostitute named Georgette and buys her a drink. They take a horse-cab to a restaurant. On the way, Jake rejects the woman's sexual advances and admits to being "sick." Over dinner, Jake tells her he "got hurt in the war." At the restaurant, they run into a party of Jake's friends. Together, they all go to a dancing-club, where Jake sees Brett enter with a group of apparently gay men. Brett greets Jake. They dance together, while the prostitute Georgette dances with the gay men, one after another. Brett and Jake leave together in a taxi, to "drive around." Brett tells Jake she has been "so miserable."
kisses her, but she stops him, saying she can't stand it. He asks if she loves him; she implies that she does. They talk elliptically about "what happened to" Jake and about how this makes their relationship impossible. (14-27)

Now, let us look microscopically at how Hemingway advances his story through these events. On page fourteen, Jake picks up a prostitute. This is the bottom step on a ladder of inference that must be negotiated in Chapter Three, but even this is not stated directly--the word prostitute is never used.

It was a warm spring night and I sat at a table on the terrace of the Napolitain after Robert had gone, watching... the poules going by, singly and in pairs, looking for the evening meal. I watched a good-looking girl walk past the table and watched her go up the street and lost sight of her, and watched another, and then saw the first one coming back again. She went by once more and I caught her eye, and she came over and sat down at the table. (14)

A fortunate minority of Hemingway's readers would know that the word poule is French for a female chicken and is used idiomatically to refer to prostituted women. For the rest, poule would be an unknown sign, the equivalent of writing X or simply leaving a blank for the reader to fill in. Hemingway here violates the maxims of quantity and manner--expected information is missing and it is not standard operating procedure to break into French in a novel for an English-speaking audience. In order to "justify" the lacuna and the use of the less-than-clear manner, the reader must create a hypothesis about the "good-looking girl" that would make a circumlocution into French the appropriate manner for
referring to her. Readers may use contextual information from both outside and inside the text. From outside the text, they may draw on their information about what sorts of words are considered "unmentionable" in English. From inside the text, they may draw information about the woman's behavior: that she walks up and down the same stretch of street, and that she sits down at the table of a man who catches her eye. Combining the data, readers construct the information that is missing from the page.

There is evidence of some care going into Hemingway's iceberg-construction in this passage; notice that he has left the woman's occupation implicit, even for fluent French-speakers:

I sat . . . watching . . . the poules going by, singly and in pairs, looking for the evening meal. I watched a good-looking girl walk past. . . (14).

Nowhere does he say that the "good-looking girl" is one of the poules: He says that he watched the poules and then he says that he watched the girl. It is by the maxim of relation that the reader supplies the unstated information that the girl was one of the poules.  

This assumption will be confirmed in later passages by the amusement of Jake's friends when they meet her (16 and 17), by one of Brett's escorts referring to her as "an actual harlot" (20), Jake's leaving money for her at the bar (23), and the mention of a "yellow card" (28)—presumably a health card. With the number of clues that are shown, a reader may get the point on first presentation, or may get it at one of the later opportunities and have the experience of revising initial impressions of just what is going on here.
So the reader has several inferential steps before arriving even at the crucial fact that the young "good-looking girl" is a prostitute. Once that information is gained, the reader watches with some sense of understanding as the man and the woman have a drink, get in a cab together, and kiss. The next passage that supports Hemingway's hidden proposition occurs when the woman touches Jake.

She cuddled against me and I put my arm around her. She looked up to be kissed. She touched me with one hand and I put her hand away. "Never mind" (15).

Now, if I tell you that a streetwalker, during his or her normal business hours, has gone off with a man, the implicature is raised (via the maxim of relation) that a prostitution transaction will occur. And once this implicature is accepted, there follows the necessary entailment that the prostitute will touch the client genitally; legally speaking, if no genital touch occurs, no prostitution transaction has occurred. To put this more exactly in our theoretical terms: The proposition \( \text{Prostitute G goes off with male stranger J} \) raises the implicature \( \text{A prostitution transaction will occur.} \) The proposition \( \text{A prostitution transaction will occur} \) entails the proposition \( \text{The prostitute will touch the man genitally.} \)

It is through that sort of enchained inferences that the reader arrives at the hypothesis that, when Hemingway says ". . . she touched me with one hand. . . ," he is not telling us that she jostled against him in the rocking horse-cab. The
hypothesis is confirmed when Jake says he ". . . put her hand away." Casual social touches are not usually so emotionally charged that the receiver goes to the trouble of physically rejecting them. This is not a casual social touch. It is a genital touch.

The writer uses contextual clues from the inside the text (such as the female character's behavior) and from outside the text (such as the reader's knowledge of the behavior of prostitutes with clients) to establish what the unspoken topic is--sex. And then, immediately after Georgette's initial sexual touch, Jake says "Never mind."

Never mind is a directive that asks the hearer to disregard the speaker's previous contribution:

Speaker Q: Pass the salt.
Speaker R: What?
Speaker Q: Never mind.

But the last spoken conversational contribution recorded by the author was not Jake's, it was the prostitute's: "Don't kid me" (15). And furthermore, a good deal of time has elapsed between the last spoken words and the directive never mind. Look at the passage immediately preceding the directive:

"Don't kid me."
We turned off the Avenue up the Rue des Pyramides, through the traffic of the Rue de Rivoli, and through a dark gate into the Tuileries. She cuddled against me and I put my arm around her. She looked up to be kissed. She touched me with one hand and I put her hand away.
"Never mind." (15)
The detailed description of the route traced by the horse-cab establishes that time has elapsed since the last recorded conversational exchange, which establishes that the Never mind is not in response to a previous spoken statement. Because of the maxim of relation, which dictates that it must be relevant to the exchange that is in progress, Never mind is an aberrant contribution without a preceding verbal transaction to cancel. The reader must supply the missing information. What would allow these words to be seen as adhering to the maxim of relation? The reader, armed with context (the cuddling and the looking up to be kissed [15]), hypothesizes that there is another sort of transaction, a non-verbal one, going on. It is this transaction, the usual exchange between a prostitute and a client, that Jake is canceling.

So the reader now has the picture of a character who picks up a prostitute, but avoids sex with her. The reader begins to see a hint of trouble here. The implication is certainly that the man has a sexual problem, but the evidence leaves the issue open to question: A man can change his mind, can't he?

Readers get their first real information about the problem at this point.

"Never mind."
"What's the matter? You sick?"
"Yes." (15)
The woman, striving to fill in the missing context that would make Jake's rejection appropriate and "relevant," asks for more information: "What's the matter?" And then she asks a second question that is not overtly related to her first: "You sick?" The reader, guided by the maxim of relation to posit a connection between the two sentences, "fills in" the missing piece: The woman has asked what the problem is, answered that problem tentatively in her own mind, and is seeking confirmation for her hypothesis that her client is ill. The same maxim enable the reader to know that she is not asking about just any illness; she is asking if he has venereal disease. He says "Yes."

The author is easing closer to disclosure of the narrator's trouble, but it is still equivocal. The "yes"--"yes, I have venereal disease"--is spoken by Jake, the central consciousness of the book to a trivial character, a woman who was just introduced to the story and is not even dignified with a personal name at this point. Furthermore, Jake has been shown, just a few pages earlier, to be a man who is quite willing to lie in the service of "graceful exits." He is interrupted in the middle of his work by his friend Cohn.

"Come on down-stairs and have a drink." [Jake says.]
"Aren't you working?"
"No," I said. We went down the stairs to the café on the ground floor. I had discovered that was the best way to get rid of friends. Once you had a drink all you had to say was: "Well, I've got to get back and get off some cables," and it was
This recent behavior of Jake's is part of the context in which the reader finds Jake affirming that he has venereal disease. The fact that Jake is a liar entails that Jake may be lying when he says this. Regardless of the truth value assigned to the proposition Jake has venereal disease, the reader is coming closer to the proposition of interest: If Jake is infected, he has a sexual problem. If he is not, but picks up a prostitute and pretends to be infected, he also has a sexual problem. In the second case, the violation of the maxim of quality would have to be explained in some way, and the reader would be likely to hypothesize: There must be a reason for him to lie. There must be a problem related to sex that is not something he wants to discuss—which signals that it is a fairly serious one. The reader at this point is closing in on the actual trouble of the book.

The next relevant information comes when the prostitute (who has by this time advanced to having a name, Georgette) asks Jake "What's the matter with you, anyway?" (17). This time, he answers with a very direct "I got hurt in the war" (17).

A number of factors undermine the credibility of Jake's utterance. As we have already seen, the author has already established the fact that Jake is capable of lying. This is a proposition that exists in the context of the book that the reader may use in evaluating the truth value of Jake's
assertion. Furthermore, Jake is bored: "It was a long time since I had dined with a poule, and I had forgotten how dull it could be" (16). "I was bored enough" (17). It is possible that, by introducing a trumped-up tragedy, the narrator is relieving his boredom with the woman in the same way that other men might relieve their sexual hunger. This possibility is heightened by the clichéd nature of the exchange:

"I got hurt in the war."
"Oh, that dirty war." (17)

In case the reader misses the cliché, the author draws attention to it immediately, underlining it with exaggeration and parody. The sentences that follow create a kind of retroactive context for reading the two lines of dialogue as empty social inanities and therefore not to be trusted. It is a violation of the maxim of quantity--giving information that is not needed because it is already known--that triggers the reader's understanding that the narrator is being sarcastic in his comment after the exchange. If a serious writer of fiction bursts into a volley of simple-minded and obvious generalizations, the reader must search for or create a context in which this sort of rhetoric would be appropriate. One possible explanation for the violation of the maxim might be that the generalizations appear in the company of other similar clichés. The narrator's comments after the dialogue lines give him a certain "protective
coloration" because the reader recognizes that he is being sarcastic.

"I got hurt in the war."
"Oh, that dirty war."

We would probably have gone on and discussed the war and agreed that it was in reality a calamity for civilization, and perhaps would have been better avoided (17).

So we have here a bored liar speaking a melodramatic cliché to a woman he does not care about—when it comes to the truth of his statement, the best a reader can do is to assign it a question mark. But, the implicit disclosure of the novel's trouble is much advanced—at least the proposition Jake has a sexual problem because of a war injury is before the reader, even if it has a questionable truth value at this point.

The next link in the chain of inference is the confirmation of the reader's tentative understanding. This occurs in Chapter Four.

The ground is laid for the plot movement in Chapter Four by the introduction of Lady Brett Ashley in Chapter Three. Brett is The Real Thing for which the prostitute Georgette is just a pale imitation. Georgette, who first appears as "a good-looking girl" (14), is treated to a drink and sexually rejected by Jake before he even troubles to ask her name. Brett is introduced by name from the beginning:

As they went in, under the light I saw white hands, wavy hair, white faces, grimacing, gesturing, talking. With them was Brett. (20)
Brett who? Who is Brett? Not "a woman named Brett," not "Brett Ashley," but "Brett." Notice that it is through the maxim of quantity that the reader immediately knows that Jake already has some history with Brett. The absence of further identification of Brett suggests that further identification is unnecessary—Brett is already well-known. The context in which it is customary to recognize another person by their first name only is when there is some level of shared past intimacy. The reader has a hint of Brett being important to Jake from the moment that she first walks on-stage in the novel.

Jake and Brett meet and dance. "It was hot and I felt happy," Jake tells us explicitly (23). They two leave together and get into a taxi, paralleling Jake and Georgette's ride in the horse-cab. Brett's first words in the privacy of the taxi are "Oh, darling, I've been so miserable" (24). The chapter ends on those words.

Interposing white space after this incomplete revelation of Brett's mental state leaves a vacuum. The author is subtly violating the maxim of quantity with respect to the reader, who expects to be told the rest of the information that is pertinent: Why is Brett miserable? Instead of the information one could reasonably expect to receive at this point in the story, the reader gets the end of the chapter and a change of subject. The next words are "The taxi went up the hill. . . ."
They kiss, again paralleling the earlier scene in the horse-cab (15). This time, it is the woman who backs off.

