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„Consciousness Representation in Carson  
McCullers’ *The Member of the Wedding*“

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## DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I confirm to have conceived and written this thesis in English all by myself. Quotations from sources are all clearly marked and acknowledged in the bibliographical references either in the footnotes or within the text. Any ideas borrowed and/or passages paraphrased from the works of other authors are truthfully acknowledged and identified in the footnotes.

## HINWEIS

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## 1 Introduction

The cornerstone of this thesis is “the nexus of narrative and mind” (Herman, *Basic Elements* 138). The fusion of these two concepts spans the extraordinary theoretical space of cognitive narratology. It is populated with approaches stemming from various disciplines, such as philosophy, psychology, linguistics and artificial intelligence, and is increasingly attracting academic attention. The sheer diversity of the disciplines involved allows the topic to be accessed from various angles, integrated into different frameworks, aligned with existing theoretical positions or applied towards the creation of new perspectives. This opens up endless possibilities for scholarly investigation and can be particularly fruitful and exciting when applied to the genre of Coming-of-Age fiction. Its intersection with cognitive narratology allows access to a distinct type of mental functioning that manifests itself as the protagonist negotiates a shift in subjectivity and worldview.

The thesis at hand intends to explore this type of mental activity as presented in one specific Coming-of-Age novel, Carson McCullers’ *The Member of the Wedding* (1946). Its protagonist undergoes a nightmarish phase of mental transformation, the erratic and fluctuating quality of which unfolds in the course of only four days. The dense concentration of this crucial phase into such a brief amount of time generates a coming of age marked by a high intensity. The intention is to investigate how the presentation of the protagonist’s consciousness is implemented in the narrative. Two overarching issues are of particular interest here: the way in which the text grants access to the fictional mind and the strategies which highlight the subjective nature of experience pertaining to the protagonist. As a theory fundamentally privileging mind-related aspects, cognitive narratology in general would present an apt methodology to illuminate these questions. However, it is the scholarship of Alan Palmer in particular that will be applied here.

His seminal work *Fictional Minds* (2004) represents the struggle against various interpretative norms placed by narrative theory and proposes a holistic framework for the study of mental functioning. Not only is this a highly ambitious enterprise, promising a unique insight into the topic, but it is also a

manifestation of cognitive narratology which circumvents one of the biggest challenges to the field: the difficulty of formulating clear comprehensive systems on the basis of the heterogeneous disciplines and concepts involved. Palmer sets out to provide an innovative perspective on fictional mental functioning by drawing on relevant insights from a variety of fields which he then balances and unites in the formulation of his method.

Palmer's approach is furthermore especially convenient for the analysis of a novel from the tradition of Coming-of-Age fiction. The contemporary manifestations of the genre showcase a consistent tension to their prototype and the bias encoded in it. This pertains particularly to novels which feature a female protagonist, as is the case in *The Member of the Wedding*. Therefore, a critical method is required that is sensitive to the series of subversions enacted on the characteristics of the form. The desire to confront outdated concepts and biased assumptions is inherently embedded in *Fictional Minds* and so the strategies outlined in it effortlessly live up to the current demands of the genre.

The study of the transforming mind in *The Member of the Wedding* will be motivated especially by insights stemming from Palmer's work that concern non-traditional techniques. While standard literary theory offers tools that can be highly informative about the direct presentations of consciousness in novels, Palmer convincingly demonstrates that such direct presentations are only a small part of mental functioning. Therefore, much of his research is concerned with the formulation of strategies geared specifically towards the extraction of this neglected side of cognition. This thesis hopes to present an account of the mental functioning in *The Member of the Wedding* that illuminates several alternative manifestations of cognition and highlights the uniqueness of the mind during the phase of coming of age.

## 2 Cognitive Narratology

Cognitive narratology delineates one of the youngest, most recent developments within the larger discipline of literary studies. While the field itself is rapidly expanding and drawing in a growing number of scholars, the very term “cognitive narratology” dates back no more than 15 years ago, according to one of its pioneers, David Herman (*Cognitive Narratology* par.7). The inception of cognitive narratology can be attributed to several large-scale developments coinciding and preparing the ground for a new theoretical approach: the larger trend of interdisciplinarity within academia, the shift from classical to postclassical narratology and the cognitive turn. Cognitive narratology can thus be “situated at a point where the narrative and cognitive turns meet” (Jahn, *Cognitive Narratology* 71) and classified “as a subdomain within ‘postclassical’ narratology” (Herman, *Cognitive Narratology* par. 5).

Richardson refers to a number of works published in the 1980s which advocated the integration of new insights on cognition within literary theory (*The Work of Fiction* 1) and that can perhaps be counted among the first signs heralding the massive cognitive wave which was imminent at this point. The cognitive turn has since followed a steady implementation within the discipline of literary studies, particularly in the areas of “narratology and stylistics, where cognitive concepts and terminology were already familiar” (Fludernik, *Narratology* 926). Narratology was furthermore particularly suited to absorb the principles of the cognitive shift due to its own development out of the classical into the postclassical stage. The field experienced a transformation as a result of the rise of cultural studies and post-structuralism, so that “the adolescence of narratology was followed by a reorientation and diversification of narrative theories” (Fludernik, *Histories* 37). This diversification was partly induced by a new access to knowledge and concepts which were simply not available before, culminating in what is now known as “postclassical narratology”. On a basic level, postclassical narratology can be characterised as a combination of classical narratology with “research tools taken from other areas of inquiry” (Herman, *Scripts* 1057), forming a field that is “energized by a variety of theoretical models and perspectives - feminist, rhetorical, linguistic, and computational” (*Scripts* 1049). The crucial part of this development is that



narratology “in its postclassical guises, has become strongly aware of psychological and cognitive factors” (Jahn, *Foundational Issues* 106).

Cognitive narratology is one sub-field arising out of this foundation and Fludernik, one of the earliest and best known scholars in the field along with Herman and Jahn (Fludernik & Olson 9), counts it among the most promising ones – not only within narratology, but for contemporary research in general (Fludernik & Olson 3). The distinguishing marks of this new area can be boiled down to an interdisciplinary approach, stemming from the diverse theories postclassical narratology was constructed on, and a heightened sensibility for cognition-related issues, which are not simply haphazardly pasted up as decorative elements, but have an impact on the fundamental concerns of the theory. Insights, principles and methods stemming from disciplines as diverse as “literature, history, linguistics, pragmatics, philosophy” (Jahn, *Cognitive Narratology* 71) and “psychology, artificial intelligence, the philosophy of mind” (Herman, *Narrative Theory* 20) have been incorporated during the formative stages of cognitive narratology and currently constitute the channels along which trans-disciplinary dialogue is conducted. Semino’s remark that “[t]he notions of ‘consciousness,’ ‘mind,’ and ‘mental functioning’ have recently come to occupy centre stage in narratology” (418) serves to highlight the essential feature of this new endeavour – mind centrality in its various forms.

Since cognitive narratology is obviously still in the initial phase of its development and, compared to more established fields, cannot draw from centuries of scholarly discourse and maturation, there remains a considerable amount of issues which need to be worked out. Marie-Laure Ryan has devoted an entire article to dissecting these shortcomings, calling the field “a project uncomfortably sandwiched between the speculative and interpretive disciplines of the humanities and the experimental disciplines of the hard sciences” (474). In contrast, Spolsky’s comment on the insights to be gained from this union is favourable, stating that “cognitive literary theory confirms and clarifies issues previously dealt with by philosophical, psychoanalytical, and cultural theorists and is beginning to produce the kind of sophisticated literary scholarship rightly valued within our profession” (43). Margolin is similarly optimistic, calling the field a “reservoir of potential insights,” stating that “many complex phenomena

acknowledged by but not yet amenable to explicit scientific theorizing are enacted in literary narrative” (*Cognitive Science* 288). He further draws attention to the habit of philosophers and cognitive psychologists to “employ pre-existing literary examples to illustrate their claims about a particular cognitive activity” (*Misperceiving* 63). In fact, the link between cognitive insights and literary studies seems practically indispensable when examining literature and cognition on a basic level. The very act of creating and consuming narratives is a by-product of human mental functioning firmly grounded in cognition and, symmetrically, “[i]t is only in the narrated domain that the full range of human cognitive activities can be portrayed or represented” (Margolin, *Cognitive Science* 281). These perspectives serve to illustrate the fact that the relationship here is thoroughly bilateral and mutually beneficial. Turner assesses the situation in a similar vein, claiming that “[m]uch of the excitement surrounding cognitive approaches to art, literature, and language comes from the prospect of commerce between the humanities and scientific fields like neuroscience, cognitive linguistics, paleoanthropology, and psychology” (19).

The centrality of mind-related aspects and interdisciplinarity generate a fertile space that can easily turn into an epicentre for a range of eclectic academic discussions. Cognitive aspects can be explored along many different lines, depending on the background of the scholars involved, the nature of the project and the aims of the research. Herman clarifies that the common denominator should be understood as a shared “focus on the mental states, capacities, and dispositions that provide grounds for – or, conversely, are grounded in – narrative experiences” (*Cognitive Narratology*, par. 1). Since this shared focus can be approached with tools elicited from deixis, space perception, models of information processing, scripts and frames, blending theory, positioning theory, metaphor, and narrative reflexivity, Fludernik rightfully likens cognitive narratology to “a group of construction sites” (*Narratology* 927). Due to the vast number of tangentially related topics simultaneously explored at the moment, the danger exists for the term “cognitive narratology” to lose its sharpness as a semantic signifier. Therefore, it can be useful to explicitly specify the particular area of concern. The intention of the thesis at hand is to compile evidence from the source material available to the reader in order to discuss the representation

of consciousness and the fictional mental functioning present in *The Member of the Wedding*. Following the classification developed by Herman, this would most comfortably fit under items (f) – “research on characters and methods of characterization in fictional as well as nonfictional narratives; [...] studies of specific techniques used by storytellers to figure forth their characters’ mental lives” and (g) – “relatedly, research on narrative vis-à-vis folk-psychological reasoning, or the everyday heuristics that people use to make sense of their own and others’ conduct” (*Cognitive Narratology* par. 19-20).

Despite facing various challenges at this stage, the field of cognitive narratology follows developments that have been decades in the making and currently fills a niche thanks to the interdisciplinary concern coded in its very matrix. After all, the hard-line separation of the disciplines is by no means the natural state of things, but an invention which goes back merely several hundred years, at best. If one gives credit to the history of science, the abolition of such artificial rigid boundaries between science and culture, the humanities and natural sciences, and the individual disciplines themselves, is long overdue (see Hagner). It would be wise to heed Fludernik’s prognosis for the future of the field which is “both optimistic and cautious. A huge consolidation and expansion may be in the making, but only if current centrifugal tendencies in the cognitive approach to literature can be harnessed to a larger framework” (*Narratology* 927). Her statement is sufficiently restrained to take into account the numerous areas which still need improvement and yet permissive enough to afford a certain latitude for the field to grow and develop. In order to minimise any potential difficulties, the thesis at hand has selected the framework developed by Alan Palmer, which seems to circumvent the “centrifugal tendencies” (*Narratology* 927) Fludernik speaks of. The following discussion about the fictional mental functioning in *The Member of the Wedding* will hopefully be able to justify Margolin’s claim that “it is the rise of cognitive science in the last twenty years or so that provides the literary scholar with what I believe to be the richest and most powerful framework yet for [cognitive mental functioning’s] systematic description” (*Cognitive Science* 274).

### 3 Coming-of-Age Fiction

The delineation of Coming-of-Age fiction's distinguishing marks poses particular difficulties, since this is a genre entrenched in heterogeneity, both when it comes to content features and nomenclature. The issue of its problematic definition has become a standard concern for analysts, as the following question emerges with increased frequency: "what stabilizes the term *bildungsroman* across eras of literary history and across different national traditions? The genre can be loosened to include almost any novel where experience trumps innocence or tightened to a fine point where no novel fits" (Esty 17). The lack of systematisation is also relevant for the denomination of the form, since a variety of terms exist and while each highlights subtle differences, they are often applied synonymously. The most common names include "Coming-of-Age story," "apprenticeship novel," "education novel," "novel of awakening" and "novel of formation".

A great number of scholarly discussions are centred on the term "Bildungsroman," since it is associated with the novel serving as a prototype for the genre (Shaffner 5), Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795). The popular academic position is that the genre's inception is located around the time Goethe's work was published and that this specific socio-cultural context was decisive for the form. Esty demonstrates that the classic "motifs of the Bildungsroman – mobility, interiority, self-cultivation, self-possession, bourgeois-bohemian compromise, integrative realism, soul-nation allegory" (208) pertain to the political developments of German nationhood. Following the Europe-wide dispersion of the genre during the 19<sup>th</sup> century ("Bildungsroman"), it is noticeable that the characterisation of the English adaptation – "childhood, the conflict of generations, provinciality, the larger society, self-education, alienation, ordeal by love, the search for a vocation and a working philosophy" (Buckley 18) – already features variations in tone and focus. Such differences only intensify in the course of the genre's temporal and spatial expansion to suit American, Overseas, colonial and contemporary needs. The ensuing manifold re-adaptations to such divergent contexts have disassembled, reorganised or simply buried into oblivion virtually every formal characteristic so optimistically proclaimed by 19<sup>th</sup> century scholars.

This development quickly led to allegations of the demise of the Bildungsroman, in particular that “World War I dealt a death blow to a genre already moribund by the 1890s” (Esty 30-31). A brief survey of the novels published in the last century, however, demonstrates quite the contrary – the genre has proliferated, particularly in ways which challenge the traditional format. This is illustrated, among others, by McWilliams’ assessment that “[w]hile former varieties of the genre are neither to be forgotten nor ignored, the Bildungsroman has reached a new stage in its history particularly in the emergence of the idea of the female Bildungsroman” (11). Since the thesis at hand prioritises precisely this variety, the term “Coming-of-Age fiction” will be preferred from now on, in order to emphasise the contemporary focus and distance from the Germanic origins.

The paradoxical tension inherent in the consistent mutability of the original features and the genre’s simultaneous durability will now be discussed in terms of the “anxious relationship between more recent Bildungsromane and the prototype” (McWilliams 6). The highly specific developments of German nationhood and the resulting issues prioritised in the first instances of the genre carry antiquated connotations for the modern reader. These elements are mere variables which were appropriate for German Coming-of-Age stories several centuries ago, but should have been displaced in the subsequent manifestations of the genre. Instead, the prototype’s anachronistic properties have tangibly persisted to this day. It seems that the specific ideology which contributed to the emergence of the genre was tacitly coded directly into the essence of Coming-of-Age fiction, constructing a *faulty vessel* – a model of alleged universals which the prototype is entrenched in and imposes on future examples of the form. This one-size-fits-all logic carrying unexamined assumptions of default experience is at the heart of the persisting regeneration the genre is experiencing. Since the matrix of the genre is drenched in undue bias, all later reinterpretations have to actively dissociate from it. In order to form a clean slate for adequately approaching Coming-of-Age fiction, the range of influence of this ideology has to be made explicit.