Our lips were tight together and then she turned away and pressed against the corner of the seat, as far away as she could get. Her head was down. "Don't touch me," she said. "Please don't touch me."

"What's the matter?" [The very words spoken by Georgette to Jake earlier.] (25)

The dialogue continues, and it is somewhere in the next page and a half, as the two lovers talk about the impossibility of their relations that the reader realizes that Jake was not kidding.

"I can't stand it."
"Oh, Brett."
"You mustn't. You must know. I can't stand it, that's all. Oh, darling, please understand!" (26)

There are galloping violations of quantity here: She can't stand what? He mustn't do what? He must know what? What does she want him to understand? The reader must supply the missing information, not just the answer to these questions, but the reason that the information is omitted in the first place. Fortunately, the implicit groundwork that has been laid in previous pages make this relatively easy to do. This groundwork, coupled with the urgency of their current exchange--"Oh, darling. . . " (24), "Oh, Brett," "Oh, darling. . . ," "Oh, no. . . " (26), and one of Hemingway's rare exclamation marks--add up to a full revelation of the central problem of the book. Although the problem is still not named, in this passage there is finally at least
reference to it by vague pronomial expressions: "... what happened to me is supposed to be funny" (26), and "A friend of my brother's came home that way from Mons (27)." In these cases, the contrived ellipses--"what happened to me," "that way"--violate the maxim of quantity to establish the taboo around the topic, even between lovers who must discuss, but never mention, it.

We have seen how a network of implicitness supports the central problem in *The Sun Also Rises*. But before we leave this example, I want to draw attention to a short passage buried in the middle of the book. In Chapter 12, the following exchange takes place between Jake and his friend Bill. Bill has been on a whimsical verbal rampage, playfully talking nonsense for the last two pages. He tells Jake what the New York literary establishment thinks of him.

"It sounds like a swell life," I [Jake] said.
"When do I work?"
"You don't work. One group claims women support you. Another group claims you're impotent."
"No," I said. "I just had an accident."
"Never mention that," Bill said. "That's the sort of thing that can't be spoken of. That's what you ought to work up into a mystery." (115)

This exchange is unusual in that it contains an explicit version of the proposition of interest that was so carefully omitted from the introductory chapters of the book. It should be noted that it occurs close to the middle of the book, so author was not relying on this explicitness to orient the reader. No, that orientation was accomplished
much earlier, by indirection. The location of this unusual explicit naming of the problem is important. It occurs just as Jake and Bill are preparing for the intimacy of fishing together. It is a prelude to what is essentially a declaration of love:

"Listen," [Bill says.] You're a hell of a good guy, and I'm fonder of you than anybody on earth. I couldn't tell you that in New York. It'd mean that I was a faggot." (116)

So, the unwonted explicitness in this passage is related to a breakthrough in closeness between the two men. It is the uniform background of implicitness about Jake's impotence that makes the unique explicitness of this passage seemed marked with meaning.

This passage is also of interest because, while mentioning the problem, it fictionally states Hemingway's project of not mentioning the central problem of the book. As I will discuss below, Tim O'Brien makes a similar metafictional gesture in his short story "Love."

As I hope to have shown in this chapter, the concepts of entailment, presupposition, and implicature can be useful in discussing Hemingway's work in a number of ways and at different points in his trajectory as an artist. They can relate his prose style to elements of his personal value system, which dictated that he, as a man, should not express emotion openly, although he, as an artist, was required to do so. The same concepts may relate his prose style to the esthetic climate in which he began his career, the literary
objectivism preached by Moise, Pound, Eliot, and Fitzgerald. The very same concepts can map out the reader's response to Hemingway's work as understanding develops across time in the sequential navigation of the text, in just such a way as was called for by Stanley Fish in his enunciation of reader-response theory. And still the same concepts may contribute to rational discussion of the authorship of Hemingway's posthumously published works.

Having examined Hemingway's implicitness, early and late, using these linguistic concepts, we will shift our attention to another twentieth century American writer, one who is widely regarded to be a follower in Hemingway's tradition—Tim O'Brien.
III. TIM O'BRIEN: IN PAPA'S FOOTSTEPS

A. General Remarks

In the Hemingway chapter, we touched on three sorts of information: the writer's motivations and expressed intentions, the linguistic patterns in his texts, and the response to his works. These sorts of information roughly correspond to Before, During, and After the text: the author's intention is prior to creating the text; entailment, presupposition, and implicature occur during the interaction of the reader with the page; and critical response occurs after reading. In Hemingway, a consideration of data from all three phases revealed correlated generalizations: Hemingway expressed the intention not to "tell" his stories; linguistic implicitness is present and important in his works; and critics show a high degree of consensus in calling his works "terse" or "understated" or any of a number of other adjectives that minimize explicitness. For comparison's sake, I would now like to turn to another related author to see if the concepts of linguistic implicitness can be similarly revealing. The author I have chosen is Tim O'Brien. The reason for this choice is
principally the similarities between the two writers, similarities that have been noted with gusto by many critics.

Like Hemingway, O'Brien was faced by a stylistic dilemma: he wanted to convey the true story of the war in Vietnam as he experienced it, but he also was restrained by strong inhibitions against telling that story. Like Hemingway, he creatively resolves the conflict by relying heavily on the three strategies of linguistic implicitness for communicating propositions that he never asserts on the page. Although the two authors share the basic dynamic of using implicit showing to sidestep ambivalence about telling, their motivations and social constraints are different, so that we may discern different patterns of implicitness in each of them.

As in the discussion of Hemingway, I will consider evidence relating to Before, During, and After the text. In the background of his writing—Before the text—I will consider the significance of O'Brien's status as a Vietnam veteran and will use passages from his works to consider his ambivalent attitudes towards overt telling. I will cite examples of linguistic implicitness from his stories themselves—During the text. And I will examine the critical response to his work, the After phase of his work, to show the strong relationship that critics have found between his work and Hemingway's.
Instead of proceeding sequentially through the Before, During, and After stages in the life-cycle of his texts, I will begin with the end, the critical response, because it is the common critical perception that O'Brien is a disciple of Hemingway that most clearly justifies a comparative analysis of their styles. But before taking up the subject of critical response, because O'Brien is much less well-known than Hemingway, it would be useful to briefly introduce him and his work.

1. Biographical Information

Tim O'Brien was born in Minnesota in 1946 and lived there until he graduated from Macalester College in 1968. He was immediately drafted and, despite vacillation that he has written about in several of his books, was inducted into the Army. In spite of being a summa cum laude ex-student body president of a radical college, O'Brien in quick order found himself in boot camp, advanced infantry training, and Vietnam. He served as a foot soldier and was honorably discharged from the Army in 1970 with seven medals, among them the Purple Heart. He disapproved of the Vietnam war before he was drafted, while he was fighting it, and after he returned home. He was not, however, a pacifist--he believed that the war in Vietnam, specifically, was an unjust war.
Although O'Brien had done some scattered writing before the war (while he was still in college, he wrote a novel that was never published) and studied at Harvard and worked for *The Washington Post* after the war, it could not be said that he had the advantage of the rigorous journalistic basic training that Hemingway started with. O'Brien's first book, the 1973 war memoir *If I Die in a Combat Zone, Box Me Up and Ship Me Home*, was very much an apprentice work. He later disowned it as "trash," although he did release a revised edition in 1979, stripped of what he calls his "purple prose" (Wilkie 287). It was well-received, however, probably more for social reasons than for literary ones; in the nineteen-seventies, the United States *needed* books about Vietnam.

*If I Die in a Combat Zone* was followed in 1975 by *Northern Lights* and in 1978 by *Going After Cacciato*. The war experience was crucial to the plot of both books, although only the second was actually set in Vietnam. Of the two, *Going After Cacciato* was also more highly regarded. In 1985, O'Brien published *The Nuclear Age*, the cradle-to-divorce tale of a 1960's campus radical. The book was frankly mediocre.

Over the years, O'Brien also continued to write short pieces for a number of magazines. One of these, his prize-winning "The Things They Carried," he later developed into a full-length book which was published in 1990 under the same
title. 15 It is a novel in the form of a loosely related sequence of short pieces, ranging from one to twenty-five pages in length. In them, the author mixes techniques of the action/adventure war story with the self-doubting exploration of a contemplative. He intersplices war memories with present reflection, fact with fiction, novel with short story. This is his most successful book, edging towards canonical status, as is shown by the fact that it is already being taught in many colleges as "literature." It is also the book that I will primarily focus on here in the sections of textual analysis.

2. Critical Linkage with Hemingway

Before examining O'Brien's work for entailment, presupposition, and implicature, I will take up the issue of critical response, the After phase in the life cycle of a literary text.

Very briefly: critics have a hard time talking about O'Brien without mentioning Hemingway. I will give a just a few examples to establish what I take to be a critical consensus nearly as solid as the agreement that Hemingway

15 "The Things They Carried" is reprinted in full in Janet Burroway's Writing Fiction, one of only two short stories she uses to illustrate her chapter "Seeing is Believing: Showing and Telling."
likes to "show, not tell"—the perception that O'Brien is like, or is influenced by, or is a follower of, Hemingway. To begin, consider the overview offered by the 1980 Contemporary Authors article about O'Brien:

Perhaps inevitably, any writer so steeped in the war experience will be compared to two other American "war novelists," Ernest Hemingway and Joseph Heller, both of whose works strongly influenced O'Brien. (438)

It continues:

Richard Freedman, praising O'Brien's "crisp, authentic and grimly ironic" writing in Going After Cacciato, noted that "as the characters are making their separate peace, their farewell to arms, Hemingway rhythms emerge." The terms in which other critics describe O'Brien's work similarly suggest Hemingway. B. M. Firestone appreciated his "precise and highly evocative writing style." Gottlieb observed that he "writes—without either pomposity or embarrassment—with the care and eloquence of someone for whom communication is still a vital and serious possibility." (438)

Everett C. Wilkie, Jr., says in his 1980 Dictionary of Literary Biography Yearbook article:

The book [Northern Lights] invites comparison with several of Hemingway's works, especially The Sun Also Rises, and critics have pointed out stylistic parallels and similar characters and incidents. (288)

Chris Waters, writing in the New Statesman on 4 January 1974, says:

There is however a certain ambiguity in his attitude; coupled with his conscientious aversion to the war and army life is a sort of young man's hunger for Experience and the desire to prove himself, not in the sense of collecting Vietnamese heads, but in a Hemingwayesque test of the resources of one's character. (24)
And Roger Sale, in a 13 November 1975 *New York Review of Books* review of *Northern Lights* which has often been quoted by other critics, asked

Is it possible to read *The Sun Also Rises* too often? Sad and charming and funny, young in just the right way, unbesmirched by what makes so much other Hemingway foolish or wrong, it retains its magic the tenth time through. Yet Tim O'Brien has read it too often, let it sink into him too deeply. (31)

Rosellen Brown, in the 7 February 1976 *New Republic*, writes of *Northern Lights*

And in the end, [they survive] moments of terror and of radiant transcendence (rendered by O'Brien with a kind of open-heartedness, pitched higher than Hemingway's but respectful of the same integrities of nature, in an amplitude of style that refuses to be self-consciously ironic or self-denigrating) . . . (p. 27)

Some of the linkages critics have discerned between Hemingway and O'Brien, of course, are not stylistic. Both are twentieth-century white male Americans of European descent and Midwestern formation, with all the similarities of socialization this entails. Both are writers of war stories. 16

For both of them, even the stories which don't actually occur during war are usually colored by its presence in the

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16 Their attitudes about war are not identical, however. Although, of the two, O'Brien was perhaps more of an actual "warrior," having served as an enlisted foot-soldier for half a year, he loathed the war he fought in. Hemingway, on the other hand, who certainly hung around more wars than O'Brien, ventured farther onto the "love" side of the love-hate relationship; he had the capacity of glorifying war at times, though at other times he held the camera steady on its horrors.
background. Hemingway's World War I and O'Brien's Vietnam were both cataclysmic, paradigm-shifting, epoch-ending shocks—wars in which many things occurred that seemed impossible according to the earlier worldview. Writers that tackled these wars brought the old language and the old conventions to bear on new realities that were often outside the pale of the older way. This forced them onto the terrain of the unmentionable.