The traditional matrix understands coming of age as a special phase during which the protagonist discovers their identity and then effortlessly transitions into adulthood, which concludes the period of change and promises stability.

The presentation of the prototypical protagonist is governed by a “normatively white, middle-class, male paradigm” (Rishoi 54) and can easily be profiled according to markers of social dominance – whiteness, maleness, affluence, Western origin, a privileged or somewhat sheltered life and a heightened idealism and naïveté. The genre caters to the demands of this narrowly defined hero, so that any other concerns which might contradict the norm are conveniently filtered out. Therefore, even if subversion is not the primary intention of female Coming-of-Age stories, they will invariably produce “oppositional identities” (Rishoi 8). The contrast between the German and English definitions presented above illustrates how the dispersion of the form leads to the diversification of such normative elements. However, there are more subtle ideological effects which persevere on account of passing off as natural facts about human existence that should not even be questioned. Those pertain to the very function of the coming of age process and the significance of categories underlying it, and can be abstracted into four main assumptions.

First of all, a formulaic plane of development is entailed, which leads from childhood into adolescence and culminates in adulthood in a linear and unidirectional manner. The intermediate phase of adolescence which stabilises this model is a relatively new invention conceptualised by “eighteenth-century philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau, who first defined the period between puberty and the attainment of full adult social status as a separate and valuable stage of life” (Rishoi 49). It can be argued that the emergence of the genre, just like the invention of adolescence, was culturally advantageous since it “legitimises the emergent social order of capitalism by representing the internalisation of social norms” (Christinidis 469).

Secondly, adolescence is understood as a phase of sudden conversion in which the protagonist’s personality fluctuates until it is made permanent by adulthood. It can be argued that this notion is neither a natural element nor a mere coincidence, but instead serves the purpose of upholding the larger status quo. Rishoi introduces David Bakan’s argument that the implied reward of coming of age and the American Dream are linked through the promise that if one obediently follows the rules of the larger system (or completes adolescence according to the rules decided by that system) this will lead to the attainment of

“success, status, income, power, and so forth” (52). Esty’s argues that modernist Coming-of-Age novels outright deny the unproblematic transition into an assimilated adulthood through the trope of “endless youth” and circular reversion (27).

The conventional Coming-of-Age model furthermore relies on the notion of identity as a fixed entity that can neatly fit into the phase provided for it. The development of the narrative is traditionally described as “centred on encountering and overcoming challenges and obstacles in the quest for identity” (McWilliams 42) and what this phrasing reveals is an understanding of identity as a pre-existing fact which merely has to be discovered by the protagonist. This is closely related to the fourth pillar of the prototype which is concerned with the isolation of the individual. It is the Enlightenment “preoccupation with the achievement of the autonomous individual” that results in a “male paradigm of rugged individualism wherein the hero is nearly always self-reliant” (Rishoi 59). This element is particularly relevant in the American context where the “national myth of self-reliance” (Curnutt 94) has a pivotal cultural role. According to Rishoi, however, the proclivity toward depictions of the individual as isolated and self-reliant has subtly declined with time. She writes that instead “the master narrative has radically shifted to valorizing the self-in-relation to such a degree that it has become hegemonic” (Rishoi 16). This evolution from self-reliance to the self-in-relation is especially ironic in the context of female coming of age, where “unlike some of their male counterparts, the young girls are always introduced to a heterosexual world, a world in which relationships between men and women, males and females, are the most important” (Ginsberg 31). The association of women with the domain of relationships and household traditionally stood in clear opposition to the individualism, self-discovery and journey into the world of male protagonists and became the reason critics initially doubted the validity of female Coming-of-Age. It is a testimony to the genre’s determination to critically engage the prototype and transcend its bias that this process has been entirely reversed. McWilliams writes that “more recent studies of the genre have focused less on the female Bildungsroman as a straightforward appropriation of the traditional form and have placed greater emphasis on how contemporary female Bildungsromane

challenge and renegotiate the traditional paradigm” (20), denoting that instead of being excluded by the original restrictive definition, the female subject is now central in determining and shaping the genre.

The brief overview of the four main conceptual pillars of Coming-of-Age fiction demonstrates that they constitute the principal lair of undesired ideology, whose persistence can be linked in origin and function to corresponding developments in Western civilisation. The norms imposed through the socio-cultural contexts of 18<sup>th</sup> century Germany have become increasingly challenged by the extensive trend within literature and cultural studies concerned with “demystifying traditional humanist and religious concepts of supposedly timeless categories, such as self, identity, and morality” (Richardson, *Literature* 3). Hence the distinct lag between the latest literary manifestations of the Coming-of-Age novel and the canonical definitions which supposedly represent it. The genre now draws its power from the ability to incorporate current critical insights and, consequently, the process of reworking ideological bias emerges as a highly relevant genre-specific feature. It seems that, as stylistic and content-related features lose their power as distinguishing marks, it is the very adaptability of the genre that gains in importance and remains the main constitutive element.



## 4 The Framework of Alan Palmer

### 4.1 Introduction

The topical examination of Coming-of-Age fiction requires a methodological approach sensitive to the dramatic shift in perspective charted out in the previous chapter. Alan Palmer's scholarship has emerged in the last decade as a continuation of post-classical narratology, spurred by the inadequacies he observed in narrative theory's treatment of fictional minds. He openly identifies with the externalist position, entailing the systematic rejection of the master narrative of individualism and the intent to balance it out by demonstrating the pivotal influence of environment and social factors (Palmer 130). This updated understanding of mental functioning completely blurs the lines between the rigid categories postulated by the Coming-of-Age prototype, making Palmer's work particularly fit to meet the demands of the genre regarding regeneration and critical re-examination.

Alan Palmer's research presents a rich and intricately woven framework geared towards the adequate critical treatment of characters' minds in narrative fiction – an aspect which has so far suffered from neglect and is in dire need of systematisation. Palmer faces the daunting challenge of building up a critical framework from scratch and the resulting cohesive theory stipulated in *Fictional Minds* will be delineated in this chapter. Due to its range and complexity it will necessarily have to be presented in a simplified way and the first part of the discussion will deal with the specific inadequacies of narratology which lead Palmer to the establishment of his theory.

*Fictional Minds* is built on one principal conviction which sets the tone of the work and critically impacts the formulation of its approaches – the fundamental understanding that “narrative fiction is, in essence, the presentation of fictional mental functioning” (Palmer 5). Defining narrative in this way elevates fictional mental functioning (abbreviated as FMF) to a central position within literary studies in general and showcases the current lack of a systematised framework as a particularly disturbing omission. Palmer demonstrates that not only is the scholarly work on the subject sparse, but, crucially, FMF has not even been recognised as its own separate area. The few existing strategies for dealing

with fictional minds only emerge as side notes supporting other theoretical concerns and so the study of fictional minds is perpetually confined to being tangentially related to some other, larger subject matter.

The driving force of Palmer's work is to shift the focus to FMF and establish it as an area in its own right with separate features, methods, frameworks and research questions. He identifies various factors which have hampered the development of a unified fictional mind framework, many of which can be reduced to a common source: the subjective first approach, which postulates the autonomy and separateness of minds and is the customary way for understanding consciousness in narrative theory and Western philosophy (see Palmer 5). Its effects as an ideological position are extensive and can be made palpable on the way thought is typically conceived of – as the quiet, private introspection characteristic for stream of consciousness novels, intensely verbose and only differentiated from speech by the fact that it takes places within the character's mind and is not spoken out loud. Palmer attributes the omnipresence of this unfiltered pure thought in literature to its impossibility outside of the domain of narrative – since we are confined to our own minds in reality, the direct access to other's consciousness in fiction holds an irresistible fascination.

The appeal of direct consciousness is so strong that it has effectively eclipsed the numerous other ways in which minds can be accessed. In real life we are clearly denied the luxury of direct access to the consciousness of other individuals and yet we constantly form educated hypotheses about their intentions, mental states and private thoughts. This skill is crucial for communication, which has consistently been proven to rely on non-verbal cues predominantly (see Knapp & Hall; Mehrabian), and even survival. Consequently, humans are highly proficient in decoding others' thoughts and intentions and have devised a myriad of strategies to this effect. Those same strategies are intuitively employed by readers: "Just as in real life the individual constructs the minds of others from their behavior and speech, so the reader infers the workings of fictional minds and sees these minds in action from observation of characters' behavior and speech" (Palmer 11). The narrative approach to fictional minds is marked by a very odd discrepancy – on one hand,

there are various ways in which others' thoughts can be accessed apart from the presentation of direct, verbalised consciousness and we constantly make use of them, both as individuals in the real world and as readers of fiction. On the other hand, narratology has elevated the verbal aspect above all others. By making it the archetypal way of accessing minds, a large part of the textual evidence tacitly becomes invisible and is excluded from an explicit analysis. The variety of difficulties arising from this are discussed in *Fictional Minds* as a prelude to the new framework developed there.

## 4.2 The Standard Approach to Fictional Minds

Palmer provides a detailed examination of the narratological approach which has emerged from the privileging of verbalised consciousness. He calls it “Speech Category Approach” due to the fact that it is “based on the assumption that the categories that are applied to fictional speech can be unproblematically applied to fictional thought” (13). In order to transcend the numerous existing taxonomies and the fact that some of the devised models contain up to thirty elements, he has summed up the speech categories under three relatively straightforward headings: direct thought, free indirect thought and thought report (see 54). The first issue he observes is that there is an undeniable imbalance in favour of the mimetic categories of free indirect thought and direct thought. Palmer substantiates this claim by surveying a random selection of classic narratological studies and analysing their focus. The outcome is that out of twenty-four works there is not one “book or article that is devoted specifically to thought report, and no survey of narratology that is biased toward thought report. Cohn is the only narratologist who is scrupulous in giving equal weight to all modes” (63). This bias within narratology leads to a number of complications, the gravest of which is perhaps the mistaken categorisation of narrative passages into the mimetic modes and the consequent inaccuracy in the academic work. The concept of free indirect thought is especially prone to ambiguity and is thus easily misapplied following the general overestimation of the mimetic categories (62).

The according neglect of the diegetic mode of thought report is traced to the historical aversion to the “judgmental and moralizing narrator” (Palmer 77). Fludernik clarifies that the end of the nineteenth century brought about a backlash against this type of narratorial function, which resulted in the entire mode of thought report being “seen as a departure from the unmediated ideal, as distortion, as interference, and as interruption” (Palmer 68). In *Fictional Minds* the role of thought report is demonstrated to perform a valuable function which cannot be taken over by any other mode. The “indispensable and pivotal role of thought report” (76) consists of forging a bridge between the internal world of characters’ thoughts and the external environment in which their consciousness is grounded, thereby enriching and complementing the

presented fictional mind. The speech category account furthermore generates an outlook on narrative in which “inner speech becomes the paradigm of the mind, even though it is only a very small part of the total activity of fictional minds” (57). A number of influential literary theorists are quoted as they outright equate thought with speech, including Genette’s explicit statement that “[t]hought’ is indeed speech” (Palmer 63). This theoretical understanding is one that Palmer repeatedly cautions against, since it culminates in a disorderly and untidy analytical perspective which fails to account for a large number of literary passages, excludes viable evidence and leads to conceptual fallacies. One example concerning the incomplete picture of mind induced by this approach is the omission of “states of mind such as beliefs, intentions, purposes, and dispositions” (53), which leaves the analyst with a notion of the character’s mental functioning that is poor and linear indeed. With its obfuscation of evidence present in the primary work, foundational “ideological distrust of the narrator” (68), and failure to take into account the actual competence and approach of readers, Palmer declares the speech category approach unsatisfactory with the following verdict: “[it] imposes on narrative an oversimplified and impoverished mind picture that does not do justice to the practice of narrators and the experience of readers” (75). The remaining narratological approaches surveyed include focalisation, story analysis, possible world theory, characterisation, and scripts, plans and frames. Palmer’s review according to their suitability for his project demonstrates that while there is a lot of potential, the useful aspects are rather dispersed and not fully developed with regard to the construction of a fictional mind approach. The goal of *Fictional Minds* is to collect the promising elements that are present in these various approaches and integrate them into a full-fledged framework.

### 4.3 Parallel Perspectives on Mental Functioning

The perspectives on the language-thought relationship derived from the real mind discourses of psychology, philosophy, cognitive science, and psycholinguistics stand in direct opposition to the speech category account in literature. None of the disciplines are too comfortable with the idea that language is the primary vehicle for the manifestation of cognitive processes - cognitive science only places a very limited value on the relevance of inner speech for cognition and psychological research has already successfully demonstrated that the loss of language in an individual does not lead to an impaired ability to “perform intelligently in other areas” (Palmer 93). The conceptualisations of consciousness from outside the domain of literary criticism further substantiate this view. John Searle has developed an exhaustive taxonomy consisting of a dozen features with the aim of illustrating “what the experience of consciousness is actually like” (Palmer 99). These include, among others, the sensation of unity, the intentionality of mental states (the ability to ascribe a specific reason to the mental state), the concept of attention (conceived of as a continuum between centre and periphery), and mood (Palmer 103). Just like the popular systematisations of consciousness provided by Steven Pinker and Daniel Dennett, the role of verbal aspects here is remote, at best. It appears, indeed, that non-verbal consciousness is quintessential in the scientific domain. While language undoubtedly shapes mental functioning in particular ways, it is clear that by overrating its impact, literary theory deprives itself of the opportunity to craft a balanced perspective that involves other tools as well.

If language only makes up a small part of cognition, this poses the question where else mental functioning becomes manifest. The field of psychology readily offers one answer, by reminding us that consciousness, be it verbal or non-verbal, only makes up the tip of the iceberg when it comes to human cognition. In his wish to distance himself from the limiting Freudian aftertaste of the term “unconscious,” Palmer refers to this realm as the “non-consciousness”. It comprises crucial aspects of the mind, such as “dispositions, beliefs, and attitudes” (107), which lie dormant for the most part and only become activated when necessary. Psychologists locate the reason for this phenomenon in the

brain's categorical desire to conserve energy and streamline its efforts. Its efficient functioning would be gravely threatened if the total amount of knowledge, memories, information and external stimuli were conscious at all times. This is closely related to Searle's concept of attention which shifts according to the demands of the environment.

The discourse of philosophical behaviourism reveals another aspect of the mind, by pointing out that "mental events are logical constructions out of dispositions to behave in certain ways" (Palmer 108). Dispositions can be seen as mental states that form the background of personality and remain relatively constant in the face of immediate mental events. While they are usually implicit on the discourse level, Palmer argues that dispositions are "the primary link between the study of characters' immediate consciousness and the area of characterization" (108) and should therefore be given a prominent place in the FMF system.

The inclusion of emotions in considerations of the mind is also advocated. Contrary to the popular view that emotions are irrational expressions and constitute the opposite of cognition, neuroscience has demonstrated that they are, in fact, inextricably linked with consciousness and crucially impact rational phenomena like decision making and reasoning (see 116). One of the cognitive functions carried out by emotions is to influence the attention management of the brain and to direct the pursuit of goals. According to Palmer, the fact that "emotions, cognitions, goals, action, context [...] all flow into one another" (117) has to be properly recognised in order to arrive at a wholesome view of FMF.

Finally, mental functioning can be located in the distinctly non-verbal area of action presentation. Palmer introduces a definition stemming from the philosophy of action, which states that action is the "physical movement [...] brought about by the conscious individual himself" (118). This definition is illuminating because it immediately includes mental functioning in an area which is usually considered separate from it. The link between the physical and the mental domain is provided by the "motive, reason, intention" (119) leading to the action. Desires and beliefs are also involved in this process, as the former are responsible for the motivation and the latter influence the execution of the

action. Palmer endorses a conceptualisation of this system as a thought-action continuum, in which “memories of the past, motives and reasons related to the present, and intentions and decisions related to the anticipated consequences in the future” (120) can be related to the consciousness of characters.

The insights derived from the real mind discourses so far are complemented by the functionalist perspective on the mind offered by cognitive science. It is concerned with identifying the purpose of the mental dimension in humans based on the underlying assumption that “the mind is an information-processing device” (Palmer 88). The work of Daniel Dennett, Steven Pinker, Lubomir Doležel and Antonio Damasio all points towards the fact that mental functioning is inherently put in relation with the concept of adaptability. For instance, consciousness in humans has emerged since it “allows us to adapt intelligently to our environment” (Palmer 89). The phenomenon of intelligence is similarly understood as the ability to adapt and react to the organism’s external context in the pursuit of specific goals. This involves the detection of a “gap between an actual and present state of affairs and a counterfactual and future state of affairs that is more desirable” (89). Palmer proposes understanding each individual character as an “adaptive, goal-directed, information-processing device” (90), which leads to a teleological conceptualisation of the fictional work “based on the assumption that its parts function coherently toward a comprehensible end purpose” (90). While the strong emphasis on teleology traditionally has been met with scepticism, since it supposedly detracts from the realism of a narrative, Palmer derives his conclusions from actual research on real mental functioning, thereby contesting the conventional understanding of realism that dominates literary theory.



#### 4.4 Fictional Minds

For his framework, Palmer does not content himself with merely providing a list of fictional-mind-related elements for analysis, as this would replicate the one-sided, linear, incomplete view he denounced in traditional narratology. Instead, he crafts a system for the extraction and analysis of fictional minds which is closely interwoven with concerns about the storyworld, the larger narrative, the role of the reader and even passages of text which seemingly refer to anything but FMF. The chief characteristic of this system is the carefully crafted balance between the different analytical methods taken over from narratology and extended through knowledge about the functioning of real minds. Rather than resulting in a one dimensional collage, the final product allows for the dynamic interaction of concepts relating to various mental aspects, which solidly flow into a holistic framework. Two main concepts emerging from Palmer's research – the continuing-consciousness frame (CCF) and embedded narratives – best serve to illustrate this new holistic approach to fictional minds. They represent different sides of the same coin, insofar as the CCF is concerned with how fictional minds are constructed by the reader, while embedded narratives constitute the outcome of this process.

The continuing-consciousness frame is best understood as an illustration of how readers comprehend a text. It appropriates frame theory from the cognitive sciences, but presents an enriched version since the focus is shifted to fictional minds. Frames and scripts are the devices used to bridge gaps resulting from the limited information provided by the text – a script is defined as “a structure that describes appropriate sequences of events in a particular context” (210) in Schank and Abelson's classic research, while frames are best understood as conceptual tools for the organisation of information, which “aim at reproducing a human cogniser's knowledge and expectations about standard events and situations” (Jahn, *Cognitive Narratology* 69). Palmer's research focus elevates the frames concerned specifically with the construction of consciousness to a paramount position, insisting that they are crucial to readerly comprehension. Guided by the minimal-departure assumption that “the character's consciousness will continue between mentions of them in the text unless informed otherwise” (201), readers gather such isolated references to a

particular character and assign them to the respective character frame. This is a highly dynamic process that functions in a “bidirectional and interactive” way: the initial frame is modified by new information derived from the text, and this, in turn, leads to an updated hypothesis about the character with which the text is approached (Palmer 176). The proficient knowledge readers have about real minds comes to bear on the way they understand fictional minds, so that the notion of causality becomes relevant in the process of interpretation. Palmer refers to a “working hypothesis that visibly coherent behavior is caused by a directing consciousness in the actual world” (178), which is transferred onto the storyworld as well. Narrative passages can be decoded with regard to the mental elements connecting a character’s actions, such as motivations, reasons, intentions, desires and beliefs. This information is then used to adjust or fortify reader hypotheses about the character’s mind. A character’s single action is interpreted in the context of past behaviour and influences the construction of future expectations or, as Palmer puts it: “The past is brought to bear on the present in order to produce the future” (179).

Approaching narrative through the concept of CCF endows the presentation of physical events with a mental dimension and shatters the artificial division between action and thought, forging an intimate link between the mind and its environment. It is strongly supported by the notion of mind-beyond-the-skin borrowed from the work of James Wertsch, which purports that the threshold between the mind and its external context is far less impervious than we think. Essentially, “minds extend beyond the boundary of our skin and encompass the cognitive tools that we use” (Palmer 160) – these tools do not merely passively mediate cognition but shape and influence it in a fundamental way. While language is probably the most obvious example, Palmer discusses two additional tools which simultaneously support and affect thought – the physical context and the social environment. The significance of the physical context for cognition results from the process of “off-loading” in which tasks are delegated to the environment in order to “reduce the cognitive load” (160) and increase efficiency. A simple example of off-loading is that drafting thoughts on a sheet of paper allows for the achievement of a proper overview of one’s ideas and significantly facilitates their organisation and structuring. The social environment

can equally be used as a cognitive tool, for example when two or more people form a “cognitive unit” (162) and collectively work on the solution of a problem. In psychology this is known as intermental thought and very often the solutions obtained in this manner are by far superior to what an individual mind would have accomplished on its own. These insights from the mind-beyond-the-skin are integrated in Palmer’s CCF and bear down on the strategies suggested for the extraction of mental functioning from the narrative.

In order to fully grasp the lines along which this readerly interpretation progresses, it is vital to discuss the concept of aspectuality. Palmer places emphasis on the fact that the storyworld is aspectual – it is not experienced as a consecution of objective facts and contexts, but is rather “only ever viewed under particular aspects or from individual and therefore limited points of view” (15). Aspectuality has a dual effect for readerly comprehension, as it accounts both for the understanding of individual characters and the storyworld as a whole. On the level of the character, the reader aligns herself with the subjective position and takes into account the accompanying mental states. Palmer specifies that “by a process of empathy, [the reader] vicariously experiences the particular physical context of the storyworld as the character does. It is only by these means that the reader can plausibly interpret the character’s subsequent behaviour” (181). The feature of aspectuality easily leads to an “epistemic imbalance” (197) as characters only have access to their own perspective and limited knowledge, whereas the reader has at their disposal the subjective points of view of numerous characters involved in the storyworld and extracts additional information from the narratorial discourse. In this way, aspectuality affects the comprehension of the entire storyworld, which is “the amalgamation of all these different, individual, subjective, and aspectual storyworlds. The reader has to use both their theory of mind and their ability to simulate the mentation of others to follow all of the different individual narratives and, therefore, the whole narrative” (145). Taken as a whole, narrative comprehension progresses from the collection of isolated references, to the connection between consciousness and its environment, the construction of the individual mind and finally the constitution of the storyworld through the collective sum of aspectual points of view.

The CCF takes account of the commerce from textual evidence to storyworld, which has at its centre the mental functioning permeating characters' behaviour throughout the narrative. The dispersed data referring to fictional consciousness has to be gathered and evaluated with the help of storyworld-internal knowledge and experience derived from handling real minds. The CCF is a representation of the work done by readers to join together the various references into a unified, continuing consciousness.

Once the readers apply the strategies subsumed by the CCF notion to the discourse, the result is an embedded narrative for the character in question. Traditionally, the concept of embedded narrative subsumes phenomena such as story-within-the-story and frame narratives. Palmer, however, modifies and extends it by transferring it to concerns about discourse analysis. In his definition, an embedded narrative designates "the whole of a character's mind in action: the total perceptual and cognitive viewpoint; ideological worldview; memories of the past; and the set of beliefs, desires, intentions, motives, and plans for the future" (183). The original feature of embeddedness is retained, but interpreted in a different context: the important elements here are the individual narrative on the one hand and the totality of the fictional text on the other. The former is embedded in the latter and this is a fact taken into account by both readers and analysts during the creation of the storyworld. It has received little explicit recognition so far and Palmer suggests that this might be due to the lack of a unified approach to literary analysis, since currently the areas of consciousness, characterisation and focalisation are treated as separate issues (see 186). The embedded narrative approach fills this gap by taking account of the implications of all three areas and combining them into a whole. The combination of CCF and embedded narratives forms a rich and systematic method for understanding and studying FMF, which ties together the numerous different strands of Palmer's concerns and research.

## 5 Application

In *Fictional Minds* Alan Palmer outlines a structure for understanding FMF and the storyworld based on tendencies and ideological positions which have to be observed in order to guarantee that all mental aspects are given due attention and analytical bias is avoided. The framework is constructed for the study of fictional mental functioning in general and has been devised in such a way that it is applicable to a variety of novels. While this universality is one of its strengths, it necessarily makes the theories rather restrained when it comes to giving direct instructions about how to handle the analysis. In order to elicit a toolkit for the practical application, the work presented in *Fictional Minds* has to be regarded as a starting point and adapted further in different directions according to the specific needs of the novels in question. Since the interest of this thesis is the fictional mind as presented in Coming-of-Age fiction, the theories will necessarily have to take into consideration the structure of the genre. As a first point, it is necessary to revisit the difficulties surrounding the definition of Coming-of-Age fiction in order to correlate it with Palmer's argument.

The minimalist definition advocated here is to conceive of the coming of age moment as the period in which identity is negotiated and ideology is unearthed by the protagonist *consciously for the first time*. If the traditional perspective is that the genre represents *the* moment of discovering one's identity, the definition suggested here understands it as *a* moment in which identity formation takes place. The personal development of the protagonist continues beyond this as well, but the coming of age moment stands out as the dramatisation of the first prototypical mental change. It prepares the groundwork for future negotiations of one's worldview and derives its special power from the fact that it problematises the first time this process is consciously carried out. The negotiation of subjectivity and identity can be related in terms of choices made by the protagonist and, crucially, the awareness that there is a choice in the first place. It represents the paradigm shift from comprehending elements like one's worldview and identity as given factors, to conceiving of them as constructed, variable and subjective.

In order to facilitate the study and analysis of this process, an organising framework can be imposed on it. This framework has the paradigm shift at its centre, which is understood as the transition between two states of mind – the state before the epistemic items become conscious and the state following this defamiliarisation. It has to be stressed that there is no clear boundary between the first state, the transition and the second state. While there should be a perceptible difference between the protagonist's state of mind at the beginning and at the end of the narrative, it is not possible to point out a precise moment when one turns into the other. Rather, both states are at the opposite ends of a gradual transformation which is explored in the novel. The identity negotiation and development of the protagonist are presumed to continue even beyond the confines of the narrative, replicating the model outlined in the course of the coming of age moment. So while the two-state-framework has its advantages for the actual analysis of *The Member of the Wedding*, it should not be taken too literally as it is no more than a helpful model along which to structure the discussion. It would appear that this understanding is flexible enough to allow a conceptualisation of the genre down to a common denominator while still leaving room for the variations and subversions carried out in the novel.

The main goal of this thesis is to explore the fictional mental functioning of the Coming-of-Age protagonist during the process of worldview formation as underpinned by this framework – there are several compelling issues that can be discussed in relation to each point of the two-state-model. What is of particular interest here is how the defamiliarisation is brought about, in what ways the protagonists negotiate their identities and craft subjectivity once they become problematised, whether and how a solution is arrived at and what differences there are between the two states in the presentation of FMF. It is possible to arrive at a fascinating strategy for exploring such questions once they are translated into the language of Alan Palmer's research.

## 5.1 Conceptualisation via Palmer

### 5.1.1 State One

Viewing the paradigmatic shift framework through the perspectives delineated in *Fictional Minds* induces a reorganisation of Palmer's foundational concepts as a restatement in different terms of the coming of age moment. The question of what starts the whole process, the trigger for the paradigm shift, ultimately explores how implicit or passive mental contents suddenly become explicit. This formulation is oddly compliant with Palmer's discussion of the non-consciousness in which a substantial part of mental functioning lies dormant. If the two perspectives are blended together, the trigger which gets the process of coming of age going can be located in the disruption of comfortable background-cognition and the ensuing influx of hitherto unnoticed items into the consciousness. One of the conclusions Palmer draws from discourses on the functioning of real minds is that "attention goes to where it is needed [...] consciousness is reserved for surprises and can deal with the unexpected" (108). It seems necessary, then, to trace the distribution of the protagonist's attention in the narrative in order to isolate the catalyst for paradigmatic negotiations. An often neglected manifestation of cognition – emotions – proves to be a helpful tool here, as part of their function is the regulation of attention. The narrative can be sifted for moments depicting uncontrolled emotional reactions as indicators of the protagonist's confrontation with the unexpected, particularly with alternative worldviews and ideologies which contradict their current mindset. An additional method for the retrieval of such clashes of ideology emerges from the conceptualisation of the mind-beyond-the-skin and its manifestation as intermental thought. When the protagonist casually belongs to a small group, usually consisting of people they share close everyday interaction with, they come to function as part of a cognitive unit sharing intermental thought. This is a prime opportunity for the collision with alternative perspectives and constitutes one of the channels which influence the primary, unexamined worldview inherent in the first state. The pattern of abandoning and reforming such relationships becomes significant as a symptom of the desire to distance or align oneself with the ideological positions represented there.

### 5.1.2 Transition

In the two-state-model outlined above, the disruption of elements which have stabilised the mindset of the protagonist so far is followed by the actual paradigm shift, the transition between the first and the second state. The process of transitioning is concerned with the intense negotiation of one's worldview and the attempt to make sense of the contradictions which brought about the defamiliarisation in the first place. Issues such as the reconciliation of different ideological positions, problem solving strategies, efforts to carve a subjective understanding, and the re-organisation of one's knowledge all illustrate how choices are made by the protagonist and flow into the larger activity of identity formation. The coming of age experience of a paradigmatic shift is equally a fertile ground for a number of Palmer's theories. The concept of situated identity makes it possible to study the mind of the protagonist as it exists in the minds of other characters. Since their assessment can deliver more accurate results than first person ascriptions in which the protagonist characterises their own personality, exploring this situated identity can provide the analyst with valuable insights. The limited aspectual point of view presented in passages of the protagonist's direct consciousness can be transcended and enriched by the elicitation of mind-related information from others' perspective on the storyworld. Intimately connected with this are the doubly embedded narratives of which the protagonist is subject. Palmer suggests that "[a]n informative way to look at narratives is to examine the distance between a character's view of their own embedded narrative and the doubly embedded narratives of others relating to that character" (233). Overlaps that are too complete or, in contrast, differ too much, should be placed in relation to the context of the larger narrative and can be meaningfully interpreted with regard to the subjectivity of the protagonist's FMF. Symmetrically, the doubly embedded narratives formed by the protagonist are likewise a rich source of information. They provide an insight into how the thoughts, actions and perspectives of others are interpreted within the consciousness of the protagonist. This storyworld-internal interpretation is a process which parallels the reader's efforts in constructing the narrative. Therefore, basic features outlined by Palmer, such as causality, come to bear on how the protagonist



makes sense of the behaviour of others. Individual actions are scrutinised for the underlying motifs and goals that evoke them and these can in turn be ascribed to particular worldviews and understandings.