With the changing of the taboo-horizons, some of Hemingway's subjects have eased out of unmentionability, while O'Brien's work may sometimes seem rawer to readers of his generation who have the same boundaries of acceptability that he does. Still, the two writers shared the project of, as O'Brien puts it, telling "a true war story," which means they shared the task of mentioning the unmentionable (even though the specifics of what this consisted of may have varied somewhat). This put both of them in the position of needing to find ways of conveying information implicitly, which makes them both of interest to the student of implicitness. In this way, the common subject matter—war—may have had traceable effects on their style.

Beyond their interest in telling the truth about the "unmentionables" of life, both authors wrote a number of passages that spell out their allegiance to not "telling." As we have seen, Hemingway's reserve was based on a cultural ideal of restrained behavior and an esthetic ideal of
objectivism. O'Brien's reserve is related, but founded on apparently different principles. We will now examine some of his writings related to the subject of the unsaid.

B. The Conflict

The preceding brief reviews of O'Brien's life and work show that he is in essence a writer of the Vietnam War. But his relationship with that war is not simple. He has, in fact, several different relationships with Vietnam. It is his setting, the purely geographical physical reality in which his best stories are played out. It is his story itself, his material, the subject matter of his telling. It is also the reason he must write--because he went to Vietnam, certain things happened to him that require him to write, trying, as he says "... to save Timmy's life with a story" (The Things They Carried 273).

Vietnam is also his constituency. The three and a half million persons who served in Southeast Asia between 1964 and 1975 constitute the group to which he is responsible, the men and women for whom and to whom he speaks.

He is sharply aware of his responsibility to this audience. The Things They Carried is "... lovingly dedicated to the men of Alpha Company. ..." In "Notes," a story in that same book, he portrays the reaction of one of
his real-life friends to a story from their shared experience that O'Brien had written less than truly:

"It's not terrible," he wrote me, "but you left out Vietnam. Where's Kiowa? Where's the shit?"

Eight months later he hanged himself. (181)

The juxtaposition of the hanging with the indictment of O'Brien's truth-telling suggests, via Grice's maxim of relation, that the two are connected. It suggests that any falsification may be lethal for the men and women who were in Vietnam, and O'Brien is responsible for the consequences of any loss of nerve or sloppiness or idealization in his writing.

But what are the effects on his style of this profound identification with the Vietnam experience? A terrible double-bind: a need to talk, to write, to tell the truth, to express, to relieve the pressure of feelings, to tell—coupled with a strong need to maintain secrecy, to be loyal, to hide guilt, to avoid the truth, to deny what happened, not to tattle, not to tell. This is exactly the sort of conflict, "tell, but don't tell," that Hemingway found himself in with regards to communicating emotion and that business writers may experience with regards to the competing needs for politeness and clarity—a conflict that may motivate recourse to alternative strategies: "showing" through linguistic implicitness.

Hemingway's stylistic conflict related to issues of both personal and esthetic values. In Hemingway's take on the
first half of the twentieth century, "Real men don't cry" and "Real artists don't tell." O'Brien, starting his career about fifty years after Hemingway did, inherited a different set of constraints. During the nineteen-seventies, the decade of the resurgence of feminism, as women's roles were re-evaluated there was considerable re-thinking of men's roles as well. Paralleling the movement towards women's liberation, the restrictions loosened on what were acceptable behaviors and feelings for men. And so we find O'Brien being explicit about emotions in a way that Hemingway would not. In 1973, he writes, "Fear hurts and humiliates. It is hard to be brave" (If I Die in a Combat Zone 31). In 1985, "I felt pride, but also panic. . . . I worshiped that man" and "All that laughter, it hurt me. Partly embarrassment, partly anger. It hurt me quite a lot, in fact" (The Nuclear Age 12, 24). And these are not simply lapses of style in his less virtuosic writing. Even in his most mature work, a good deal of emotional information is conveyed explicitly: "It wasn't to kill; it was to hurt" and ". . . it was a question of pain" (The Things They Carried 85).

Fear, humiliation, pride, panic, adoration, hurt, embarrassment, anger— all these are within the pale, not unspeakable, as far as O'Brien is concerned. So, if it is not emotion that will drive him into implicitness, what is?

In his writing, O'Brien speaks to Vietnam veterans and for Vietnam veterans and as a Vietnam veteran. He speaks for
and to and as a member of a group that came home to America with some very profound inhibitions against speaking at all. Vietnam left many of its veterans with painfully changed attitudes about life, intrusive memory images ranging from nightmares to full-blown flashbacks, and serious problems with civilian life and relationships. This is not a small group—three and a half million people are enough to leaven the entire nation with their problems. And the pain is not confined to the veteran group. As Robert Jay Lifton told Congress in his testimony about the national significance of veterans' post-Vietnam problems

. . . the Vietnam veteran serves as a psychological crucible of the entire country's doubts and misgivings about the war.

He has been the agent and the victim of that confusion—of, on the one hand, our general desensitization to indiscriminate killing, and on the other, our accumulating guilt and deep suspicion concerning our own actions. We sent him as an intruder in a revolution taking place in a small Asian society, and he returns as a tainted intruder in our own society.

Albert Camus urged that men be neither victims nor executioners. In Vietnam we have made our young men both. (Lifton IV-32)

The veteran serves as a crucible for the entire country; Tim O'Brien's work serves as a crucible for the entire group of veterans. On each of these levels—national, personal, and

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17 For my understanding of the conflicting roles of secrecy and "telling" in post-traumatic stress disorder, I am indebted to the professional staff of the Veterans Administration Hospital where I received my psychiatric training in 1980, and to the veterans who have shared their stories with me in the course of their treatment, both at the V.A. and on the Acute Psychiatry Unit of Ochsner Hospital in New Orleans.
artistic—the need for secrecy is opposed by a need to tell the true story of Vietnam.

1. Factors Favoring Not Telling

Distrust is a primary reason for avoiding discussion of the Vietnam experience. Veterans, who were asked to give so much in Vietnam, saw the inequality of sacrifices made for national policy—they were asked for ultimate sacrifice, while the rest of the population lived very nearly untouched by the war. They saw the rest of the country as having mistreated them: manipulating them, sending them into a hostile environment to do an impossible and life-threatening job, and then reviling them for their attempts to fulfill the contract. As one veteran told Dr. Lifton, "... I couldn't stand looking at those 9-to-5 people who sent me to Vietnam" (Lifton IV-31).

Soldiers were also firmly indoctrinated during the war about the need for secrecy. Some of this was the ordinary security-consciousness of the Loose-Lips-Sink-Ships variety that tends to go hand-in-hand with all warfare. Some was more personal. Soldiers in Vietnam saw and did things that were "normal" within the peculiar value system of that time and place, but if they talked about these things to people outside that system, they risked being harshly judged or
getting their comrades in trouble. "Telling" could provoke catastrophe. The scandal of "atrocities" was largely a matter of the "wrong" people--outsiders--finding out about fairly typical events in the war. It "... seemed like it was the natural thing to do at the time," Paul Medlo said of what he and the others did at My Lai (Lifton IV-30).

Residues of this indoctrination against "telling" persist for decades after the war, just as do the terrifying images of violence that haunt the survivors. And the inhibition is reinforced by the veteran's guilt: survivor guilt as well as guilt over real actions. Survivor guilt is the legacy of any cataclysmic disaster in which a person watches others die while he or she, for no apparent reason, survives. Combat veterans of Vietnam saw their buddies die, and often they hold a dim and secret belief that they were responsible for those deaths through some slip in watchfulness or courage (See O'Brien's "Speaking of Courage," "Notes," and "In the Field," *The Things They Carried* 155-199).

Beside the survivor guilt, many veterans actually committed actions that were acceptable within the tortured "normality" of Vietnam, but were far outside prevailing American morality. When they returned to their other lives and were expected to pick up their pre-combat value systems as if they had never been away, the memories of themselves in Vietnam were destabilizing. To remember, from within one
moral framework, one's actions while inhabiting an alien moral framework is threatening to the self, because those memories may include actions that are unacceptable in the present reality. Remembering those actions is psychologically dangerous (and many veterans push memories away from consciousness), but speaking of those memories, admitting to those actions, is even more risky. Confessing guilt before an audience confirms the reality of the memories. Confessing before an audience that is already mistrusted and is virtually guaranteed not to understand--because it was not in Vietnam--is fraught with peril of condemnation and rejection.

In sum, distrust of non-veterans, indoctrination, guilt, repression, and loyalty to comrades and country all operate to prevent Vietnam veterans from telling the truth about their experiences in war. In spite of those factors, there is still a strong drive towards "telling," mainly because it is in telling that healing begins.

2. Factors Favoring Telling

The necessity of "telling" is well known among those who treat post-traumatic stress in Vietnam veterans. "Telling" is such an acknowledged therapeutic modality in Veterans Administration hospitals that support groups will often be
structured around having veterans bring in war mementos. The mementos are then used as catalysts for storytelling, to help break the iron silence around the war. (Jack Pishner tells of one man he referred for treatment to a V.A. hospital in Washington, who showed up at his first such support-group meeting with a box full of human ears as his "memento.")

Telling the truth about your experience is not just a strategy of pragmatic mental health practice, it also holds pride of place in much psychotherapeutic theory. Jung said, "... the patient who comes to us has a story that is not told. ..." (117). More recently, James Hillman has followed up on the healing nature of telling one's story:

From my perspective as depth psychologist, I see that those who have a connection with story are in better shape and have a better prognosis. ... To have "story-awareness" is per se psychologically therapeutic. It is good for soul. ... Story-awareness provides a better way than clinical-awareness for coming to terms with one's own case history. ... In deep analysis, the analyst and the patient together re-write the case history into a new story, creating the "fiction" in the collaborative work of the analysis. ... This brings us to content. Which stories need to be told? ...

I have come at this from a psychological viewpoint, partly because I wish to remove story from its too close association with both education and literature--something taught and something studied. My interest in story is as something lived in and lived through, a way in which the soul finds itself in life. (1-4)

Likewise, Sam Keen speaks of "modern man's inability to believe that human life is rendered ultimately meaningful by being incorporated into a story" (86).
Simply put, finding meaning in one's experience requires "telling," and this is most obvious in cases of post-traumatic stress disorder. (P.T.S.D. is of course not limited to survivors of combat stress. Survivors of abuse, holocaust, and other catastrophic stresses face similar conflicts between the need to tell and the need to remain silent.)

It is not just personal and individual psychic wounds that require truth-telling for their healing. Those who seek to heal the larger wounds of their nation or of their planet are also driven, in spite of all difficulties, to place their stories before an audience, just as testimony is placed before a judge or jury in order that corrective action may be taken. One of the critical functions of the artist is that of truthful witness. "If someone else could have written my stories," Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel writes, "I would not have written them. I have written them in order to testify. My role is the role of the witness... Not to tell, or to tell another story, is... to commit perjury" (Quoted by Felman 204).

In order to heal both personal and social wounds, veterans must tell the truth about their experiences. Tim O'Brien must tell the truth. But in order to avoid condemnation, hide guilt, and stay faithful to comrades and country, veterans must not tell the truth. Tim O'Brien must
not tell the truth. O'Brien's explicit comments about "telling" reveal his ambivalence about the enterprise.

3. O'Brien's Statements of the Conflict

In *Going After Cacciato*, after the death of one of the squad, O'Brien ends the chapter with confirmation of the need to tell stories: "When it was night they began talking about Jim Pederson. It was always better to talk about it" (71).

Later in his career, he says more about this. In "Notes," a piece in *The Things They Carried* in which he discusses a Vietnam buddy of his who finally took his own life, O'Brien says:

> I did not look on my work as therapy, and still don't. Yet when I received Norman Bowker's letter, it occurred to me that the act of writing had led me through a swirl of memories that might otherwise have ended in paralysis or worse. (179)

In the context of Bowker's story, the "or worse" mentioned strongly suggests the possibility of suicide if O'Brien did not have the healing opportunity of writing.