Text passages that illustrate how the protagonist tries to make sense of unfamiliar worldviews by reconstructing and interpreting them internally are highly fascinating and also germane to the analysis of the paradigmatic shift. Translated in Palmerian terms, the negotiation of worldviews involves the protagonist going beyond their aspectual view by attempting to switch cognitive frames and adopt another's subjective outlook. On the one hand, this is an embodiment of the learning process which takes place during the phase of transition. The protagonist has developed an awareness of the multiplicity of perspectives and in search of establishing their own subjectivity explores ideologies foreign to them. Slipping into different cognitive frames constitutes a way of "testing" alternative worldviews before constructing one's own. On the other hand, examining how skilful the protagonist is in formulating doubly embedded narratives is epistemically revealing. It exposes how proficient their comprehension is at any given point and allows for the quantification of progress throughout the coming of age, since it is reflective of the protagonist's problem solving abilities.

Tracking the instances in which the protagonist slips in and out of others' cognitive frames provides access to the pattern of epistemic growth they undergo during the phase of transition. Whenever the aspectual view of another character is inadequately reconstructed, the causes for this have to be studied by getting to the bottom of what the protagonist does not know or properly understand yet. Such missing puzzle pieces are significant since they can generate a misconceived dialogue which propels the narrative events by influencing the relationship with other characters. The synergy this creates corresponds to Palmer's demonstration that plot is read "as the interaction of characters' embedded narratives" (190), becoming linked to the teleological concerns of the novel. Similarly, an improvement in the protagonist's construction of doubly embedded narratives signals that certain missing epistemic pieces have been supplied and a new stage in the paradigmatic negotiation has been reached.

### 5.1.3 State Two

The final part of the organisational framework is the state of mind emerging after the transition. As the negotiation and restlessness brought about by defamiliarisation gradually subside, the worldview of the protagonist can become at least temporarily stable. It is consolidated through the selection of the ideology that is subjectively most appropriate for the protagonist at this point in time. What can be studied here is how the improvement of the protagonist's knowledge throughout the narrative is responsible for this mindset and what choices were made in order to arrive at it. One method of studying this is through the analysis of passages with regard to the network of present and counterfactual states encoded in them. This involves the application of Palmer's tools towards the extraction of goals, intentions, desires and beliefs which refer to the larger mental functioning behind them. The new mindset can be made palpable by tracing its effect on the behaviour of the protagonist and it would be particularly fruitful to establish a contrast with passages preceding the transition. The ebbing away of attention can also be conclusive for the choices which define this last part, determining which issues are retracted back into the non-consciousness and where the attention is now redirected to. This final step is in line with the symmetry of the two-state-model and closes the circle by revisiting the pattern of attention which triggered the entire process.

## 6 The Member of the Wedding

The fiction of Carson McCullers is permeated by the cardinal “theme of individual loneliness, growing pains, social or physical marginality” (Spivak 131). After its publication in 1946, *The Member of the Wedding* went on to become a critic favourite, praised as a “concise and penetrating study of American adolescence” (Mortimer 61). McCullers’ third work has been commended on its “perfectly controlled” plot and compared to such Coming-of-Age milestones like *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *The Catcher in the Rye* (Cook 60).

The novel is structured in three parts depicting “the story of four days in the life of Frankie Addams” (Dangerfield 31), a twelve-year-old girl living in the American South. Apart from her absentee father, Frankie’s days are mainly populated by her cousin John Henry and the family cook Berenice. The normality of her existence has been dramatically ruptured during the spring of that year, so that at the onset of the narrative Frankie’s worldview is left in shambles. Throughout the never-ending heat of the summer that follows she attempts to make sense of what has happened and why her outlook is suddenly determined by an anxiety she cannot find the words for. Frankie’s affliction is seemingly resolved when her brother visits in order to introduce his fiancée to the family before their wedding. Something about seeing the young couple together strikes a chord with Frankie and displaces her existential tension. She visualises herself as a “member of the wedding” and decides to join the two after the ceremony, even changing her name to “F. Jasmine” so as to resemble their names that also start with the letters “J A”. Exhilarated by this newfound solution, she spends the last day before the wedding going around town and her changed countenance pushes her into accepting the invitation of a soldier who, unaware of her age, asks her out on a date. The evening ends in his hotel room, in which Frankie can only narrowly avert an attack. She returns home slightly disturbed, but overall focuses her energy and hope into the imminent wedding. When this does not go as planned and the newly married couple refuse to take her along on their honeymoon, Frankie’s world seems to shatter anew. She unsuccessfully tries to run away and is left completely miserable when the police pick her up. The final part of the novel depicts a day several months after this incident. Berenice has resigned, John Henry has succumbed

to illness, the family is about to move houses and Frankie now calls herself “Frances”. She refuses to ever talk about the wedding and her days now are overshadowed by a new best friend and their plans to travel the world together.

The intention of the analytical chapters that follow is to examine how Frankie’s coming of age is depicted in *The Member of the Wedding*. The mental transformation taking place in the novel is understood according to the focus devised in the previous sections. Following Palmer’s appraisal that “the mind refers to much more than what is normally thought of as consciousness or thought” (19), the underlying aim will be to employ relevant techniques suggested in *Fictional Minds* in order to disclose as many non-traditional aspects of the fictional mental functioning as possible. The analysis is structured along five chapters concerned with the features of attention, narrative strategy, language, substitution and assimilation. They form an arch reflecting both the two-state-model of Coming-of-Age fiction developed above and the specific complex of issues experienced by Frankie. The first three chapters are concerned with the dramatisation of the transition phase and the contrast it forms to the mental functioning that precedes it, opening up the problem and illuminating it from various angles. The final two chapters focus on the specific strategies for closing the problem that characterise Frankie’s negotiation in the course of the novel.

## 6.1 Distribution of Attention

According to the interpretative framework set up in the previous chapter, the mental functioning presented in Coming-of-Age fiction can be structured in three parts: the protagonist's initial state of mind; the phase of transition in which questions of identity and worldview are scrutinised; and finally the state of mind resulting from the preliminary consolidation of cognition. The actual transformation of the protagonist's mind unfolds during the phase of transition; however the mental states preceding and following it have a vital function as liminal points which constitute its dynamics. It is therefore of particular interest how changes in mental functioning are invoked and, accordingly, how the transitions between each state are navigated in the novel. It is possible to approach such questions with the help of the feature of attention discussed in *Fictional Minds*.

In his review of the work done on real minds, Palmer establishes that consciousness only comprises a small part of mental functioning, as "the brain's preference is to make as much as possible of its activity non-conscious" (108). The reason for this phenomenon can be located in the "functional approach to the notion of attention" (107) and the fact that efficiency remains the primary principle which underlies the organisation of mental functioning. In order to ensure that situations and problems which require an immediate response can be handled adequately, the consciousness is kept free of all mental contents which are not acutely needed. Palmer addresses the recurring "emphasis on the need to reserve attention for when it is required to deal with surprises" (108), solidifying its crucial role in retrieving and introducing elements into the consciousness when necessary. The feature of attention is thus understood in terms of its function as a gatekeeper, determining which non-conscious mental contents are permitted entrance into consciousness. This conceptualisation can be adapted to the purposes of Coming-of-Age fiction by linking the succession of the framework's three parts with the distribution of the protagonist's attention. This way, the passage from the initial state to the phase of transition can be analysed as the breakpoint where specific non-conscious mental contents become conscious. The chapter at hand will discuss the distribution of attention

in *The Member of the Wedding* and specifically how this feature evokes the phase of mental transition.

The pattern of Frankie's attention in the novel neatly conforms to the structure of the interpretational framework, as its different manifestations clearly correspond to the three states of mind. Since the vast majority of the narrative is concerned with the phase of her transition, there are no passages which allow direct access to Frankie's initial state of mind. Instead, it has to be inferred through the subtle contrast set up with her current cognition, as demonstrated by the following quotation:

Things she had never noticed much before began to hurt her: home lights watched from the evening sidewalks, an unknown voice from an alley. [...] She was afraid of these things that made her suddenly wonder who she was, and what she was going to be in the world, and why she was standing at that minute, seeing a light, or listening, or staring up into the sky: alone. She was afraid, and there was a queer tightness in her chest. (31-32)

This passage is a relatively straightforward description of the way Frankie's environment exerts a decisive influence on her emotional states, at first inducing fear which then grows into existential angst. It is significant, however, that what triggers those intense emotions is not an abnormal or shocking occurrence, but rather contextual elements which Frankie is thoroughly acquainted with, as they are a standard part of the environment she has grown up in. Furthermore, it is disclosed that the effect her surroundings have on her is unusual for her character – she responds with fear, even though until that point in her existence “[s]he was not the kind of person ever to think of being afraid” (29). Her untypical reaction, combined with the fairly mundane trigger, suggest that the key factor in the scene is the way she *abruptly* becomes aware of the home lights and the unknown voice, representing a clear shifting of her attention onto something which has hitherto only ever been at the periphery of her consciousness. This is symptomatic for the state of Frankie's attention pre-transition and the fact that previously her perception of the storyworld has been unquestioned and unproblematic.

The initial state's engaged but non-conscious cognition can also be reconstructed from the following excerpt: “This was the summer when Frankie

was sick and tired of being Frankie. [...] Until the April of that year, and all the years of her life before, she had been like other people" (29). Frankie's present separation from other people serves to highlight how, previously, her view of the storyworld had been characterised by an unobtrusive sense of unity. In its absence, her identity seems to become detached from the communal feeling and emerges in its own right. This leads to the existential questions of the previous passage, about who she is and what her place in the world is, and it makes her "sick and tired" of being herself.

The unexpected and unusual turbulence of Frankie's present serves to contrast the initial state's stability and steadiness. Prior to the onset of the coming of age process, questions of self and existence were quietly taken for granted. Her outlook into the world was dominated by an inherent sense of unity and a non-conscious approach, in which things were understood as given and her experiences were simply taken as the objective state of affairs. All of this is significant for the distribution of Frankie's attention, whose function was balanced and in harmony with her perception, never transcending the immediate, everyday activities she was involved in. The focus of her attention was outward and forward into the storyworld.

In the transition phase, on the other hand, the harmony and forward outlook of her attention are broken. This is effected through the hyper-awareness with which Frankie perceives her immediate surroundings from the very onset of the novel: "The three of them sat at the kitchen table, saying the same things over and over, so that by August the words began to rhyme with each other and sound strange" (7). The feeling of strangeness persists until it is explicitly stated that "the long known, the familiar, struck her with strange surprise" (60), demonstrating how her sudden intense engagement with what has hitherto been merely a backdrop to her life gradually weakens the natural status of her worldview and assumptions. In this way, the heightening of her attention results in defamiliarisation and everything is endowed with a sudden perceived oddness. It furthermore has the effect of quite literally interrupting her forward progression by making time stand still. Throughout the first part of the novel, her everyday experiences are characterised as nightmarishly repetitive and never-ending: "But as the summer lasted, and would not end, the walls had begun to

bother Frankie. That evening the kitchen looked strange to her, and she was afraid" (14).

The defamiliarisation expands from affecting her immediate external environment, to becoming increasingly internal. One of the moments in which this changeover can be located is Frankie's realisation that "to her own ears her voice sounded ragged, far away" (11), since her voice has an external manifestation, but its point of origin is clearly internal. Indeed, shortly after she starts observing her own voice, the focus of her attention becomes internal and abstract as she remarks: "I wish I was somebody else except me" (12). The inward turn considerably changes the way she experiences reality and the unsettling sensation that "the world seemed somehow separate from herself" (31) stands in stark contrast to the comforting sense of being like other people, which is synonymous with her childhood years. This discomfort motivates the consideration of the specific questions which Frankie has to negotiate during the phase of transition and they further serve to highlight the increasingly philosophic quality of the issues occupying her attention. The defamiliarisation of her own person foregrounds the arbitrariness of her existence and identity:

"Listen," F. Jasmine said. "What I've been trying to say is this. Doesn't it strike you as strange that I am I, and you are you? I am F. Jasmine Addams. And you are Berenice Sadie Brown. And we can look at each other, and touch each other, and stay together year in and year out in the same room. Yet always I am I, and you are you. And I can't ever be anything else but me, and you can't ever be anything else but you. Have you ever thought of that? And does it seem to you strange?" (135-136)

Simultaneously, Frankie's belief in an objective reality is unsettled – a point which she attempts to argue in front of Berenice: "I see a green tree. And to me it is green. And you would call the tree green also. And we would agree on this. But is the color you see as green the same color I see as green? Or say we both call a color black. But how do we know that what you see as black is the same color I see as black?" (136). In addressing one of the classic problems of philosophy, Frankie expresses the growing uncertainty of her own perception. Gradually, the set of issues relating to the subjectivity of her cognition and self come to occupy a central role in her consciousness, veritably haunting her and constantly engaging her attention. Not only is this what she consistently thinks



about when she is alone and what she brings up in conversations, but it even intrudes in highly inappropriate moments. The existential questions start overpowering her consciousness even in situations when her attention is supposed to be focussed on the present activities she is engaged in. This obstructs her functioning in everyday life to the point where other characters take notice and Berenice has to exclaim: "You don't have your mind on the game" (22).

Particularly in her interactions at home with Berenice and John Henry, Frankie's consciousness is presented as having a dual quality, as one part of it attempts to engage with and react to the immediate surroundings, while the majority of her attention consistently reverts to the problem of her existence. In an attempt to absolve herself from the constant questioning and fear this causes, she devises the plan to join her brother's wedding. However, the wedding comes to function as a mere placeholder and similarly becomes a fixation as it splits her consciousness: "Frankie swept the cards from the table. The wedding was bright and beautiful as snow and the heart in her was mashed" (23) and "Frankie walked around the table and she could feel [the brother and his wife] going away" (41). Both passages illustrate the wedding-related thoughts as intrusions in the form of non-sequiturs which prevent her from becoming fully immersed in the present. This disruptive influx of mental contents makes it impossible for Frankie to slip back into the unaware form of existence of the initial state and forces a resolution of the issue.

At the end of the narrative, as the final state sets in, Frankie's attention assumes a completely different quality which is reflected in the discourse. The last pages of the novel constitute a calm revision of the events that have taken place since the failure of the wedding with an even, matter of fact tone. Frankie's thoughts refocus outside of herself again and while they are now mainly occupied by the budding friendship with Mary Littlejohn there are no intrusions and nothing causes a split in her consciousness any longer. As Frankie's meta-cognition subsides, the focus of her attention reverts back to the storyworld and its external events.