"Stories can save us," he continues at the end of *The Things They Carried*. ("The Lives of the Dead" 255).

> The thing about a story is that you dream it as you tell it, hoping that others might then dream along with you, and in this way memory and imagination and language combine to make spirits in the head.... That's what a story does. The bodies are animated. You make the dead talk. They sometimes say things like "Roger that." Or they say, "Timmy, stop crying," .... (259-261)
And then it becomes 1990. I'm forty-three years old, and a writer now, still dreaming Linda alive in exactly the same way. . . . I can even see Timmy skating with Linda under the yellow floodlights. I'm young and happy. I'll never die. I'm skimming across the surface of my own history, moving fast, riding the melt beneath the blades, doing loops and spins, and when I take a high leap into the dark and come down thirty years later, I realize it is as Tim trying to save Timmy's life with a story. (273)

But in spite of passages such as these that seem to link "telling" with healing and even salvation, there are many passages in his work that hold up silence as the greatest virtue. Silence is based on politeness—not a trivial virtue in O'Brien's world—and a respect for privacy. It is an honest man's response to the insufficiency of words and the extreme difficulty or impossibility of communicating the truth.

O'Brien's greatest embodiment of this noble silence is in the character of Elroy, the old man "On the Rainy River," in The Things They Carried. The old man takes Tim in and shelters him while he grapples with the decision of whether to comply with his draft notice or escape across the river to Canada. Although the old man is clearly aware of the young man's struggle, he says nothing, for which Tim is grateful to the point of adoration:

The man's self-control was amazing. He never pried. He never put me in a position that required lies or denials. To an extent, I suppose, his reticence was typical of that part of Minnesota, where privacy still held value, and even if I'd been walking around with some horrible deformity—four arms and three heads—I'm sure the old man would've talked about everything except

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those extra arms and heads. Simple politeness was part of it. But even more than that, I think, the man understood that words were insufficient. The problem had gone beyond discussion. (54)

Much of the story is devoted to considering Elroy's generous silence and what it meant.

In addition, O'Brien's experience of the war was one of intense, chronic uncertainty and ignorance. In a chapter in Going After Cacciato entitled "The Things They Didn't Know," he catalogs the gaping ignorance of the soldiers: they did not know the language or the body language of the people; they did not know the hopes and desires of the people; they did not know why they were fighting. If a writer "told" solid facts about the war in Vietnam, even if those facts were true, he would be presenting a false picture, because the true story was uncertainty itself:

Magic, mystery, ghosts and incense, whispers in the dark, strange tongues and strange smells, uncertainties never articulated in war stories, emotion squandered on ignorance. They did not know good from evil. (241)

So a "true" war story must be told in a way that allows what shows to have more than one meaning, and readers must be forced to pick their way through ambiguities without resolution.

Another factor O'Brien weighs as he considers the paradox between telling and not telling is the simple impossibility of being understood by an audience that has not experienced what the teller has experienced. In Going After
Cacciato, a young soldier prepares to talk to his parents via a radio-telephone hook-up from the war:

He tried to think of something meaningful to say. Nothing forced: easy and natural, but still loving. Maybe start by saying he was getting along. Tell them things weren't really so bad. Then ask how his father's business was. Don't let on about being afraid. Don't make them worry . . . (140)

Not only would it be unreasonable to expect his parents and their entire generation to understand; the failure of communication would also cut him off from the understanding of almost all women.

. . . Mary Anne made you think about those girls back home, how clean and innocent they all are, how they'll never understand any of this, not in a billion years. Try and tell them about it, they'll just stare at you with those big round candy eyes. They won't understand zip. It's like trying to tell somebody what chocolate tastes like."

Mitchell Sanders nodded. "Or shit."
"There it is, you got to taste it" ("Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong," The Things They Carried 123)

The witness's despair of being understood was also noted by Felman in the following quotation from a Holocaust survivor, speaking of the death-camps, in the documentary Shoah: "No one can describe it. No one can recreate what happened here. Impossible? And no one can understand it" (224). Where understanding is impossible, communication is hopeless.

As these quotations show, O'Brien consciously held two opposing values with regards to "telling": that it was good--necessary for healing--and that it was bad--futile,
untruthful, and unkind. This conflict parallels the double-bind of the veteran with regard to telling stories about Vietnam: that it is necessary and that it is impossible.  

18 O'Brien is rhetorically posed between this necessity and this impossibility: "He could not describe what happened next, not ever, but he would've tried anyway. He would've spoken carefully so as to make it real for anyone who would listen" ("Speaking of Courage," *The Things They Carried* 168). How did O'Brien resolve the paradox? How did he reveal the truth without actually speaking the unspeakable? How did he tell without telling?

C. Analysis of O'Brien Texts in Terms of Presupposition, Entailment, and Implicature

As we saw when we examined Tim O'Brien's intentions and motivations as a Vietnam veteran and writer--the Before phase in the life of the text--this author works under strong and

18 Shoshona Felman notes a similar double-bind in *Shoah*, the documentary about the Holocaust: . . . [T]he necessity of testimony *Shoah* affirms in reality derives, paradoxically enough, from the impossibility of testimony that the film at the same time dramatizes. . . *Shoah* is a film about silence: the paradoxical articulation of a loss of voice. . . The testimony stumbles on, and at the same time tells about, the impossibility of telling. (224)
conflicting constraints both to tell and not to tell the story of Vietnam. Can the concepts of linguistic implicitness be usefully applied to Tim O'Brien's work to clarify the way in which he buries un-told stories between the lines? To approach this question, I will analyze texts by O'Brien in a fashion similar to that I have already applied to Hemingway.

1. Presupposition and Entailment

To illustrate the way in which this author uses presupposition and entailment to construct stories that do not appear explicitly on the page, look for a moment at a fragment from "Spin," in The Things They Carried (33-40). This fragment is essentially an independent story-within-a-story, a composition with its own emotional kick. It is the first of five "micro-stories" that cover about one page. The author introduces them with an explicit declaration of genre: "What sticks to memory, often, are those odd little fragments that have no beginning and no end" (39).

Norman Bowker lying on his back one night, watching the stars, then whispering to me, "I'll tell you something, O'Brien. If I could have one wish, anything, I'd wish for my dad to write me a letter and say it's okay if I don't win any medals. That's all my old man talks about, nothing else. How he can't wait to see my goddamn medals." (39)
What does the "bite" of this story depend on? It hangs on the presupposition that Norman Bowker will win medals and on what is entailed by this.

Review for a moment the definition of presupposition:

**Presupposition:** Proposition (a) presupposes proposition (b) if the falsity of (b) renders (a) without a truth value, that is, the falsity of (b) makes it impossible to judge (a) true or false.

The last line of this small text presents us with the assertion *Norman's father can't wait to see Norman's medals.* 
*Can't wait* means to want something to be true, and to be true quickly. In other words, the narrator's explicit words constitute an assertion about the truth value of the proposition *Norman's father sees Norman's medals*; his words assert, not that it is true or false, but that Norman's father wants it to be true soon. So our proposition (a) is *Norman's father sees Norman's medals.* It is this proposition that presupposes proposition (b), *Norman wins medals.* If (b) is not true, then it makes no sense to claim that (a) is true. That is, if Norman has no medals, it makes no sense to say *Norman's father sees his medals* is true or false. So, Norman's father is avidly looking forward to a state of affairs which presupposes that his son will have won medals.

And what exactly is entailed by winning these medals?

**Entailment:** Proposition (a) entails proposition (b) if the truth of proposition (a) ensures the truth of proposition (b) and the falsity of proposition (b) ensures the falsity of proposition (a).
We can be very specific here because the terms for which medals are awarded are very precisely defined. The Purple Heart is given only to persons who are wounded in action while serving with the United States armed forces, or to the next of kin of persons who are killed in action or die of combat wounds. Thus, the proposition (a) *Private N won the Purple Heart* entails the proposition (b) *Private N was wounded or killed in action*, because the truth of (a) ensures the truth of (b) and the falsity of (b) ensures the falsity of (a). In other words, if it is true that Private N won the Purple Heart, it is necessarily true that Private N was wounded or killed in action and if it is not true that Private N was wounded or killed in action, then it is necessarily not true that Private N received the Purple Heart.

Other military decorations are similar. The Congressional Medal of Honor is given only for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life, above and beyond the call of duty." Thus, the proposition *Private N was given the Medal of Honor* entails *Private N was in mortal danger*. The Distinguished Service Cross is awarded for "extraordinary heroism in military operations against an armed enemy." The Silver Star is awarded for "conspicuous gallantry in action." The Soldier's Medal is awarded for "heroic voluntary risk of life." Battle stars and campaign medals are given for participation in particular battles and
campaigns ("Honor, Medal of"; "Decorations, Medals and Orders").

In fact, with the exception on Good Conduct Medals, wartime military decorations are given to ordinary soldiers for suffering or risking death or injury. For an ordinary reader, who would be likely to collapse the distinctions between medals, we could say that the proposition Private N was given a medal entails the proposition Private N suffered or risked death or injury, so that when a father single-mindedly promotes medal-winning on the part of his son, it is a pretty ambiguous interaction, speaking a death-wish in the language of parental pride. The reader is invited to fill in the missing story. Is the father so disconnected from the reality of Vietnam that he is unconscious of the message he is communicating? Or is he frankly homicidal in his hope for glory through his son's sacrifice? The author does not tell, but he leaves a very complex, highly charged situation in the lap of the reader, a story that is never told, but exists nonetheless.

2. Implicature: Maxim of Quality

The Maxim of Quality: Make your contribution true according to your knowledge.

O'Brien's work is preoccupied with the quality of what he says—-with whether or not something is factually true or
invented, and with the separate question of whether it is spiritually true or false. He is obsessed with the maxim of quality, the requirement that all contributions to an exchange must be true and based on evidence. This obsession, which leads him to violate the maxim often and to rub the reader's nose in his violations, seems to relate to formal purposes, at least in Going After Cacciato and The Things They Carried, of recreating the disorder and uncertainty of the guerrilla experience in Vietnam. 19

The Things They Carried is a remarkable collection of interrelated prose pieces in which the author goes to considerable lengths to smudge the boundaries between fact and fiction. It is O'Brien's best work, and the book in which he is writing on a level of virtuosity that puts him in the company of writers who are called "great." It is also a book that regularly breaks, smashes, and dances upon the shards of the maxim of quality. To start with a simple example: There is one piece in the book that begins with the line, "This is true" (75). In the same story, the narrator keeps reminding the reader "It's all exactly true" (77) and "It all happened" (83). But the story ends by saying

19 Going After Cacciato consists of alternating chapters from two separate stories. One is the tale of the fantasy pursuit of the deserter Cacciato all the way to Paris. The other is the frame-story of a young soldier standing watch in an observation tower who passes the time by imagining. But at the very end of the novel, the frame story is revealed to be the dream, and the fantasy to be at least partially true.
it's all made up. Every goddamn detail—the mountains and the river and especially that poor dumb baby buffalo. None of it happened. None of it. And even if it did happen, it didn't happen in the mountains, it happened in this little village on the Batangan Peninsula, and it was raining like crazy, and one night a guy named Stink Harris woke up screaming with a leech on his tongue. (91)

What's a reader to do? The author is asserting a seeming contradiction: I am writing fact and I am writing fiction. If it is true that the story is "all made up," then the author's contribution is not true at the points where he asserts that the story is non-fiction. If it is true that the story is non-fiction, then the his contribution is not true when he tells us that it is "all made up." How can the reader make a blatant contradiction seem to comply with the maxim of quality?

Part of the context in which the reader takes in this apparent violation of expectations is the title of the piece: "How to Tell a True War Story." Not only is the writer asserting contradictions, but in the comment that the title makes on the story, he is asserting that this is the way to tell the truth. He lies and contradicts himself, he asserts that this is the way to tell the truth about war, and he gives the following explicit information.

For the common soldier, at least, war has the feel—the spiritual texture—of a great ghostly fog, thick and permanent. There is no clarity. Everything swirls. The old rules are no longer binding. The old truths are no longer true. Right spills over into wrong. Order blends into chaos, love into hate, ugliness into beauty, law into anarchy, civility into savagery. The vapors
suck you in. You can't tell where you are, or why you're there, and the only certainty is overwhelming ambiguity.

In war you lose your sense of the definite, hence your sense of truth itself, and therefore it's safe to say that in a true war story nothing is ever absolutely true. (88)

Between the title, the explicit statement of the confusion of war, and the contradictory assertions about whether he is writing fact or fiction, the reader fills in missing understanding: O'Brien's war is confusion, disorientation, ambiguity, and distrust. O'Brien's Vietnam is not knowing what to believe.

The violence O'Brien does against the maxim of quality is not limited to writing simple propositional contradictions, such as "it's all true— it's all made up" into his pages. The situation is much more complex, as we can see if we extend our concept of quality violations to include violations of expected genre truth-claims.

When Grice originally stated the maxim of quality, he subsumed two specific maxims--Do not say what you believe to be false and Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence—under one "supermaxim," Try to make your contribution one that is true. That formulation has worked well for analyzing conversation between two living persons or between two fictional characters. But what if we shifted the language of the maxim slightly, focusing not on issue of absolute truth but on appropriateness of truth value called
for by the exchange. We might then state the maxim of quality in this way:

Maxim of Quality: Make the truth value of your contribution such as is called for by the current purposes of the exchange.

A rationale for this shift would be that the other maxims, quantity, relation, and manner, are all founded on a standard of appropriateness rather than an absolute property of the contribution:

Relation: Make your contribution relevant to the current purposes of the exchange.

Manner: Make your contribution in a clear, unambiguous, concise, orderly fashion appropriate to the current purposes of the exchange.

Quantity: Make your contribution exactly as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange.

If the maxim of quality were brought into line with the other maxims so that the point was not the absolute truth of a contribution but whether or not the truth value of a contribution matched the expectation of the recipient of the communication, then the maxim would also cover areas in which a participant expects not to be told the truth. For example, in the average "how-are-you?" greeting or "knock, knock--who's there?" joke, giving an accurate answer to the spoken question would still violate the Cooperative Principle, no matter how true that answer might be. In the context of a joke or a phatic greeting or a work of fiction, the cooperative listener or reader does not expect a fellow participant to suddenly burst into truth.
The top-most words on the front cover of The Things They Carried are "Contemporary American Fiction." On the back cover, the label that appears just above the book's price is "Fiction." So what is a reader to do when a "fiction" about the men of Alpha Company is also dedicated to "the men of Alpha Company," which by the normal pragmatic conventions would have the reader believing that "the men of Alpha Company" exist in the world outside the book. What is a reader to do when a book by Tim O'Brien, found in the novel section of the bookstore, has a main character by the same name?

O'Brien's mix is not only of fact and fiction but of rhetorical levels, narrative positions relative to his material. He writes stories which depict him writing stories in which he discusses writing stories. He undercuts the veracity of a story within the story itself. He also delights in cryptic statements like "That's a true story that never happened" ("How to Tell a True War Story" 90).

The butchery of the maxim of quality will cause the reader to grope for reasons: re-creation the confusion of war, with cultural points of reference lost in the foreignness of the situation just as geographical points of reference were lost in the tangle of Vietnam. Or re-creation of the indirectness of a man haunted by survivor guilt and perhaps other guilts that can never be told in ordinary
peacetime America? Or possibly re-creation of the unreal
dream-like quality of flashbacks?

Speaking of the ambiguities of the Vietnam war, Dr. Robert Jay Lifton said

. . . the young GI who is sent to South Vietnam is put in a terribly complex psychological situation in which the people he is sent to defend really dislike him, and he bitterly dislikes them, and he begins to suspect and doubt the interpretation of the war and of his mission that has been made by his country.

Moreover, there are no battlelines. Everything shifts, nothing is stable, just because of the nature of that war, because it is a guerrilla war. . . . (Lifton IV-36)

"Everything shifts, nothing is stable"—O'Brien goes to considerable lengths to re-create that sensation for his readers. In his mix of autobiography with fiction, he leaves readers with some of the same issues Hemingway leaves: What is invention and what is the life? Hemingway loathed the way that people called his best story-telling "mere reporting."

But O'Brien clearly seeks the confusion of the two, and consciously orchestrates it to serve his complex purposes.

The following is almost a manifesto of his policy towards truth. It is also the entire text of his "story," "Good Form."

It's time to be blunt.
I'm forty-three years old, true, and I'm a writer now, and a long time ago I walked through Quang Ngai Province as a foot soldier.

Almost everything else is invented.

But it's not a game. It's a form. Right here, right now, as I invent myself, I'm thinking of all I want to tell you about why this book is written as it is. For instance, I want to tell you this: twenty years ago I watched a man die on a trail
near the village of My Khe. I did not kill him. But I was present, you see, and my presence was guilt enough. I remember his face, which was not a pretty face, because his jaw was in his throat, and I remember feeling the burden of responsibility and grief. I blamed myself. And rightly so, because I was present.

But listen. Even that story is made up.

I want you to feel what I felt. I want you to know why story-truth is truer sometimes than happening-truth.

Here is the happening-truth. I was once a soldier. There were many bodies, real bodies with real faces, but I was young then and I was afraid to look. And now, twenty years later, I'm left with faceless responsibility and faceless grief.

Here is the story-truth. He was a slim, dead, almost dainty young man of about twenty. He lay in the center of a red clay trail near the village of My Khe. His jaw was in his throat. His one eye was shut, the other eye was a star-shaped hole. I killed him.

What stories can do, I guess, is make things present.

I can look at things I never looked at. I can attach faces to grief and love and pity and God. I can be brave. I can make myself feel again.

"Daddy, tell the truth," Kathleen can say, "did you ever kill anybody?" And I can say, honestly, "Of course not."

Or I can say, honestly, "Yes." (203-204)

Because of the cloud of unknowing, of lies and contradictions and confusions, that surrounded the Vietnam War, violations of the maxim of quality have an especially prominent place in O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*. Quality violations in this work do not always render up unambiguous propositions—uncertainty and disorientation are a end in themselves wherein the reader is given a chance to share for a moment the slippery reality of the war and the worse surreality of its flashback-haunted aftermath.
3. Implicature: Maxim of Quantity

The Maxim of Quantity: Make your contribution exactly as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange.

O'Brien's story "The Man I Killed" (The Things They Carried) is one of the most pronounced, and effective, examples of skillful use of quantity violations that I have found. In this piece, the narrator, who shares the same name as the author, over and over again commits the ultimate violation of the maxim of quantity: silence.

While "Tim" stares at the man he has just killed, his friend Kiowa stays by him:

"No sweat, man. What else could you do?"

Later, Kiowa said, "I'm serious. Nothing anybody could do. Come on, stop staring." (141)

The direct question Kiowa asks Tim, "What else could you do," requires a response by the normal pragmatic conventions of the language: an answer, a refusal to answer, or an explanation for the lack of an answer. The next word after the question is "Later," indicating that time has passed. The absence of any intervening text suggests that time has passed with no action. Tim does not acknowledge the question in any fashion.

Nor does the author/narrator acknowledge the lacuna. He doesn't say, "Tim refused to answer." It is by Kiowa's persistent attempts, couple with our firm trust in the maxim of quantity, that we realize Tim is not speaking.

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A few lines later, Kiowa tries again.

"All right, let me ask a question," he said. "You want to trade places with him? Turn it all upside down—you want that? I mean, be honest." (141)

This time there is intervening text between the question and the next spoken words, and what intervenes is a description of what Tim is staring at. The Cooperative Principle is operating at two levels of rhetoric here. On one level, there is the cooperative agreement between the two characters in the story, the agreement that Tim flouts by failing to respond to his friend's questions. On another level, there is the cooperative contract between the author and his reader. By this second level of the Cooperative Principle, the reader knows that the description that follows is true, direct, sufficient, and relevant to the text that precedes it. It is the answer to all of Kiowa's questions:

The star-shaped hole was red and yellow. The yellow part seemed to be getting wider, spreading out at the center of the star. The upper lip and gum and teeth were gone. The man's head was cocked at a wrong angle, as if loose at the neck, and the neck was wet with blood." (141)

(Note that in documenting such careful physical detail about the reality of death in war, the writer of the above paragraph was standing firmly on the shoulders of the writer of "A Natural History of the Dead").

The next words are Kiowa's, trying, like a hypnotist or like a therapist, to "pace" Tim, trying to gain some control by instructing Tim to do what he thinks Tim is already doing (and can't help doing).
"Think it over," Kiowa said. Then later he said, "Tim, it's a war. The guy wasn't Heidi—he had a weapon, right? It's a tough thing, for sure, but you got to cut out that staring."

Then he said, "Maybe you better lie down a minute."

Then after a long empty time he said, "Take it slow. Just go wherever the spirit takes you."

(141)

Here we have more one-sided dialogue, where one of the conversational participants keeps issuing invitations to respond, but the other participant refuses to play: Tim offers nothing at all. When a reader is repeatedly shown such flagrant violations of the maxim of quantity, some explanation will be sought to bring the aberrant contribution (i.e., silence) into compliance with expectations. The reader will hypothesize circumstances under which it might be reasonably expected that a person would not respond to a close friend: People who don't answer are opting out of a conversation, or are unable to speak because of injury, unconsciousness, or death. But no reason is given for "Tim" to opt out of an exchange with Kiowa. In fact, Kiowa expects him to answer. If his silence is a veto of the Cooperative Principle with Kiowa, in order to avoid conversation with his close friend and ally, the reader must hypothesize a scenario that would make this unusual behavior seem reasonable.

No mention is made of Tim being physically wounded, so the maxim of quantity suggests that if he is unable to speak, it is not a physical disability; it is an emotional trauma that has verbally disabled him. As the story advances, and

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the description of the dead Vietnamese begins to sound more and more like Tim himself, the title of the story begins to be ambiguous: the man Tim killed was Tim, so of course he can't speak—he's dead. But he's not physically dead—Kiowa keeps talking to him. All signs point to the unstated information that Tim, after having killed this man who looks so much like himself, is a very distraught young man.

It seems to me that this implicature is effective in conveying more than just the proposition that Tim is distraught. There is, at least for me, some subjective participation on the part of the reader in the suffering of the character. A possible explanation for this sort of creation of actual emotional empathy between a human reader and a fictional character might be as follows. The violation of the maxim invites readers to fill in the missing information based on their own past experiences, that is, the larger context within which the communication occurs. If that experience is of an intellectual nature—for example, having read a in a book that people who are very upset sometimes can't talk—the reader will access that intellectual memory in order to fill in the blank. But if the past experience that can normalize the violation is a subjective one—perhaps having experienced an extreme emotion oneself—then that emotional memory will be accessed in order to process the violation of the maxim. This is speculation, but it does seem to me that "context" can include more than
just propositions and that the ability of some texts not to just relate emotions, but to evoke them, must be explained. In this way, the extreme violation of the maxim in the extreme setting of the story invites the reader to imaginatively supply not just the proposition that makes sense of the violation, but a subjective grasp of just what type and intensity of trauma might deprive a person of speech. At any rate, the absence of verbal response raises the implicature that Tim has moved somewhere beyond speech.

Kiowa's response confirms this. Kiowa, who is on the scene and can see things that the reader can't see, gives up on asking questions. He recognizes that Tim has moved beyond words, and begins to offer simple concrete directions: "Stop staring," "Lie down," "Take it slow." The temporal adverb then is repeated between the instructions to suggest the passage of time without action words or action. (The maxim of quantity promises us that if relevant action were occurring, we would be told.) The repetition of then incidentally gives the reader a rhythmic pattern, similar to that found in poetry and hypnosis, as Kiowa once again "paces" Tim by telling him to go where the spirit takes him, because he sees that Tim is already gone.