It can be concluded that the distribution of attention in *The Member of the Wedding* has a twofold function. On the one hand, it initiates a heightened consideration of the protagonist's situation. The resulting defamiliarisation deprives known but non-conscious information of its implicitness and assumed naturalness, thereby unearthing the issues which become subject of the protagonist's negotiation during the phase of transition. On the other hand, the distribution of attention also has a motivational function by constantly confronting the consciousness with the newly uncovered problems. This promotes a continuous engagement with the issue until a resolution is found and the new state of mind can be consolidated, thus concluding the coming of age.

## 6.2 Narrative Situation

The preceding discussion considers the way in which the distribution of attention evokes the protagonist's mental transformation on a storyworld-internal level. In this chapter, the focus is on the storyworld-external tools with which the transformation of the mind is dramatised, more specifically when it comes to the narrative discourse. Since the narrative situation involves a heterodiegetic third-person narrator, the direct presentations of the protagonist's verbal output are supplemented by mind-related information in the form of thought report and numerous instances of free indirect perception. However, the narrator cannot be characterised as omniscient due to the fact that the distance to the storyworld is slim, verging on non-existent. The narrator's consistent alignment with the protagonist's perspective is most obviously indicated by his matter of course compliance with the heroine's self-descriptions. Those vary in the three parts of the novel, as she respectively thinks of herself as Frankie, F. Jasmine and Frances. Even in those parts of the discourse which are detached from direct presentations of Frankie's thoughts, the narrator defers to her choice of how she wants to be referred to. This is particularly significant since none of the characters within the storyworld show any consideration to Frankie's wish to be called differently.

Furthermore, the narrative discourse carries certain obvious traits which place it much closer to the sphere of Frankie's psyche than to that of removed omniscience. The narrating voice showcased in the following passage is clearly not that of a distanced and objective narrator:

This was the summer when Frankie was sick and tired of being Frankie. She hated herself, and had become a loafer and a big no-good who hung around the summer kitchen: dirty and greedy and mean and sad. Besides being too mean to live, she was a criminal. If the Law knew about her, she could be tried in the courthouse and locked up in the jail. Yet Frankie had not always been a criminal and a big no-good. (29)

The lexical choices present in this excerpt, particularly "no-good," "loafer," and "too mean to live," are naive and childish terms which are of subjective relevance for Frankie. The reader has previously come to know that several of the other girls in Frankie's town "had said she was too young and mean" (17) and Berenice exclaims exactly the same thing, verbatim: "You are too mean to

live" (29). The vocabulary incorporated here consists of terms that have created an impression upon Frankie, so that she has innocently and uncritically taken them over in her own thinking, as children are wont to do. The passage represents the presentation of her consciousness via the narrator, rather than the narrator's evaluative commentary. The sentence about the courthouse demonstrates the same principle, this time not on the level of vocabulary, but on the level of comprehension. Frankie's single act of petty theft certainly does not qualify for a large-scale prosecution and the incarceration of a 12-year-old. While the idea of what is done to criminals is something that has deeply scared and impressed Frankie, her understanding is only vague and unformed. Therefore, she overestimates the magnitude of her "crime" and misapplies the schema of courthouse, judicial process and imprisonment. The discourse presents exactly this wrongful application of Frankie's understanding and not the narrator's objective evaluation of the situation.

This alignment of the narrator's voice with Frankie's perspective on the storyworld is a valuable element of the discourse level, since it provides plenty of evidence for the fictional mental functioning in the novel. However, the proximity also has the effect of obscuring information by depriving the reader of external input. Every part of the storyworld that is presented through the narrative discourse is already coloured by Frankie's perception, emotions and understanding. This eliminates the possibility of classifying her mental functioning and measuring it against the objective reality of the storyworld, or passing any kind of informed judgement. Since the narrator withholds such valuable explanatory information, the reader levels up with Frankie's understanding and in the process of reading undergoes a restlessness, confusion and erratic search for the cause similar to her. For instance, in the beginning of the novel, the phrase "she was afraid" (13) occurs four times in the space of a few paragraphs. Each time, it is repeated verbatim, without any variation or synonymous rephrasing, so that it evolves into a steady rhythm which pierces through the scene and comes up over and over again. The discourse surrounding that phrase does not provide the concrete source of this feeling or any further explanation, so that "she was afraid" turns into an acute mental state to which no causation is applied. Frankie cannot classify or

integrate this sensation and therefore she cannot adequately account for it. Neither can the reader for the better part of the novel, since the narrator does not mediate in any meaningful way. The somewhat non-chronological form of the narration in the novel's first part mimics Frankie's futile attempts at making sense. Her mind jumps back and forth from her present perception to strange memories of spring and the desolation of summer, turning over and repeatedly inspecting the separate recollections. This is an example of the way in which the discourse succeeds at producing the effect of Frankie's mental functioning. She registers the feeling, which is constantly there and while she lacks a solution and cannot explain it, the constant repetition prevents it from being ignored. In following the narration, the reader is exposed to the same urgency of the sensation and suffers the frustration of the fruitless enquiry into its cause.

The episode of "she was afraid" is a small-scale illustration of what it is like to be Frankie during the phase of transition. In cognitive narratology, this phenomenon is called qualia - "an unfamiliar term for something that could not be more familiar to each of us: the *ways things seem to us*" (Dennett 381). Herman defines it alternatively as "the idea that conscious experiences have ineliminably subjective properties, a distinctive sense or feeling of what it is like for someone or something to experience them" (*Storytelling* 314). The narrative proximity of *The Member of the Wedding* thus allows for the dramatisation of Frankie's transforming mind in such a way that the reader goes beyond the passive reception of information and actively emotes with her.

One of the most important withholdings of information concerns the April event, the immense significance of which will be discussed in more detail in the final two chapters of this thesis. Early on in the novel, the brief sentence "[u]ntil the April of that year, and all the years of her life before, she had been like other people" (29) sets it up as a crucial moment without further elaborating on it. Shortly after that, it is repeated that "April that year came sudden and still, and the green of the trees was a wild bright green. [...] There was something about the green trees and the flowers of April that made Frankie sad" (29-30). The repetition combined with the refusal to detail what happened and the direct correlation between the event and the change in her mental state, produce the qualia of Frankie's summer months. Just like her, the reader is made aware of

the event's ominous effect, but cannot account for its significance or deduce why it influenced her as intensely.

A further prolific source of information about Frankie's mental functioning emerges from the way the narrator controls the reader's access to certain key moments. Two of the novel's standout events concern the first visit of the brother to Frankie's house and the long-awaited wedding ceremony. Despite their significance, neither event is allowed to unfold in the present and the access to each is complicated in multiple ways.

The influence of the brother's visit is already established on the first page of the novel: "And then, on the last Friday of August, all this was changed: it was so sudden that Frankie puzzled the whole blank afternoon, and still she did not understand" (7). However, the referent of the "it" pronoun is only clarified at a later stage. In the meantime, the visit continues to be presented to the reader as a formative event, hanging cloud-like over the discourse without being made explicit and properly palpable. Frankie's recollection is only incrementally unfurled in the form of interjected memories in-between her daily events. She approximates the issue carefully, starting with the seconds leading up to the brother's arrival – "And what were they doing that August morning when her brother and the bride came home? They were sitting in the arbor shade and talking about Christmas" (22) – and later: "She stood in the doorway, coming from the hall, and the first sight of her brother and the bride had shocked her heart" (35). The moments until she actually gets to see her brother are remembered clearly and in minute detail, quite unlike the rest of the visit, as the following scene demonstrates:

"Tell me," she said. "Tell me exactly how it was."

"You know!" said Berenice. "You seen them."

"But tell me," Frankie said.

"I will discuss it for the last time," said Berenice. "Your brother and the bride come late this morning and you and John Henry hurried in from the back yard to see them. The next thing I realize you busted back through the kitchen and run up to your room. You came down with your organdie dress on and lipstick an inch thick from one ear to the next. Then you all

just sat around in the living room. It was hot. [...] And that is all. Now, is you satisfied?" (37)

She seems incapable of recollecting what has happened once she set eyes on her brother, and as Berenice's exasperated "I will discuss it for the last time" insinuates, Frankie has kept asking her to recount the visit, trying to extract the information she herself lacks. However, no description seems to be precise or exhaustive enough and only instances later Frankie's thoughts return to the event:

"Tell me," Frankie said again. "Exactly what did they look like?"

"Look like?" said Berenice. "Why, they looked natural. Your brother is a good-looking blond white boy. And the girl is kind of brunette and small and pretty. They make a nice white couple. You seen them, Foolish." (37-38)

Berenice's repeated "you seen them" and Frankie's vehement desire to be told "exactly" what the situation was like, what each of them did and how they looked suggest that a peculiar cognitive reaction has unfolded. It is as if the first visual confrontation with the couple had such an intensive effect on her that it required all her faculties to concentrate on dealing and trying to properly grasp the situation. Her meta-cognition, so prevalent throughout the rest of the spring and summer, is abruptly turned off here and becomes displaced by an exclusive focus on the present. This prevents the brother's visit and her resulting impressions from being properly stored in her memory. It further accounts for her constant questioning and the fact that the answers she receives from Berenice are insufficient – they only cover the objective material side of the situation, whereas Frankie tries to find out its subjective significance in order to understand her own severe reaction. Once again the reader is placed in an epistemic overlap with the protagonist. The event that Frankie cannot remember is inaccessible through the narrative discourse and so the reader's insight into the storyworld is strictly bound to Frankie's experience of it.

The second key event, her brother's wedding, is constructed as the culmination of the narrative. Frankie's stubbornly recurring thoughts about the brother and the significance she lends to the wedding build up a tension implying that once Frankie is granted participation in the ceremony, her negotiation and confusion

will be resolved. She even goes so far as to structure her entire life's history around the day of the wedding, so that it is divided into three parts: "all the twelve years of the old Frankie, the present day itself, and the future ahead when the J A three of them would be together in all the many distant places" (73). The third part of the novel, in which the delineation of the wedding is expected, opens in the manner anticipated with a detailed description of the journey to the wedding location. Immediately upon their arrival, however, the relation between story and discourse time abruptly changes as the actual ceremony is summarised in one short paragraph. The very introduction of the expected climactic event presents it as already finished, casually including the phrase "the wrecked wedding over" (168) in a subordinate clause. The following pages again implement the constant shifts between present and memories, as descriptions of the bus ride home are interrupted by scenes from the wedding that flash up in Frankie's mind. The discourse's simulation of her cognition presents it as not having been modified at all by the experience of the wedding. This is symbolic of the unattained resolution of Frankie's problem and contributes to the anticlimactic status of the scene. Furthermore, the way Frankie perceives the wedding to be "unmanaged as a nightmare" (168) corresponds to the feeling evoked by the series of unorganised recollections which constitute the reader's sole insight into the event.

*The Member of the Wedding* implements the specific subjective outlook of the transforming mind by conferring it diegetically. The novel's particular narrative situation, which is founded on the narrator's close proximity to the protagonist's perspective upon the storyworld, effectively dramatises the quality of her mental functioning. Since the narrator's ascriptions of causality are either unavailable or misleading, the reader is fully subjected to Frankie's subjective understanding of the external environment. She is still not fully equipped to deal with the new insights and problems opened up when her phase of transition was triggered by the distribution of attention. Therefore, the experiences she undergoes cannot be sufficiently comprehended, relativised, or put into perspective – they exist on their own and have absolute importance. The immense impact this grants to her various mental states is encoded in the narrative discourse and conferred upon the reader. In particular, it is the absence of alternative perspectives on the



storyworld and the withdrawal of causative information that make the restlessness, frustration, and circularity of Frankie's mind come to life.

### 6.3 Linguistic Failure

One of the main claims underpinning the Palmer's model for the study of fictional minds relates to the predominance of the linguistic medium in literary criticism. He argues that discussions of fictional mental functioning are too often distorted by what he calls the "grip of the *verbal norm*" (14). This brings forth a variety of problems in terms of the accuracy of the analysis. The insights he incorporates from various scientific disciplines pertaining to real minds successfully demonstrate that language is only one among numerous strategies through which cognition is expressed. Palmer mentions "mood, desires, emotions, sensations, visual images, attention, and memory" (58) as an illustration of the non-linguistic mental phenomena. Nevertheless, language remains the one tool heavily privileged in classical narratological approaches, which showcase an "overestimation of the verbal component in thought" (75). This bias can be exposed by the fact that critical discussions often exclusively equate mental functioning in fiction with the "highly verbalized, self-conscious form of thought that is known as *inner speech*" (9). The analytic models for thought presentation emerging from this understanding have a tendency to neglect the diegetic mode of thought report or indirect speech. Accordingly, mimetic and direct categories, such as interior monologue, private speech and direct discourse (cf. Palmer 54) are privileged on the deceptive promise that they provide "valid" information which has not been diluted by narrative interference. Indeed, Palmer makes this often implicit attitude tangible by observing that the "words that narratologists tend to use about the role of the narrator and therefore about thought report are negative ones such as narratorial 'interruption,' 'intrusion,' 'interference,' and 'distortion'" (57). In his framework, Palmer incorporates his awareness of this bias and consequently attempts to "redress the balance a little" (5). It should be noted, however, that this criticism of the "verbal norm" does not advocate the complete renouncement of the value of direct presentations of characters' cognition. Rather, since the manifestation of the mind has been shown to extend far beyond the expression via the tool of language, alternative realms of mental functioning should also be given due attention.

While Palmer's is a comprehensive study inclusive of various types of literature, it would be interesting to discuss how his observations relate to Coming-of-Age fiction in particular. The transforming adolescent mind constitutes a very special moment of cognitive development, allowing for a certain latitude and experimentation in the way mental functioning is handled in the genre. Indeed, *The Member of the Wedding* readily displays how the overreliance on the linguistic medium can be exploited and veritably put on its head.

One of the foremost features of the novel is the frustration of verbal expression. The protagonist's cognition is affected by the inability to verbalise her thoughts and feelings for the better part of the narrative and this failure is something that acutely befalls her at the onset of the phase of transition. By effectively removing the possibility of adequate verbalisation, *The Member of the Wedding* does not merely expound on the problematic status of language, but virtually pushes it to the extremes. This chapter will initially explore the ways in which this is accomplished and then move on to a survey of the alternatives which emerge in the absence of linguistic expression.