The one-sided dialogue continues, leaving the reader to "fill in" the blanks of Tim's silences.

"Listen to me," Kiowa said. "You feel terrible, I know."
Then he said, "Okay, maybe I don't know." (142)
There was some silence before he said, "Stop staring." (142)

"You okay?" Kiowa said. (143)

"... Can't just sit here all day."
Later he said, "Understand?"
Then he said, "Five minutes, Tim. Five more minutes and we're moving out." (144)

"Hey, you're looking better," he said. "No doubt about it. All you needed was time--some mental R&R."
Then he said, "Man, I'm sorry."
Then later he said, "Why not talk about it?"
Then he said, "Come on, man, talk." (144)

The final words underscore the problem: the need for both the character and the author to tell the story, but the impossibility of ever telling the story, the impossibility of answering Kiowa's questions. "'Talk,' Kiowa said," and the story ends (144).

4. Implicature: Maxim of Manner

The Maxim of Manner: Make your contribution in a clear, unambiguous, concise, orderly fashion appropriate to the current purposes of the exchange.

For an example of O'Brien's deliberate violation of the maxim of manner, examine his story-cum-essay "How to Tell a True War Story" (The Things They Carried 73-91). This piece is a series of fourteen interrelated fragments. The first fragment tells the story of Rat Kiley. Rat's best friend dies. Rat writes a long, generous, heart-felt letter to his
friend's sister. He shares his memories and praise of her brother and ends by telling the young woman that he will look her up when he gets back to the States.

So what happens?
Rat mails the letter. He waits two months. The dumb cooze never writes back. (76)

And the fragment finishes on that note.

To get the point here, the reader needs to take several steps. First, the violation of the maxim of manner triggers a search for why the dead man's sister is called "a dumb cooze," not the normal manner of referring to women, especially not to the bereaved sister of a close friend. The narrator even comments on the manner violation himself:

Listen to Rat Kiley. Cooze, he says. He does not say bitch. He certainly does not say woman, or girl. He says cooze. Then he spits and stares (76).

Send guys to war, they come home talking dirty. Listen to Rat: "Jesus Christ, man, I write this beautiful fuckin' letter, I slave over it, and what happens? The dumb cooze never writes back" (77).

The cooperative reader fills in a reason for the manner violation: it signals that the speaker is angry at the woman. Anger is the emotional response of persons who are not getting what they want. In other words, the fact that the speaker is angry entails that he is not getting what he wanted. But the fact that he is not getting what he wanted presupposes that he wanted something, something from the woman. But this forces the reader into a re-evaluation of the passage before, where Rat (the speaker) is described as
selflessly writing a letter of monumental sincerity to his
dead friend's sister. O'Brien, in this short one-page
fragment, with a quick manner violation creates a literary
effect of complexity and subtlety. When the reader is hit
with the last line, there is a sudden double-image: Rat, the
Saint, giving the precious gift of his memories to a dead
buddy's family, counterposed against Rat, the greedy romantic
opportunist.

One of the characteristic features of The Things They
Carried is the large amount of repetition that occurs
throughout the book. Single words are reiterated, like the
ticking then in "The Man I Killed." A repeated structural
pattern—listing "The Things They Carried"—provides the
framework for the story that grew into the book. Subsections
of that story begin with these lines:

First Lieutenant Jimmy Cross carried . . . . (3)
The things they carried were . . . . (4)
What they carried was . . . . (6)
What they carried varied . . . . (10)
The things they carried were . . . . (13)
They carried . . . . (14)
For the most part they carried . . . . (18)

A similar syntactic patterning can be found in the beginning
of the sections of "How to Tell a True War Story."

Complete thoughts echo and re-echo, such as the
repetitive and incremental description of the dead Vietnamese
in "The Man I Killed" (137-144) and the near-litany in which
the author asserts over and over again his present reality
and distance from the war:
I'm forty-three years old, and a writer now, and the war has been over for a long time. . . . ("Spin" 37)

Forty-three years old, and the war occurred half a lifetime ago, and yet the remembering makes it now. . . . ("Spin" 40)

I'm forty-three years old, true, and I'm a writer now, and a long time ago I walked through Quang Ngai Province as a foot soldier. . . . ("Good Form" 204)

And then it becomes 1990. I'm forty-three years old, and a writer now, still dreaming Linda alive in exactly the same way. . . . ("The Lives of the Dead" 273)

The maxim of manner subsumes the requirement not to be unnecessarily repetitive. How can the cooperative reader create a context in which the repetitiveness of The Things They Carried seems to be the most perfectly appropriate manner in which to present the story?

Triggered by apparent violation of the maxim, the reader may make associations to other rhetorical situations in which repetition is appropriate: stubborn insistence, religious ritual, obsession, poetry, madness—these are some examples. With the outside contextual information that perseveration is likely to occur in these sorts of situations, the reader may tentatively construct the information that the author may be repeating himself out of the need to be believed, as part of some sort of chant or litany, out of obsession, because he is writing poetry, or because he is mad. With the constructed information rendering the reduplication meaningful, the
repetition adds to the unity and emotional effectiveness of the book.

This effect of O'Brien's is not particularly conspicuous in Hemingway, although we can see traces of it. For instance, in The Garden of Eden, when David becomes aware that all will not be well with his marriage, it is partly through repetition of the one word goodbye that we realize how agitated he is: "... his heart said goodbye Catherine goodbye my lovely girl goodbye and good luck and goodbye. . ."

5. Implicature: Maxim of Relation

The Maxim of Relation: Make your contribution relevant to the current purposes of the conversation.

O'Brien flouts the maxim of relation often for the same sort of effect Hemingway created with similar maneuvers. We've already seen the juxtaposition of superficially unrelated statements with which O'Brien implicates himself in the death of his friend Norman Bowker:

"It's not terrible," he wrote me [of "Speaking of Courage"], "but you left out Vietnam. Where's Kiowa? Where's the shit?"

Eight months later he hanged himself. ("Notes," The Things They Carried 181)

In this example, we jump without transition from Norman Bowker's criticism of the honesty of Tim's story to the
announcement that Norman Bowker kills himself shortly afterwards. The reader, trusting that the writer is adhering to the maxim of relation, assumes that these two bits of information are related and constructs a bridge between them to make this so. The bridging proposition may be something like Norman Bowker committed suicide because Tim did not tell the truth about Vietnam. Such a proposition, when stated baldly, may seem grandiose or unrealistic. Implied, as it is, it softly places the suggestion that the veteran's failure to find his story told truly is the equivalent of a deprivation of a vital necessity, killing him as surely as would the deprivation of water or air.

In another example, an American officer is killed by his own squad in Going After Cacciato. The murder is never mentioned explicitly, but the reader has absolutely no doubt about what happened. To prepare the ground for the implicature, the author gives the reader contextual information within the story. The lieutenant in question wastes men's lives by insisting that they do the dangerous job of searching Vietnamese tunnels instead of simply blowing them up (207-208). He has written down the names of the men who refuse to do this suicidal task, presumably an implicit threat to bring charges against them for insubordination (207-208). One of the soldiers has taken out a fragmentation grenade and made everyone touch it, because, he says, "I want
it unanimous" (209). One of the soldiers is sent to talk to Cacciato, the squad simpleton.

"Everybody has to touch it," was what Oscar Johnson had said. "He'll listen to you. Go talk to him." So, sure, he'd gone down to the crater to talk sense to the kid. "Hopeless," he'd said. "And it's for your own damn good, and even if you don't join in, even so, it'll happen anyway, but, look, it's for your own good." So he'd pressed the grenade against Cacciato's limp hand. Was it touching? Was it volition? Maybe so, maybe not. "That's everybody," Oscar said afterward.

And then Lieutenant Corson came to replace Lieutenant Sidney Martin. . . .

The death of Lieutenant Martin happens somewhere in the white space between "everybody" having touched a grenade and the coming of Lieutenant Corson. The fact of the murder is written in by the reader who trusts that there is a relation between the two items of information. In this way, one of the more unmentionable aspects of the Vietnam War—that Americans killed Americans—is communicated without ever being spelled out.

In the above passages, the bridging material that the reader needs may be as simple as a single proposition: Norman Bowker committed suicide because Tim did not tell the truth about Vietnam or The soldiers killed Lieutenant Martin with a grenade. But in some cases O'Brien's violations of the maxim of relation invite the reader to write entire stories between the lines of the text. Consider, for example, the short paragraph in the original short story "The Things They Carried" wherein O'Brien describes the pack load of an infantry medic:

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As a medic, Rat Kiley carried a canvas satchel filled with morphine and plasma and malaria tablets and surgical tape and comic books and all the things a medic must carry, including M&M's for especially bad wounds, for a total weight of nearly 20 pounds.

The reference to "M&M's for especially bad wounds" is haunting, calling up in the reader a picture of a situation in which a medic must treat a close friend who he knows is going to die regardless of treatment. All that the medic can offer is one last taste of chocolate before death. The poignancy of the situation is increased as the reader realizes that the M&M's are known to exist for this purpose, so that everyone in the squad—quite possibly including the dying man—will know that death is impending when the candies are brought out.

O'Brien told the story of M&M's for the dying at least once before. In Going After Cacciato (1975), the author explicitly tells how the medic shakes out two M&M's, places them on the dying man's tongue, tells him to swallow, and reassures him that he will feel better as soon as "that good-shit medicine takes hold, couple of seconds or so" (60). In "The Things They Carried" (1987), such explicitness is abandoned in favor of the unadorned reference to "M&M's for especially bad wounds." Why does the stark reference in the later and more expertly written book evoke the story more completely than the four-page segment (59-63) of the earlier novel?
This virtuosic display of implicitness depends on the maxim of relation and on the author's confident assumption that readers will possess in their contextual knowledge the information needed to read an embedded sequence of implicit propositions. The implicature the reader must first negotiate is founded on the veiled relationship between M&M's and "especially serious wounds." The first-order bridging proposition is of course something like The medic treats serious wounds with chocolate candy, but this implicature still requires explanation. It still leaves the reader with two apparently unrelated propositions linked in an if/then structure: IF \( x \) is badly wounded, THEN the medic gives \( x \) M&M's.

The author is relying on readers to possess certain contextual information (from both outside and inside the text) that will enable them to create a connection between \( x \) is badly wounded and The medic gives \( x \) M&M's. Such information from the world outside the text probably includes such propositions as:

- Chocolate does nothing for wounds.
- Medical personnel will not give food to someone who is going into surgery.
- To survive, the seriously wounded require surgery. Persons with "especially bad wounds" are likely to die.
- By-standers are likely to wish to help wounded friends.

From inside the text, the reader may already possess such information as the fact that the medic, Rat Kiley, is basically benevolent towards the men in his squad.
Triggered by apparent violation of the maxim of relation, the reader will seek to fill in missing information. The reader may consult contextual information and perform additional logical operations on it in the quest to find the way in which the author's contribution adheres to the Cooperative Principle. For example, using as a major premise the outside contextual proposition Medical personnel will not give food to someone who is going into surgery and the minor premise from inside the book Rat Kiley is medical personnel, the reader will deduce the entailed proposition The injured man is not going into surgery. This recovered proposition in turn serves as minor premise to the major premise garnered from outside contextual information To survive, the seriously injured require surgery. If the injured man needs surgery to survive, but is not going into surgery, then the injured man will not survive.

In other words, the apparent violation of Grice's maxim of relation in this passage triggers a search for a context in which the passage will be interpretable as complying with the Cooperative Principle. This search does not yield a simple proposition in this case, as it has in some of the examples I have considered, but a cascade of propositions each of which prompts the reader to construct a little more of the story. It is through precise control of implicitness strategies that the author is able to embed what is in effect an entire story between the lines, a story that elsewhere he
explicitly told over the course of four pages. In the later, implicit version, the reader hammers the story together for herself, out of textual clues, contextual knowledge, and logical entailments.

Before leaving the maxim of relation, I want to mention one style of violating it that is far more characteristic of O'Brien than of Hemingway: the use of white space on the page to separate superficially unrelated sections of the text.