Frankie's cognition exhibits three different manifestations of language failure over the course of the transition phase – at first she cannot find any words to explain what is going on with her, then she is unable to say exactly what she means and finally she does not mean to say anything, but cannot stop talking. The protagonist's difficulty in expression is already introduced within the opening pages, where it is stated that “[t]here was something about this wedding that gave Frankie a feeling she could not name” (8). Part I of the novel is marked by the prevalence of this particular phrase, which is retained and repeated more than half a dozen times. Soon, it becomes obvious that the emergence of the unnameable coincides with the onset of the phase of transition. The changes in mental functioning it has brought about primarily manifest themselves as a feeling which Frankie is unable to grasp: “She could not name the feeling in her, and she stood there until dark shadows made her think of ghosts” (50). The specific way in which the issue is formulated – “The name for what had happened to her Frankie did not know” (10) – is significant, as it places an emphasis on how novel this state and its accompanying symptoms are. Not only is Frankie unable to adequately explain and account for

what is happening to her, but she even lacks the appropriate lexical item, she *does not know the name* for what is going on. As her transformation advances, the terror of the unheard and unknown spreads out, tainting her world more and more – the brother and his fiancée “made in her this feeling that she could not name” (35); she discovers “a new unnameable connection” (66) between herself and an unknown old man passing her by; there is again “a feeling impossible to explain in words” (66); and even experiences which take place in the immediate present “she could not further explain” (104). Eventually, she explicitly addresses this problem, stating: “I don't hardly know how to tell just what I mean” (102). In all those instances, the option of expressing her state verbally is withdrawn and blocked from the beginning, due to the fact that “unknown words were in her throat” (136) – she literally cannot even produce the kinds of words needed to transmit her sensations.

However, her inability to find “the right words to tell of a feeling that she had never heard named before” (117) does not remain the sole difficulty. The narrative additionally challenges the linguistic tool by including numerous scenes in which Frankie does come up with a verbal expression of the issues troubling her – only to have them subverted seconds later. It starts off innocuously enough, when she says “[t]he world is certainy [sic] a small place” and upon further inquiry from Berenice immediately corrects this statement: “‘I mean sudden,’ said Frankie. ‘The world is certainy [sic] a sudden place’” (10). While this could normally be disregarded as an insignificant moment, it is endowed with special meaning due to the fact that the pattern of statement followed by an instantaneous retraction is repeated over and over again. For instance, after she seems to finally have succeeded in expressing one of the main problems that engage her – the upcoming wedding – she privately reflects that the “conversation about the wedding had somehow been wrong. The questions she had asked that afternoon had all been the wrong questions” (50). The unreliability of her explanations is driven to the point of absolute ridiculousness towards the middle of the novel, as, within a single scene, she retracts her statements a staggering five times:

“Listen,” F. Jasmine said. “What I've been trying to say is this. Doesn't it strike you as strange that I am I, and you are you?” [...]

Strange words were flowering in her throat and now was the time for her to name them. "This," she said. "I see a green tree. And to me it is green." [...] F. Jasmine scraped her head against the door, and put her hand up to her throat. Her voice shattered and died. "That's not what I meant to say, anyway." [...]

"This is what I mean," F. Jasmine said. "You are walking down a street and you meet somebody. Anybody." [...] F. Jasmine felt the unsaid words stick in her throat and a choked sickness made her groan and knock her head against the door jamb. Finally she said again in a high ragged voice:

"This:"

Bernice waited, and when she did not speak again, she asked: "What on earth is wrong with you?" [...] She began to talk in a high fast voice, but they were the wrong words, and not what she had meant to say. (135-138)

The excessiveness in this scene is merely a hyperbolic illustration of how her attempts at verbalisation degenerate in the rest of the novel. Any instances in which Frankie makes a comprehensive point about her mental state or the issues that bother her are abruptly rendered invalid. She recants, seemingly corrects herself and, in a maddening circularity, tries over and over again to find an adequate linguistic expression. The failure of language is made palpable every time she modifies what she has said, immediately upon speaking it out loud.

The third strategy which subverts the status of language is its devaluation. Immediately after the manic episode delineated above, Frankie reacts to the expressive impotence by spawning the following stream of "wrong words":

"Boyoman! Manoboy!" she said. "When we leave Winter Hill we're going to more places than you ever thought about or even knew existed. Just where we will go first I don't know, and it don't matter. Because after we go to that place we're going on to another. We mean to keep moving, the three of us. Here today and gone tomorrow. Alaska, China, Iceland, South America. Travelling on trains. Letting her rip on motor-cycles. Flying around all over the world in aeroplanes. Here today and gone tomorrow. All over the world. It's the damn truth. Boyoman!" (138-139)

Frankie's babbling is accompanied by an increasingly frantic conduct as she paces in circles around the kitchen table and even develops a fever in the process. Incited by the preceding inability to phrase her thoughts, she

generates this flood of words and she talks without any purport, just for sake of talking. This moment symbolises a substantial transition. Frankie's language use is no longer motivated by the desire to express meaning and instead becomes a substitute robbed of communicative value. It marks the final step in the erosion of the verbal tool and epitomises the absolute inflation of language.

To recapitulate, the verbal expression of mental phenomena is problematised in the novel through Frankie's absolute inability to substantiate her thoughts and sensations and the growing recklessness with which she employs language. This issue is intimately connected with the discussion of the novel's narrative situation in the previous chapter. Since the discourse level depicts Frankie's perspective in an unmediated way, the reader does not usually receive any clarifying information from the narrator and is exposed to the state of her consciousness. Although the novel technically features a third-person narrator, the ascriptions presented actually constitute the protagonist's first-person understanding and outlook. Due to this peculiar narrative situation, the reader is led down the garden path of Frankie's formulation of her thoughts and their consistent unreliability problematises the medium of language. This allows for the linguistic failure to be dramatised both within the storyworld and outside of it.

The rest of this chapter will explore the presentations of the "non-linguistic nature" of consciousness (Palmer 97) featured in the novel, since it is necessary to establish what alternatives remain for the manifestation of the mind in the absence of expression through language. The following passage depicts several of Frankie's strategies for handling the peculiar tightness in her chest:

She went around town, and the things she saw and heard seemed to be left somehow unfinished, and there was the tightness in her that would not break. She would hurry to do something, but what she did was always wrong. She would call her best friend, Evelyn Owen, who owned a football suit and a Spanish shawl, and one would dress in the football suit and the other in the Spanish shawl and they would go down to the ten-cent store together. But that was a wrong thing and not what Frankie wanted. (32)

The tightness is a recurring element in Frankie's phase of transition and at a previous point in the narrative it has been explicitly associated with the feeling

she cannot name. This suggests that the primary motivation for the various actions itemised in this passage stem from the difficulties Frankie experiences in trying to resolve or account for the unnamed feeling. It is as if the frustration brought about by this inability is so severe that it urges her to find *any* means of expression. Her first resort, then, is the attempt to find relief on the distinctly non-linguistic plane of physical action. The various activities in which she engages on account of this have an erratic quality which is similar to her verbal meltdown discussed above. They seem to be picked randomly, as if Frankie is desperately sampling different things that symbolise normality, such as spending time with her best friend, in the hope of ridding herself of the strange and unusual state of mind. It is striking that a very similar passage follows shortly after that:

Because she could not break this tightness gathering within her, she would hurry to do something. She would go home and put the coal scuttle on her head, like a crazy person's hat, and walk around the kitchen table. She would do anything that suddenly occurred to her—but whatever she did was always wrong, and not at all what she had wanted. Then, having done these wrong and silly things, she would stand, sickened and empty, in the kitchen door and say:

“I just wish I could tear down this whole town.” (33)

This time the tightness is directly identified as the cause for her actions and the elements of hurry and wrongness are equally repeated. Together, they make up the behavioural pattern Frankie resorts to whenever the pressure becomes unbearable. Her own linguistic failure drives her to seek an escape in any sudden action that comes to mind. Ultimately, however, the circularity of her mental functioning persists here as well, so that the erratic actions are doomed to leave her dissatisfied, just like her efforts to verbalise her state.

In contrast, the intuitive and sense-based manifestations of her cognition are shown to be increasingly reliable as the linguistic medium is unsettled. The initial account of the April event is a good illustration of the fact that for Frankie the only understandable input is the one she derives from her senses:

Then the spring of that year had been a long queer season. Things began to change and Frankie did not understand this change. After the plain gray winter the March winds banged on the window-panes, and clouds were shirred and white on the blue sky. [...] The pale wistarias

bloomed all over town, and silently the blossoms shattered. There was something about the green trees and the flowers of April that made Frankie sad. (29-30)

What happens to Frankie is put on a level with the season and its appearance, so that a strong link between her mental change and the environment is created. In fact, the majority of the passage explores the external aspects of nature while there are barely any insights into Frankie's state of mind. She is acutely aware of how the environment has changed but not how she herself has been impacted by the mysterious spring event. Her senses are thus shown to trump logic and understanding. There is a continued thread in the novel highlighting how sounds and colours in particular have an exceptional impact on her. The clarity with which she perceives and interprets them is unmatched by any of her attempts to rationally explain her other issues. She is especially disturbed by the sound of an unfinished piano scale which floats into the kitchen:

F. Jasmine turned from the window, but before she could speak again there was the sound. In the silence of the kitchen they heard the tone shaft quietly across the room, then again the same note was repeated. A piano scale slanted across the August afternoon. A chord was struck. Then in a dreaming way a chain of chords climbed slowly upward like a flight of castle stairs: but just at the end, when the eighth chord should have sounded and the scale made complete, there was a stop. [...] F. Jasmine sat perfectly still before the table crowded with plates and dinner dishes. The gray of the kitchen was a stale gray and the room was too flat and too square. (102-103)

The faint auditive input is not bypassed as a mere background noise, but instead acquires the power to interrupt her speaking and completely arrest her attention. It intensifies the perception of her surroundings and provokes Frankie's heightened awareness of the kitchen and the way it makes her feel. The whole episode encompassing the tuning of the piano, its unfinished scale and the colour and quality of the room she is in renders her "sad" and "jittery" (103). It seems that Frankie is both more comfortable and more proficient in ascribing sense-related causes to her mental states than she is establishing a verbal account. This point is inversely demonstrated when she goes through a brief period in which she does not feel anything at all. The characterisation of this numbness is depicted predominantly in terms of her senses: "She never



stood alone in the back yard in order to stare up at the sky. She paid no attention to sounds and summer voices, and did not walk the streets of town at night" (34). Here the absence of emotions is clearly correlated with Frankie's deliberate disregard for sensuous input.

The combination of sense and intuition also comes to play an important role in the way Frankie deals with her environment while she is affected by the linguistic failure. The two encounters she has with the soldier are moments of particular confusion in which she barely understands what is going on. She struggles with assessing his peculiar facial expression, the things he says and the overall way he behaves. Furthermore, she is unsuccessful in trying to convey her doubts to him or even find a verbal explanation for herself. In both cases, however, a sensory impression helps her to intuitively comprehend the danger of the situation. The first encounter takes place in the hotel bar and Frankie's doubts about what is going on are abruptly terminated when she realises that "[t]he hot, close smell in the hotel suddenly made her feel a little queer" (87), upon which she gets up and leaves. During their second encounter, the soldier persuades her to join him in his room and again a vague uneasiness which she cannot substantiate takes hold of her. This time, it is the absence of noise that activates her intuition: "It was the silence in the hotel room that warned and frightened her, a silence she noticed as soon as the door was closed" (159). In her rational understanding, Frankie can see nothing wrong with the soldier's actions or her own agreement to follow him into the room. It is on the basis of the "forewarning hush that comes before an unknown trouble, a silence caused, not by lack of sounds, but by a waiting, a suspense" (160-161) that she actually becomes scared and tries to escape. Regardless of how impaired or inadequate her verbal skills are, whenever she turns to the sensuous and intuitive input, she invariably receives correct information.

The evidence compiled so far demonstrates that the stance towards the medium of language adopted in the narrative is thoroughly critical. Linguistic expression is shown to fail the protagonist in multiple ways, such as through the distortion of meaning and through its inherent inability to competently transmit her mental states. The systematic elimination of language-based forms of expression serves the function of drawing increased attention to a cluster of

phenomena – actions, senses, intuition – that are traditionally underrated as sites for the manifestation of cognition. One of the more striking strategies through which this point is emphasised is the selective regulation of moments of clarity experienced by the protagonist and the fact that the few such instances offered are inevitably produced through non-linguistic means. In a pivotal scene, a conversation sparks a newfound understanding between Frankie and Berenice. In its course, the older woman's demeanour completely changes as she symbolically allows Frankie to light up a cigarette and the two of them are like "two grown people smoking at the dinner table" (119). It is the fact that Frankie understands what Berenice is talking about which leads to this change of her status and yet it is stated that "it was not so much the happenings she mentioned as the way she told about these happenings that made F. Jasmine understand" (121). It is remarkable that even in the course of a conversation, a situation which is the embodiment of a linguistic exchange, the power of verbalisation is subverted. It can be inferred that at least during the phase of transition, the adolescent's mental functioning and understanding are decidedly not language based.

#### 6.4 Substitution as a Strategy

The discussion so far investigated Frankie's mental transformation by illuminating it from several different angles. The chapter on the distribution of attention explored how the change in mental functioning arises in the first place through the infiltration of consciousness by previously non-conscious mental contents; the examination of the narrative situation revealed that this effected an incomplete, halfway understanding of things and that the missing information manifested itself through lacking causality and increased restlessness; and finally the chapter on linguistic failure illustrated the frustration evoked by Frankie's inability to express her problems verbally. Altogether, they serve to open up the main problems of Frankie's phase of transition and the tension which accompanies her coming of age. The final two chapters will now centre on her attempts to resolve this tension and how the specific strategies are conclusive about her mental functioning.

It is possible to analyse the linguistic failure of the previous chapter not only in terms of its surface value, that is, the inadequacy of language for transmitting certain mental phenomena, but also in its own right as a strategy which brings Frankie closer to resolving her problems. While the mental transformation first manifests itself as a shapeless angst which oppresses and suffocates her, once it is dubbed "unnameable" it takes on a more concrete form. Admittedly, at first glance this might seem like a weak consolation, especially for Frankie who still has to work through that "feeling that she could not name" (35). However, it actually demarcates a shift in both agency and understanding. Calling it inexpressible constitutes a shift of balance insofar as it transforms the issue from something that is happening to her into something minimally tangible that she can actively deal with. Referring to something as inexpressible is already making it expressible by being able to say it. The possibility of solution is provided by the very assignment of a semiotic category to the problem. This way, Frankie moves on from facing an unconceptualised, immaterial enemy to having the outline of something she can work on by filling in the specifics. Thus the ineffability plaguing Frankie comes to constitute a problem solving skill through the creation of a placeholder.

The same pattern of substitution can be found in the novel beyond the level of language as well. For this purpose, the series of strategies Frankie exhibits as she attempts to resolve the tension stemming from the “unverbalised” feeling has to be exposed. The narrative offers three moments that are explicitly derived from her uncertainty: Frankie becoming a criminal, her efforts to participate in the war and finally the formation of the member-idea. On the face of it, the relevance and correlation of those strategies appears to be dubious at best. As the brief analysis in this chapter hopes to demonstrate, however, they can actually be placed in a tightly interrelated network that is highly significant for the deepest areas of Frankie’s mental functioning which have not been accounted for so far.