Most fiction that is divided into chapters or sections takes advantage of the reader's faith in the maxim of relation. The reader trusts the writer not to sprinkle a random selection of scenes into a single work: there must be a connection and, if it is not obvious, the reader will construct one. Classically, the reader filled in at least a temporal transitions. For example, in 1926 Hemingway wrote:

After we finished the lunch we walked up to the Café de la Paix and had coffee. I could feel Cohn wanted to bring up Brett again, but I held him off it. We talked about one thing and another, and I left him to come to the office.

CHAPTER VI

At five o'clock I was in the Hotel Crillon waiting for Brett. . . . (The Sun Also Rises 40-41)

The cooperative reader fills in an image of the main character working at his newspaper office for several hours, finishing, and going to meet Brett on the same day. This "off-stage" action is not described explicitly; it is a ghostly fill-in by the reader. It is a necessary fill-in,
however; it is the only way that Chapter VI is revealed to occur on the same day.

There are nineteen chapters in *The Sun Also Rises*; this sort of break in which the reader fills in intervening action happens eighteen times in 247 pages. In the 273 pages of *The Things They Carried*, there over one hundred breaks in the text marked by white space. Twenty-one of these are between titled chapters. Many of these breaks occur between superficially unrelated material: scenes separated by many miles and decades, fragments with different rhetorical positions (i.e., fiction and metafiction), chronicles of war and chronicles of peace. O'Brien segmented or fragmented his text much more than Hemingway did. (Although Hemingway did do this—consider the two apparently unrelated sections of his story "A Natural History of the Dead.") The consequent frequent juxtaposition of superficially unrelated material leaves the O'Brien reader many more opportunities to hypothesize a relationship between distinct sections.

Of course, this distinction between their styles corresponds with their different historical periods, modernism versus post-modernism. Hemingway crafted his technique before post-modernism made the fragmentation of contemporary life into a significant and conscious influence on artistic style. O'Brien developed his technique after twentieth-century cinematography had made flashbacks and rapid shifts in camera-angle comprehensible to the public.
Also, O'Brien writes in a world where hallucinogenic drugs and the experience of combat veterans have taught us the other meaning of the word *flashback*: the uncontrollable intrusion of imagery and emotion from a past experience (Blank 295). O'Brien's channel-surfing of memory offers the reader the flavor of existence for a veteran, where a random association, say a smell or a passing emotion, may precipitate a vivid and painful memory at any time. The relationship between fragments is far less often simply one of temporal continuity in O'Brien's work than it is in Hemingway's work.

For an example of O'Brien's use of the white space between subsections as a hiding place for meaning, take the following break in the short story "The Things They Carried" (*The Things They Carried* 13). (The section that ends at the white space tells of Lee Strunk safely completing a suicidally dangerous job—searching an enemy tunnel—while the rest of the squad waits on the surface.)

Lee Strunk made a funny ghost sound, a kind of moaning, yet very happy, and right then, when Strunk made that high happy moaning sound, when he went *Ahhooooo*, right then Ted Lavender was shot in the head on his way back from peeing. He lay with his mouth open. The teeth were broken. There was a swollen black bruise under his left eye. The cheekbone was gone. Oh shit, Rat Kiley said, the guy's dead. The guy's dead, he kept saying, which seemed profound—the guy's dead. I mean really.

The things they carried were determined to some extent by superstition. Lieutenant Cross carried his good-luck pebble. Dave Jensen carried a
rabbit's foot. Norman Bowker, otherwise a very gentle person, carried a thumb that had been presented to him as a gift . . . . (13)

The subsections are on the surface about different things. One tells how one soldier got killed when another soldier was expected to die. The next one is about good-luck charms. The white space between the sections apparently signifies a change in subject. But the cooperative reader, trusting in the maxim of relation, expects to find a connection between the two and, if the connection is not obvious, will search for one or construct one. In this case, it is not difficult. One section shows the soldiers living with the presence of unpredictable sudden death, the next shows them taking control of their lives in the only way available to them—superstition. The reader can supply the connection: in the face of powerlessness, men create power for themselves, even if it is as imaginary (and pathetically ineffective) as the power of a pair of women's stockings wrapped around a soldier's neck to keep him safe.

In this chapter, we have considered O'Brien's work from three angles, just as we did Hemingway's: Before, During, and After the text.

Previous to the text—Before—exist the author's motivations and intentions as a chronicler of the Vietnam experience. Out of this experience, O'Brien writes with
strong conviction that the truth must be told, but with strong reservations that it may be impossible to tell it.

In the interaction of the reader with the text--During--we find numerous examples of implicit information being conveyed in patterned maneuvers that we can identify as entailment, presupposition, and implicature. O'Brien shares with Hemingway a heavy reliance on these strategies, but uses them in different ways. For instance, O'Brien is not as devoted to draping modest veils over emotion as Hemingway is; O'Brien is more likely to conceal actual facts, such as the murder of an officer (Going After Cacciato 207-220) or the revelation that a man's beloved is a lesbian (The Things They Carried, "Love" 27-31). O'Brien's work has progressed from relative explicitness (If I Die in a Combat Zone) to extreme implicitness (The Things They Carried), while Hemingway consciously adopted implicitness early on and was constant to it as an ideal throughout his career. Fragmentation--in O'Brien not just a type of grenade, but a prose style--allows O'Brien many opportunities to suspend meaning between two separate sections of text, a strategy that Hemingway used less often. Repetition as a stylistic device is far more pronounced in O'Brien than in Hemingway (who also used it), giving the text a chant-like flavor at times, at times the flavor of obsession, of insistence in the face of disbelief.

And After the text, in the critical response to O'Brien's writing, we find a significant critical consensus
that his style is strongly influence by Hemingway's. This perception of influence may well relate to the use by both authors of similar techniques of implicitness to "show" and not "tell" their stories.

In his short story "Love" (*The Things They Carried* 27-31), set many years after the war, O'Brien tells of a visit from his old lieutenant, who delicately, without ever "telling," reveals that the girl he dreamed of all through the jungles of Vietnam turned out to be a lesbian. At the very end of the story, "Tim" asks his permission to write a story about this. The ex-officer agrees, but stipulates:

"Make me out to be a good guy, okay? Brave and handsome, all that stuff. Best platoon leader ever." He hesitated for a second. "And do me a favor. Don't mention anything about---" "No," I said, "I won't." (31) It is through masterfully controlled linguistic implicitness that O'Brien is able to write about "---" without ever mentioning it.
IV. CONCLUSION

In the previous chapters, I have introduced several linguistic concepts and have showed how they can be applied to the narrow task of describing the prose of two twentieth century American writers. In doing so, I hope to have shown that such theories can explain interesting features of style, especially in writers such as Hemingway and O'Brien who for various reasons may be ambivalent about telling their stories. Now I would like to open my focus and look at how the set of concepts I have called strategies of linguistic implicitness may connect with other theories. The other theories I will consider will be vorticism, reader-response theory, quantum mechanics, and Gestalt psychology. I chose to consider these frameworks because of their obvious kinship with my own theoretical structure. However, in surveying them, it becomes obvious that they share more than the fact that they either support or are supported by the theory of linguistic implicitness. It is also true of all of them that they have their roots in intellectual developments that occurred close to the turn of the twentieth century, and they all tend to focus attention on relationships between entities rather than on the independent character of entities.
A. Ezra Pound's Vorticism

Ezra Pound became disenchanted with his imagist movement as Amy Lowell took control of it between 1913 and 1914. He began to look towards a new conceptual framework. The image, he decided, was inherently too static a concept to contain, convey, or represent poetic feeling. He began to see poems less as images and more as vortices, whirlpools of energy which pull the reader in.

The image is not an idea. It is a radiant node or cluster; it is what I can, and must perforce, call a VORTEX, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing. In decency one can only call it a VORTEX."

(92)

He saw that the more active readers were in reading a poem, the more engaged they were with the vortex and the more successful the poem was. He experimented with ways to produce such "vorticist" poems, but was largely unsuccessful until coincidence introduced him to Chinese poetry.

This introduction was accomplished by the wife of Ernest Fenollosa, an American sinologist who died before completing his translation of the poetry of Li Po. After his death, his widow presented his working notes to Pound. These notes consisted of exact English transliterations of each Chinese character in five-character poetic lines. Although the transliterations were not linked by logical or syntactical
connection, Pound observed that the simple juxtaposition of the concepts in itself established a connection between them—a poetic technique that had been well-developed in Chinese poetry over the course of thousands of years, but was new and profoundly impressive to his Western sensibilities. He conceived of it as being like the specification of a point on an axis.

. . . we come to Descartian or "analytical geometry." Space is conceived as separated by two or by three axes (depending on whether one is treating form in one or more planes). One refers points to these axes by a series of co-ordinates. Given the idiom, one is able actually to create. (91)

Pound's metaphor is illustrated in Figure 4.1, which shows how the location of a point may be specified by giving its coordinates along two or more axes. Pound's idea here seems to be that, just as we may juxtapose a coordinate on the x-axis with a coordinate on the y-axis to specify a point in a plane, a poem may juxtapose "one idea set on top of another" (89) to specify one very specific feeling experience.

Although vorticism was fairly short-lived as an independent literary movement, the influence of Pound continued to be extremely potent in shaping the modernist esthetic. Because of this, understanding the linguistics of his "vortex" is helpful in understanding the moves that Pound and his students (such as Hemingway and Eliot) made in creating twentieth century style.
In analytical geometry, the location of a point is specified by giving its coordinates along several axes. Pound found in this an analogy to the specification of a feeling state by juxtaposition of several poetic images.

In the light of the linguistic concept of implicature, it would seem easy enough to explain vorticism. When two linguistic contributions follow one another closely, the cooperative reader or listener assumes that they adhere to Grice's maxims, including relation (unless this expectation is canceled by words like "incidentally" or "by the way," which function as signals that the maxim of relation is being violated without intent to raise an implicature). If the adherence is not superficially obvious, if perhaps there is no surface connection between the two contributions, readers will automatically seek to construct one, as they assume the connection must exist. So Pound was right; such juxtaposition of superficially unrelated images does indeed provoke active engagement in the reader--it provokes the reader to "write" the rest of the poem, the connection that...
lies in between. The juxtaposition or "superposition" of images in vorticism is effective largely because the reader expects adherence to the maxim of relation.

B. Reader-Response Theory

Reader-response theory is a mode of literary criticism dating from the 1970's, stimulated by German thinkers such as the critic Hans Robert Jauss and the philosophers Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. Reversing New Criticism's view of the written text as an independent object, reader-response theory focuses on the meaning of texts as something that is contributed by the reader in the act of reading.

As enunciated by the American critic Stanley Fish, this criticism focuses on what readers do as they proceed through a text: perceiving, reasoning, making choices, structuring the text into units, venturing interpretations, reversing interpretations—sometimes again and again. Each step carries the reader a little further through the textual experience. Because of this vision of reading as a process along the time dimension, Fish insists that criticism should consider a literary work as a temporal experience, instead of as a static whole. Beginning to read, Fish would say, is different from being in the middle of reading, which is different from finishing reading and, in a fine-grained
analysis, every advancing moment of reading is different from the one before.

. . . . [W]hat my analyses amount to are descriptions of a succession of decisions made by readers about an author's intention--decisions that are not limited to the specifying of purpose but include the specifying of every aspect of successively intended worlds, decisions that are precisely the shape, because they are the content, of the reader's activities. ("Interpreting the Variorum," Is There a Text in This Class? 161)

Of course, the problem with focusing on the reader's response instead of the relatively fixed printed text is that there are as many responses as there are readers. If the large number of potential readers yields an equally large number of responses, then the utility of this sort of criticism is threatened by a chaos of idiosyncratic data. Generalization becomes impossible. However, Fish finds that there is a reasonably high degree of consensus in the interpretation of literature. To explain such consensus as does exist in readers' responses, he postulates the existence of "interpretive communities."