First of all, a similarity can be established between the constitutive elements of each example and the few direct conceptualisations of Frankie’s problem offered in the narrative. The following account of her criminal behaviour can be tied to the negotiation of identity Frankie undergoes during the phase of transition, specifically in regard to the fact that she no longer wishes to be herself:

Because she could not break this tightness gathering within her, she would hurry to do something. [...] She broke the law. And having once become a criminal, she broke the law again, and then again. She took the pistol from her father's bureau drawer and carried it all over town and shot up the cartridges in a vacant lot. She changed into a robber and stole a three-way knife from the Sears and Roebuck store. (33)

The first sentence immediately frames her stealing in the context of the tension she has accumulated, which finds its release in the perpetration of a rash action. It is crucial that in this episode she does not merely steal, but she actually “change[s] into a robber”. This peculiar phrasing suggests that in “suddenly [becoming] a thief” (160) she creates for herself an alternative identity, even if just in a very remote and small-scale way. Getting herself in trouble constitutes a strategy for effecting a change in her status and identity and corresponds to the statement that it “was the summer when Frankie was sick and tired of being Frankie” (29).

Her acute desire to participate in the war similarly arises from a symptom of her mental transformation which is even depicted in an analogous way: “It was the

year when Frankie thought about the world” (30). This makes her question “who she was and what she would be in the world” (57). Her confusion is aggravated when she starts reading the newspaper and cannot make sense of the war coverage. Her attempts are hampered by the fact that “there were so many foreign places, and the war was happening so fast, that sometimes she did not understand” (30) and because she does not understand she wants to be involved. It is notable that Frankie showcases a sensitivity to the concept of gender as evidenced by her awareness that becoming a Marine hinges on whether she is a boy (see 30-31). Nonetheless, she tries to secure her participation in the war by devising instead the plan of donating blood:

She could hear the army doctors saying that the blood of Frankie Addams was the reddest and the strongest blood that they had ever known. And she could picture ahead, in the years after the war, meeting the soldiers who had her blood, and they would say that they owed their life to her; and they would not call her Frankie—they would call her Addams. (31)

This time Frankie’s strategy simultaneously addresses two of her concerns. It provides her with yet another alternative identity, complete with a name change – the sole usage of a last name implying maleness and adulthood – and an elevated status due to the special quality of her blood. In addition to that, the direct involvement in the war, albeit not in the initially desired function of a Marine, counteracts the exclusion she feels from the world and implicates her in events normally reserved for adults. Ironically, the Red Cross subsequently refuses her blood on account of still being a child.

For her final attempt at rectifying her situation, Frankie tries to insert herself into her brother’s wedding. Her plans on joining them after the wedding by making herself a fixed member of their union can be understood as a strategy for processing her longing to be included. The feeling of lonesomeness is a primary feature of Frankie’s mental functioning, introduced from the novel’s very beginning, which characterises her as someone who “belonged to no club and was a member of nothing in the world” and defining her as an “unjoined person” (7). The solitude of existence is furthermore subject of one of Frankie’s tortured attempts to verbalise her concerns to Berenice (see 136). Apart from furnishing her with a sense of belonging, the intended union with the newlywed couple

also pertains to the other issues mentioned so far. It would allow Frankie to be part of a distinctly adult formation, corresponding to her wish for distance from the realm of childhood, and the future activities she envisions as part of the trio involve travelling and exploring the world. The component of identity change is present here as well, since she fantasises various scenarios in which she would have a renowned profession and pre-emptively changes her name to F. Jasmine Addams.

All three strategies devised by Frankie can be interpreted as variations of the same underlying theme, induced by her intense frustration stemming from the incomplete understanding and inability to express herself. The truly crucial significance of the three strategies, however, is their role as features of Frankie's special mental functioning. The strategies presented here can be exposed as parallels of a motif established by Frankie's linguistic failure. In the preceding chapter, it was discussed that she would follow the same anticlimactic pattern of starting an explanation or verbalising a concept only to revoke its validity seconds later. The anticipated relief, which a successful expression of her thoughts would have brought about, is never achieved, so that the narrative is propelled on the basis of constant disappointment. Frankie's employment of the three strategies replicates that exact same pattern. Whenever a supposed solution to her problems occurs to her, she latches on to it, attempting to push it through and inevitably fails, over and over again.

The explanation for the consistent failure of Frankie's resolution strategies can be achieved when they are understood as semiotic substitutions. Like the ineffability discussed in the beginning of the chapter, Frankie's coping attempts are not directed at her actual problem. Instead, they provide her with the opportunity to employ a placeholder, something she can work with in order to momentarily release her frustration and energy – until the actual problem becomes accessible to her. On a side note, a considerable giveaway for the fact that the solutions are misleading is the unproblematic correspondence between them and the direct formulations of Frankie's issues. As has already been demonstrated, neither Frankie's nor the narrator's direct linguistic ascriptions are to be trusted in *The Member of the Wedding*.

If the strategies presented above are merely artificial creations that allow Frankie to define a problem she can at least work with, the question presents itself why she is unable to approach the problem directly. This line of questioning requires a retracing of the symptoms for her transforming cognition back to their very origin – the liminal point separating her balanced worldview from the restlessness and confusion that follow.

The original un-understood issue which emerges here is the mysterious event that happened in April. All the instances in the novel connecting the April event to the change in her mental state refuse to specify the exact nature of what happened and instead place their focus solely on its shattering effect. Nevertheless, the narrative offers several hints about the incident that are buried in unrelated passages in the form of casual remarks. The first one occurs fairly early on in the novel as a spontaneous recollection: “One Saturday afternoon she committed a secret and unknown sin. In the MacKeans' garage, with Barney MacKean, they committed a queer sin, and how bad it was she did not know. The sin made a shriveling sickness in her stomach, and she dreaded the eyes of everyone” (33). The episode is endowed with particular intensity through the choice of lexical items such as “unknown,” “queer sin,” “shriveling sickness” and “dread”. This intensity creates a stark contrast with the omission of any content-related information – there are no specifics on what actually took place, so that Frankie’s dread and sickness hover in mid-air and remain unsettled. The incident in the garage attains further significance from the vehement way in which Frankie reacts to Berenice’s innocent mention of Barney:

"That mean nasty Barney!" The garage had been dark, with thin needling sunlight coming through the cracks of the closed door, and with the smell of dust. But she did not let herself remember the unknown sin that he had showed her, that later made her want to throw a knife between his eyes. Instead, she shook herself hard and began mashing peas and rice together on her plate. "You are the biggest crazy in this town." (99)

Frankie’s emotional reaction, the memory of the dark garage and her desire for vengeance already suggest the chilling nature of the incident. It should also be noted that she uses the adjective “nasty” not only in the present example but several times throughout the book in reference to Barney. The same word

reoccurs when she justifies her disdain for a group of older girls, explaining: "They were talking nasty lies about married people. When I think of Aunt Pet and Uncle Ustace. And my own father! The nasty lies! I don't know what kind of fool they take me for" (18). The connection established between what happened with Barney and the conversation with the older girls yields further evidence, suggesting that the act in question is usually carried out between married people. This suspicion is finally confirmed when the incident with Barney is grouped with several other experiences: "There slanted across her mind twisted remembrances of a common fit in the front room, basement remarks, and nasty Barney; but she did not let these separate glimpses fall together, and the word she repeated was 'crazy'" (162). The "common fit" refers to an event from the time Frankie's father was subletting one of their rooms to a married couple. She accidentally witnessed them engaging in an activity she does not understand, but which makes her assume that the man was having a fit (see 50). All those separate incidents connect in various ways to the original spring event and when the few available specifics are decoded, it can be safely assumed that the main issue eschewing Frankie's understanding relates to sexual intercourse. The speculation that it is precisely the experience with Barney which is concealed behind the mysterious April event is ultimately settled towards the end of the novel when, for the first time, the incident's temporal dimension is specified as "that April afternoon in the MacKeans' garage" (160).

The actual significance of Frankie's three coping strategies, then, constitutes an ersatz-activity induced by the traumatic quality of her first confrontation with sexuality. Each of the three strategies can be understood as an alternative way of framing this problem, allowing her to partially explore some of its aspects while still avoiding an explicit realisation. The act of becoming a criminal channels the sinful aspect of the incident, allowing Frankie to explore the "unknown sin" (33) Barney made her commit by transforming it into a clearly defined transgression that she can safely act out herself. Unlike the event that took place in the garage, she is fully aware of the consequences her stealing has and, more importantly, theft is devoid of the taboo that sex is surrounded with in her context. Furthermore, it seems significant that the two acts of stealing she commits – taking her father's gun and shoplifting the knife – directly



correspond to her plan of revenge: “She hated Barney and wanted to kill him. Sometimes alone in the bed at night she planned to shoot him with the pistol or throw a knife between his eyes” (33).

In the second strategy, her participation in the war, the facet of the April event is more elusive. Nonetheless, the issue of gender demonstrated in Frankie’s desire to only be referred to by her last name and her realisation that as a girl she cannot become a Marine, connect the two. What is more, the alternative act of donating her blood to the soldiers can be examined for its sexual undertone. It can be interpreted as an attempt to establish physical relations, since she specifically imagines that the blood donation would make those men “close kin” (31) to her. Alternatively, Frankie’s wish to transfer her blood can also be recognised as a counterpart to menstruation which is a classic motif in female Coming-of-Age stories, but remains absent from *The Member of the Wedding*. Nicole Seymour even suggests that an interpretation of the blood Frankie plans on donating as “hymenal blood that marks her induction into the heterosexual economy and, thus, the ‘ideal end’ of straight union” (309) is a possibility. The participation in the war through the distribution of her own blood thus becomes a fertile strategy for the exploration of a variety of aspects related to sexual maturity and intercourse. The act of substitution here once again allows Frankie the safe distance she needs to familiarise herself with the issue in a gradual manner.

Finally, Frankie’s wish to join the brother and his fiancée incorporates the aspect of symbolically forming a union with somebody else. In one of the many moments of alleged understanding, she formulates an explanation for her longing, stating that “[t]hey are the we of me” (52). Her peculiar choice of a ternary union as opposed to the conventional two members of sexual intercourse will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter. It is symptomatic, however, that Frankie wants to join them exactly at the moment of their marriage and wishes to accompany them on their honeymoon once they have left the church.

The continuum opened up through the three strategies is quite graceful, especially in view of the progressive sophistication offered by each new

substitution. Whereas the act of stealing is a rather clumsy and literal attempt to revisit the sinful and criminal incident in the garage, donating blood and becoming a member of the wedding carry an increasingly metaphorical quality and fall closer to the actual concept of adult intercourse. The traumatic blocking which forcefully interrupts Frankie's understanding simultaneously gives rise to the fascinating manifestation of mental functioning which unfolds throughout the phase of transition dramatised in the novel.

## 6.5 Assimilation of Information

The *idée fixe* of becoming a member of the wedding requires special attention as a feature of the transforming mind. It functions as a focal point for the narrative, as made evident not only by the novel's title, but also by its propulsive role for the process of Frankie's coming of age. Sarah Gleeson-White addresses the problematic nature of this pivotal element, which has stimulated a variety of conflicting interpretations in secondary criticism (see 28). She demonstrates how this is exacerbated by the two explanatory models provided by Carson McCullers herself: on the one hand the much-quoted "Frankie is in love with the bride of her brother and wants to join the wedding" (McCullers & Dews 32) from her autobiography; and on the other hand Gleeson-White refers to the conflicting account that "Frankie's yearning to join the wedding reflects the universal need to belong" (28). In addition to the numerous compelling discussions that examine underlying issues of asexuality, bisexuality, homosexuality, general queerness, and the performance of femininity (see Adams; Free; Thurschwell; Whitt), Frankie's desire to be a member of the wedding, from now on shortened as the "we-of-me complex", can also be analysed from a perspective privileging her cognitive problem solving. For this purpose, two relevant concepts derived from Palmer's *Fictional Minds* – cognitive units and doubly embedded narratives – will be applied.

The first issue that has to be discussed is the presence of an undeniable parallel between Frankie's chosen "we-of-me" in the form of her brother and his wife, and Berenice and John Henry, who have been called the "unacknowledged we of Frankie" (Thurschwell 117). This affinity to form threesomes and the dynamics of their juxtaposition can be explored with the tool of cognitive units. Palmer first approaches this issue in terms of the cooperation of two or more minds, a process that gives rise to the phenomenon of intermental thought. This intermental interaction is "obviously essential to analyses of fictional presentations of close relationships such as friendship, family ties, and, especially, marriage" (163) and can often be found to underlie the foundational developments in a narrative structure. Palmer is convinced that "two or more minds [can] form a cognitive unit of whatever sort, however casual

and ephemeral,” claiming that this is not only conceivable but even has the potential to “produce a rich and suggestive body of evidence” (162).

When this approach is applied to *The Member of the Wedding*, the two contrasting formations have to be categorised as an actual cognitive unit, in the case of Berenice and John Henry, and a desired cognitive unit, relating to the brother and his bride. From the onset of her phase of transition, and even before she creates the “we-of-me complex”, Frankie displays the overwhelming tendency to distance herself from the actual cognitive unit she is part of. Her union with its other two members is unchosen, they are simply a constant presence in her everyday life – “Berenice had been the cook since Frankie could remember” (9). As Frankie’s transition is triggered, the unchosen membership becomes undesired, which is illustrated by her condemnation of John Henry, whom “she could not make [...] go home” (9), and her complaint about the “terrible summer we of her and John Henry and Berenice [...] that was the last we in the world she wanted” (53). Her desire to distance herself from this cognitive unit can also be made palpable in the deliberate attempts to forcefully disrupt the natural flow of their intermental thoughts and actions. For instance, Frankie obstinately refuses to assume her traditional role in the conversations the three of them have, so that “Berenice stopped talking and sat there shaking her head, waiting for them to question her. But F. Jasmine would not speak” (97-98). Finally, it is John Henry who resolves the tension by taking over all the questions Frankie would normally be expected to ask. Frankie’s refusal to engage and play along is depicted in quite literal terms during one of the usual card games, as her behaviour progressively becomes hostile and disruptive:

“Hush quarreling,” said Berenice. “To tell the truth, I don't think either one of you got such a grand hand to fight over the bid about. I bid two hearts.”

“I don't give a darn about it,” Frankie said. “It is immaterial with me.”

As a matter of fact this was so: she played bridge that afternoon like John Henry, just putting down any card that suddenly occurred to her. (10)

Later on, her unwillingness to play along is exacerbated as she throws her cards down:

“Oh,” Frankie said, “I am sick unto death.” [...]

They had played cards after dinner every single afternoon; if you would eat those old cards, they would taste like a combination of all the dinners of that August, together with a sweaty-handed nasty taste. Frankie swept the cards from the table. [...] She got up from the table. (23)

It is partly Frankie’s disdain for her actual cognitive unit that pushes her into the almost instantaneous creation of an alternative, as soon as she sees the brother and his bride for the first time. This is a key moment illustrating what Palmer calls the “formation and breakdown of intermental systems” (163-164) – Frankie pursues the “we-of-me” offered by this new unit in an attempt to replace Berenice and John Henry.