Interpretive communities, according to Fish, are made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading (in the conventional sense) but for writing texts, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions. In other words, these strategies exist prior to the act of reading and therefore determine the shape of what is read. . . . ("Interpreting the Variorum," Is There a Text in This Class? 171)

To the extent that reader response is based on unique personal experience and characteristics, it is idiosyncratic and not susceptible to useful generalization. However,
insofar as reader response is based on "shared interpretive strategies," it should be possible to make valid and interesting generalizations about it. So, for the reader-response critic, the identification of these "shared interpretive strategies" becomes primary.

Fish discovers the baseline shared interpretive strategy in the concept of linguistic competence:

> If the speakers of a language share a system of rules that each of them has somehow internalized, understanding will, in some sense, be uniform; that is, it will proceed in terms of the system of rules all speakers share. And insofar as these rules are constraints on production—establishing boundaries within which utterances are labeled "normal," "deviant," "impossible," and so on—they will also be constraints on the range, and even the direction, of response; they will make response, to some extent, predictable and normative. Thus the formula, so familiar in the literature of linguistics, "Every native speaker will . . . ." ("Literature in the Reader," Is There a Text in This Class? 44-45)

"If speakers of a language share a system of rules. . . .," says Fish. His use of "if" here suggests conditions of uncertainty, but speakers do share such a system of rules; linguists have been laboring for decades to specify precisely what these rules are. However, when Fish published Is There a Text in This Class? in 1980, as if the idea were a completely novel one, he quoted Ronald Wardhaugh calling in 1969 for a description of a reader's "semantic competence":

> A speaker's semantic knowledge [Wardhaugh contends] is no more random than his syntactic knowledge. . . . therefore, it seems useful to consider the possibility of devising, for semantic knowledge, a set of rules similar in form to the set used to characterize syntactic knowledge.

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Exactly how such a set of rules should be formulated and exactly what it must explain are to a considerable extent uncertain. At the very least the rules must characterize some sort of norm, the kind of semantic knowledge than [sic] an ideal speaker of the language might be said to exhibit in an ideal set of circumstances—in short, his semantic competence. (90, quoted in Fish 45)

Entailment, presupposition, and implicature are "shared interpretive strategies," to use Fish's term. Users of these strategies constitute an interpretive community, albeit a very large one. Almost, but not all, speakers employ them. There is a psychiatric term for the failure to use them: concreteness of thought. In a psychiatric interview, the assessor will pay attention to how the person being assessed responds to non-literal statements, statements that conventionally require some interpretation on the part of the receiver. Persons who do not make these interpretive acts—who do not read violations of the Cooperative Principle as implicatures or fail to recover the entailments and presuppositions behind statements—are considered to be abnormal and are noted to have "concreteness of thought."

Entailment, presupposition, and implicature are interpretive strategies shared by all competent speakers who are not psychologically or neurologically damaged. They are in the possession of speakers as well as hearers, writers as well as readers. Because of this set of rules held in common, the speaker or writer can manipulate the
understanding of the hearer or reader—a code can only be used if both sides of the communication possess the key.

It seems to me that the patterned recovery of unstated propositions through entailment, presupposition, and implicature is exactly the sort of semantic knowledge that Wardhaugh and Fish were discussing, and that a description of these patterns is at least a first step towards developing precisely the set of rules they were calling for.

C. Quantum Mechanics

Quantum mechanics, the new physics, has been around for nearly a hundred years now, if we date its inception from Planck's theory of quanta in 1900 and Einstein's theory of relativity in 1905. However, its influence on the general worldview of non-physicists probably dates only from 1979, when Zukav's "translation," The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics, made the odd and daring ideas of the theory available outside the castle-keep of science.

Since that time, the sense that humans are in the process of changing the way they understand reality has been percolating very gradually through the ground of contemporary thought. The plot of Weisbecker's eccentric novel Cosmic Banditos, combined drug-running, improbable characters, and impeccable physics. Diane Wakoski's 1991 book, Medea the
Sorceress, entwined quotations from the basic texts of the New Physics around her autobiographical poetry. Bernt Capra's 1992 movie, Mindwalk, was essentially a feature-length lecture on quantum mechanics and systems theory, delivered by none less than Liv Ullmann. Thanks to a sort of cultural "trickle-down effect," moorings to classical Newtonian physics—in which "things" are assumed to have "substance" and independent existence—are loosening. Philosophers and scientists are easing the rest of us onto speaking terms with a new view of reality, one that conceptualizes "things" as consisting of sets of relationships between insignificant bits of near-nothingness strung out in unimaginably large spaces of true nothingness. Furthermore, the new theory sees things less as having independent existence and more as being brought into being by the active participation of an observing consciousness.

Although it may be only of passing esoteric interest, I would like to point out that the theory of linguistic implicitness is perfectly congruent with the worldview that is being introduced by quantum mechanics. Linguistic implicitness refers to meaning, a virtual "reality," being created by the relationship between propositions. If propositions can be viewed as "particles" of a sort, then the relationships between them that can be mapped out as entailment, presupposition, and implicature can be seen as analogs to the forces of attraction and repulsion that hold
together the illusion that this desktop on which I write is solid, hard, and unitary. Similarly, those linguistic relationships, like the relationship between quantum particles, create illusions, worlds in literature.

Another way in which the theory of linguistic implicitness is congruent with the new physics is the emphasis on the role of the participant-observer in creating the world. Speaking from the evidence of quantum mechanics, John Wheeler, a Princeton physicist, wonders:

May the universe in some strange sense be "brought into being" by the participation of those who participate? . . . The vital act is the act of participation. "Participator" is the incontrovertible new concept given by quantum mechanics. It strikes down the term "observer" of classical theory, the man who stands safely behind the thick glass wall and watches what goes on without taking part. It can't be done, quantum mechanics says. (1273, quoted in Zukav 54)

Analogously, the theory of linguistic implicitness shows the fictional world not to exist independently between the covers of a book the way a "Newtonian" literary theory (such as New Criticism) might suggest. Rather, this way of understanding shows the reader, the active participant-observer, interacting with the "particles" on the page literally to create a universe, a literary universe.
D. Gestalt Theory

Gestalt psychology was born in Germany early in the twentieth century. It emerged as a reaction to the atomistic experimental psychology of the time, which held that there was roughly a one-to-one correspondence between perceptions and individual physical stimuli provided by the external world. Gestalt thinkers, such as Max Wertheimer, Kurt Koffka, and Wolfgang Köhler observed that classical psychology could not account for phenomena such as the human recognition of a melody as being the same even when it is transposed to a different key. In transposition, every single physical stimulus, every note, is different—and yet, the melody remains the same. They also noted that identical visual stimuli would be perceived differently depending on their surroundings—a problem for the older theory.

Interest in the insufficiencies of the older theory led to Gestalt's focus on perception, especially through the study of optical illusions and related anomalies. Gestalt psychologists' chief insight was that groupings of stimuli are perceived as whole patterns or configurations: the whole, or the Gestalt, is more than the sum of its parts. Their conclusions about "fields" in the brain corresponding to these wholes of perception have been largely superseded. However, their generalizations about the principles that tend to create wholes out of disconnected bits of physical stimuli
formed the basis of the modern study of perception and are still of interest today. They named general principles, such as continuity, proximity, and closure, which tend to promote perception of unified wholes.

In 1993, Campbell offered the insight that the same principles that cause unity to be attributed to a sequence of sounds or a collection of visual stimuli also cause unity to be attributed to a text. She noted a number of analogs between text perception and other types of perception, but what is specifically relevant to the discussion of literary implicitness is the parallel between Grice's maxim of relation and the Gestalt principle of continuity.

Continuity was defined by the Gestaltists as the tendency to connect discontinuous fragments if they carry on each other's direction, movement, or shape. For example, two lines that are in the same plane and go in the same direction are likely to be perceived as two parts of the same line, while two lines in the same plane that go in markedly different directions are likely to be perceived as two separate lines.

In Figure 4.2, there are two sets of discontinuous figures, each comprised of two separate lines. However, because of the principle of continuity, there is in (a) what amounts to a visual willingness to see them as a single interrupted line, to virtually "fill in" the space between them. This readiness to join the two figures into one is not
Figure 4.2 The Gestalt principle of continuity suggests that forms will be seen as parts of a whole if they carry on each other's direction, movement, or shape.

as pronounced in (b) because the principle of continuity is not involved.

One can see how the tendency to perceive unity where there is continuity has survival value for humans. When you are standing on the sidewalk and the outline of an oncoming car is briefly interrupted by an intervening tree-trunk, it is positively useful that you don't have to reason out whether the half-car on one side of the tree is related to the half-car on the other side of the tree and can thus be expected to behave in predictable ways. The "Gestalt," or configuration, of the car dominates; the outlines of the car continue each other's directions on either side of the tree, and the viewer "fills in" the unseen connection.

Campbell observed that "This human preference for sensing unity where there is visual continuity appears to be analogous to that of sensing coherence where there is discourse relation" (29). In other words, where it is possible to sense, find, or construct a connection between parts (whether visual, auditory, or textual), the human mind
is likely to do it. The maxim of relation is a statement of the specifically semantic manifestation of this general principle of human perception. When I ask you if you want a beer, and you answer, "Is the Pope Catholic?" the two explicit questions are much like the two half-cars that show on either side of the tree-trunk. The perceiving mind insists that they must be connected, even though the connection is not superficially obvious. The gap between the two questions, the apparent discontinuity or irrelevance, is like the band of invisible car hidden behind the tree-trunk: the zone of perception that is "filled in" by the human mind.

So we find that it is possible to see Grice's maxim of relation as being subsumed by a larger general principle of perception, the Gestalt principle of continuity. And, as the maxim of relation itself has been seen by some scholars (Wilson and Sperber) as potentially subsuming Grice's other maxims, it may be possible to fit that portion of literary implicitness which rests on implicature into a more general theory. As we explore this "more general theory" concerning the ways in which the mind makes units out of discrete bits of information, we will be in a better position to relate phenomena from various genres--the apparent movement of motion pictures, notes that are suggested but not played in music, colors that are seen but are not on the painter's canvas, and propositions that are conveyed but not asserted--in a more comprehensive understanding of the way art works.
In this conclusion, I have tried to enlarge the scope of the discussion of literary implicitness. To do so, I have briefly mentioned some theoretical frameworks that appear to support or be supported by this conceptualization. What I have not done, but might be equally interesting, is to discuss other specific writers and how the theory might be applicable to them. Vietnam veterans and macho men are by no means the only ones who are ambivalent about telling their stories. Survivors of abuse, particularly sexual abuse, and survivors of mass catastrophes are also known to need and avoid telling. It would be interesting to use the same constructs—entailment, presupposition, and implicature—to analyze the work of survivors like Virginia Woolf, abusers like Ann Sexton, or chroniclers of the Holocaust, with a view to uncovering patterns in what goes unsaid.

Another direction in which research may fruitfully be extended is in determining to what extent strategies of implicitness can be used to explain the division of literature into such categories as modern and primitive, dramatic and narrative, mimetic and exegetic or diegetic, artistic and not artistic, objective and subjective, scenic and interpretive. Analysis of the examples that critics have used to characterize these various divisions may reveal that a significant part of what they were all talking about was
the simple distinction between implying and asserting, showing and telling.


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VITA

Donna Glee Williams was born in Mexico and attended school there and, later, in Maryland. She dropped out of high school in her junior year and moved to New Orleans, Louisiana. After graduation from Newcomb College of Tulane University with a bachelor's degree in Spanish Literature, she worked for a time in the Louisiana State University Medical Libraries and attended Charity Hospital School of Nursing. During her nursing training, she began to publish short fiction and poetry. She continued to write during the years that she worked as a registered nurse at Ochsner Hospital in New Orleans, first in Neonatal Intensive Care and then in Pediatrics. Eventually she gave up full-time work as a nurse to pursue a Master of Fine Arts in Writing and a Doctorate in English. She currently teaches writing at Loyola University in New Orleans and works as a psychiatric nurse at Ochsner Hospital. Her writing has been published in a number of scholarly journals, reference works, and magazines.
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