Ultimately, however, her efforts end in a catastrophic failure. The reason for this is twofold, having to do with the power swayed by her actual unit and the incompleteness of the unit she desires. The presence of John Henry and especially Berenice is a crucial factor for Frankie’s childhood worldview, which was forged under their formative influence. The narrative makes it evident to what extent Frankie’s cognition and outlook are shaped by Berenice in particular. The small-scale manifestations of her impact can be discerned from Frankie’s vocabulary and willingness to accept Berenice’s judgements. The prevalence of Berenice-coined words like “no-good” has already been discussed in the chapter on narrative structure, while the readiness to trust Berenice’s ascriptions can be observed in a scene where Frankie recounts parts of her meeting with the soldier. Berenice immediately asks whether he had been drunk, which at first seems to both impress and shock Frankie: “Berenice’s question had disturbed F. Jasmine, and she took a minute to consider. ‘I don’t think he was drunk. People don’t get drunk in broad daylight’” (92). Nevertheless, from this point on Frankie adopts this characterisation of the soldier, as evidenced by her subsequent meeting with him (see 158) and by her second attempt to explain the situation to Berenice: “Say you might meet somebody you think he almost might be a *drunk*, but you’re not sure about anything” (104; emphasis in original). But Berenice’s influence is far more profound and consequential than this mere linguistic transfer. Its crucial relevance to Frankie’s mental functioning emerges quite clearly from a passage in which Berenice tells of her first love – a conversation which has taken place

“a thousand times” (110) between the three of them. The story recounts Berenice’s happiest days and Frankie’s familiarity with it is emphasised, just like the fact that in the past she has regularly asked detailed questions about it. The outstanding feature of Berenice’s narration is her use of the adjective “lonesome,” which occurs three consecutive times (see 110-111). It is a word with particular implications for Frankie, due to the reoccurring characterisation of her state as “lonesome”. This choice seems to be more than a mere coincidence, since Frankie and Berenice are the only two people to employ this term and it is never once substituted by similar words like “lonely” or “loneliness”. Berenice’s use relates to the context of having lost both her happiness and the person she belonged to and it is fascinating that Frankie should choose this very word whenever she tries to convey her state. The implication is that there is a significant link between Berenice’s story and Frankie’s situation that summer. This theory assumes a clearer shape when the rest of Berenice’s story is inspected. She recounts a very specific anecdote from the time she was happily married, when one winter she and her husband “had gone together to the North and seen the snow” (110). This sentence, sandwiched between two assertions that Frankie is well acquainted with its content, is an indication of the direct correspondence between Berenice’s tale and Frankie’s own “we-of-me” creation. It is intimated that snow and cold carry a sacred value for Berenice and are tightly connected with her happiest time. Frankie seems to have directly taken over these connotations and they surface repeatedly in her wishful thinking and the visions of her future as a member: “She saw a silent church, a strange snow slanting down against the colored windows. The groom in this wedding was her brother, and there was a brightness where his face should be” (8). Furthermore, her long daydreams of icy landscapes and Alaska form a powerful contrast to the detested heat that dominates her days during the “summer of fear” (25). The various instances delineated so far add up and yield the same conclusion – that Frankie’s “we-of-me complex” is essentially modelled on her primary cognitive unit. The threesome-formation and the specific elements of the imagined future are all deeply influenced by the presence of John Henry and Berenice, with the latter having a critical impact on Frankie’s most fundamental understanding. The foundation in which Frankie’s worldview and ideology are rooted is made up of

the very thing she tries to supplement and distance herself from. This entanglement dooms her attempt to flee into the new cognitive unit from the start. The failure of the “we-of-me”-solution is further compounded by the fact that functionally it does not have any of the attributes of a cognitive unit. The novel delineates numerous instances in which Berenice, John Henry and Frankie demonstrate proper intermental performance – the finishing of each other’s sentences, the unspoken understanding and even joint emotional reactions, such as their simultaneous outburst in tears (see 144). In contrast, the confrontations with the brother are consistently based on incomprehension and non-recognition. On their first visit, her brother and the fiancée gift her a doll and treat her like a little girl (see 24), which is a misunderstanding of her personality that is deeply offensive to Frankie. During the actual wedding, the three of them are “never once alone” (170) and their interactions are entirely one-sided and marked by the same non-recognition of Frankie as an equal member – her brother picks her up and gives her a dollar, while the bride-to-be kisses her and calls her a “little sister” (170). Frankie remains mum throughout and is tormented by her inability to tell them about the wedding and her plan for them to be together from then on. Not only is there an absence of any intermental phenomenon – Frankie’s desired unit lacks even the most basic communication and exchange of thoughts. It is an entirely artificial and non-organic construct that can never function in the way Frankie expects it to.

The application of cognitive units and intermental thought as analytical tools allows for the understanding of Frankie’s “we-of-me complex” as a specific manifestation of her fluctuating cognitive development. It symbolises her attempt to distance herself from a social structure that is painfully familiar and supplant it instead with an alternative construct of her own making. While the ways in which this strategy fails are manifold and diverse, the desired union with the brother also has one function which is of utmost importance. It is closely related to the discussion in the previous chapter, which located traumatic blocking as the main process stimulating Frankie’s coming of age. The initial strategy employed in order to avoid the traumatic information is the construction of alternative models which allow the processing of separate aspects of the main issue without Frankie ever having to acknowledge it as a whole. The

models in question were shown to be part of a progression so that the third model, the union with the brother, has the highest complexity and abstraction. The remaining part of this chapter is a discussion of the brother-union as a representation of an alternative attempt to sever access to the traumatic information and the consequence of this.

In terms of Frankie's subjective experience, this third model has the strongest effect on her. From the moment she formulates the intention to join the wedding a feeling of unknown relief overwhelms her, along with the absolute conviction that she has finally solved her problem:

For when the old question came to her – the who she was and what she would be in the world, and why she was standing there that minute – when the old question came to her, she did not feel hurt and unanswered. At last she knew just who she was and understood where she was going. She loved her brother and the bride and she was a member of the wedding. The three of them would go into the world and they would always be together. And finally, after the scared spring and the crazy summer, she was no more afraid. (57)

The narrative is plastered with small cues which signal that this decision truly harbours the resolution to her situation – the novel's entire second part, which happens to be the longest, is concerned with presentations of Frankie's changed outlook and the last day before the wedding. Her experience of the storyworld literally changes overnight following her decision to become a member: "Because of the wedding, F. Jasmine felt connected with all she saw, and it was as a sudden member that on this Saturday she went around the town. She walked the streets entitled as a queen and mingled everywhere" (59). Throughout the entire second part, Frankie's perspective is deceptively characterised as that of a person who has successfully completed her coming of age. It is as if her fundamental problem has been resolved and she has unwittingly acquired a new, adult sense of self. This indication that Frankie has somehow found a way around her main issue, the disavowal of sexuality, is compounded by the specifics of the "we-of-me complex". It involves a heterosexual couple, Frankie's intention to join them exactly at the day of the wedding and a planned honeymoon, for which she again envisions her constant presence. Yet her daydreams about the future together do not involve any marital element or even the wedding itself. Instead, Frankie sees herself free to



go on adventures, explore the world and travel and assume an adult identity with professional responsibilities. Indeed, secondary criticism has analysed the situation in the following way:

Frankie is interested in the idea of relationship that it accommodates, and all her fantasies about being a member conceive of the wedding as a kind of induction into a much wider and much more varied world of experience. Thus, her brother and future sister-in-law are of less interest in themselves than the unexpressed and inexpressible potential that she sees in them. (Millar 94)

In view of the critical angle adopted in this thesis, it would be possible to understand this potential of the wedding and union in relation to Frankie's disavowal of traumatic knowledge. It is interesting that Millar should use the phrase "induction into a much wider and much more varied world of experience" – traditionally, the conflict of Coming-of-Age fiction is understood in terms of innocence versus experience, so this again suggests that joining the brother's wedding would resolve Frankie's specific issue and enable her to move on. The urgent question emerges: which element of becoming a member of the wedding exactly carries the power to resolve Frankie's un confronted trauma of sexuality? Considering the consequence of joining the wedding envisioned by Frankie – a completely sexless future in the presence of the brother and his wife – it can be assumed that the whole thing is Frankie's final attempt to avoid acknowledging the existence of sex, this time by delegating it. The underlying realisation seems to be present in her understanding that the issue she is incapable of facing is a crucial aspect on which her admission into adulthood depends. In this context, becoming a member of the wedding can be equated to the formation of an organism that functions as a whole. Within it, the understanding and eventual acting out of sex can be taken over by the other two grown and married members, without ever reaching Frankie. This hypothesis can account for Frankie's immediate change in behaviour after coming up with the member-solution – her mood is lighter and she behaves like a grown person, since by "taking care" of the unknown issue, she is free to proceed into adulthood and leave the existential angst behind. This mechanism can be understood as a peculiar compartmentalisation which transcends the boundaries of the individual – by making herself part of the super-human "we-of-me" organism, Frankie can completely relegate the issue she does not want to face to the other two.

The mechanism discussed here is fascinating as a pendant to the discussion in the previous chapter. Frankie still avoids acknowledging the information, with the distinction that here it is achieved through delegation instead of substitution. This mis-categorisation of the issue guarantees that Frankie's worldview will remain intact. However, it also signifies that rather than modelling her worldview in a way that integrates the understanding of sexuality in an acceptable way, she deprives herself of personal growth and actually brings the productive negotiation of the phase of transition to a halt.

Frankie's strategy for displacing rather than engaging the key knowledge of sexuality renders her attempts to enter the realm of adulthood notoriously unstable. Her encounter with the soldier is an elaborate exploration of the consequences that ensue when Frankie tries to function on the basis of this fragmented worldview. This scene has been analysed by critics as the moment in which Frankie's "encounters with sexuality culminate" (Gleeson-White 17) and the nightmarish description of the endless disaccord between the two participants culminates in an almost-rape. In its essence, the passage constitutes the clash of two fictional minds and the resulting flawed interaction. Palmer's research offers a resourceful tool which can be geared towards the analysis of precisely this type of mental functioning – the concept of doubly embedded narratives. It signifies a character's attempt to make sense of another's behaviour by constructing their mental functioning. Palmer outlines the basic concept behind this term by stating "that versions of characters exist within the minds of other characters and that the relationships between these versions determine to a great extent the teleology of the plot" (15). This is effected on the basis of "assumptions about the reasons for [the character's] behaviour" (184) and involves "attempts to view the storyworld from a different aspect" (231). In order to apply this notion to the soldier-scene, the way Frankie handles the ascription of motives to the behaviour and speech of the soldier has to be examined. Her understanding of his causation and long-term goals present the weakest point of their interaction and can be conclusive about why things get out of hand and, simultaneously, about Frankie's own mental functioning.

The misunderstanding between Frankie and the soldier is launched from the very first words he speaks to her. When she approaches him, he seems highly disoriented and after staring at her with unseeing eyes absent-mindedly asks: "Which way are we going? Are you going my way or am I going yours?" (82). Frankie's reaction to this obvious chat-up line is as follows: "F. Jasmine had not expected this. The soldier was joining with her like a traveller who meets another traveller in a tourist town. For a second, it occurred to her that she had heard this remark before, perhaps in a picture show—that furthermore it was a set remark requiring a set answer" (82). She has a vague sensation that she is about to cross into an unknown new adult realm and it is as if the sphere of adults is like a secret club for which she does not have the password or "set answer". However, she quickly ignores this suspicion and interprets the soldier's remark as a comradely invitation instead. Because her worldview is thoroughly naive, she is unable to account for the factor of gender which dictates the soldier's attitude to her. While he flirts and persistently wants to take her out on a date, she is convinced that he sees her as a fellow traveller, completely unaware of any sexual motivation behind his words.

This illustrates a dynamics on Frankie's part that is key to her overall mental functioning at this point. Just like the union with the brother is a completely one-sided creation that she tries to force onto the external world, she enters into the soldier situation with a similar preconceived schema. This relates to the power balance between the two of them and is motivated by her specific outlook onto the storyworld, in which she features as an adventurer on an explorative journey. Until this day in which she ventures out into the town, her worldview is motivated by exclusively theoretical speculations that are never challenged. Accordingly, Frankie's confrontation with the soldier denotes the first proper application of her frame of mind in a practical context. Her inexperience is made painfully clear by the inflexibility with which she handles this situation. Even though she notices that the soldier's statements do not adhere to her conception, Frankie refuses to adjust her schema. At some point, she asks him about his plans which he takes as an opportunity to ask her out to a notorious bar. Frankie clearly realises that he "had mistaken the meaning of her question, for she had asked it to him as a soldier liable to be sent to any foreign country in

the world" (83). Nonetheless, she forcibly spins his talk so that it fits her preconceived notion by feeling flattered that the soldier "in his mind included her in such unknown pleasures" (83) and treats her like an adult. This causes a peculiar conversation which proceeds simultaneously on two disconnected layers. Frankie remains inherently incapable of matching the soldier's adult jargon and innuendos, as in the following comic exchange:

For several minutes he did not talk. Then, when at last he spoke, the words did not make sense to her and she did not understand. It seemed to her the soldier said:

"Who is a cute dish?"

There were no dishes on the table and she had the uneasy feeling he had begun to talk a kind of double-talk. She tried to turn the conversation. (86)

This is a prime example of how Frankie's complete exclusion of sex-related information incapacitates her ability to adequately reconstruct the soldier's intentions and frame of mind. During this interaction she is effectively unreceptive to the nuance brought about by sexuality and socially determined gender relations. She tirelessly tries to get the conversation back on track, into an area she is familiar with, but never manages to regain control of it. Though she introduces serious adult topics related to politics, the war and travelling, the soldier outright violates the linguistic cooperative principle by being obviously disinterested and countering with irrelevant observations:

To make conversation she remarked that her brother had been swimming in Alaska, but this did not seem to impress him very much. Nor would he talk about the war, nor foreign countries and the world. To his joking remarks she could never find replies that fitted, although she tried. Like a nightmare pupil in a recital who has to play a duet to a piece she does not know, F. Jasmine did her best to catch the tune and follow. But soon she broke down and grinned until her mouth felt wooden. The blue lights in the crowded room, the smoke and noisy commotion, confused her also.

"You're a funny kind of girl," the soldier said finally.

"Patton," she said. "I bet he will win the war in two weeks." (158)

The fact that "their two conversations would not join together" (158) adds to the evidence that her understanding of the situation is wrong and Frankie is shown

to revert back to her intuition: “yet it was not so much the actual remarks as the tone underneath she failed to understand” (158). What really signals to her that something is off is “a layer of queerness she could not place and understand” (158) – this is an almost direct admission that what is happening with the soldier does not fit in the way she understands the world at this point – she has no place for it. Frankie’s inability to ascribe adequate motivation to the soldier’s behaviour is grounded in the fact that she is fundamentally incapable of categorising the situation. Overall, the incompetence with which she attempts to reconstruct the soldier’s doubly embedded narrative is symptomatic for the fact that her relegation of the entire class of sexuality related knowledge makes for a worldview that lacks any viability.

In terms of Frankie’s mental transformation, the episode with the soldier and the underlying inability to assimilate the vital piece of information to balance her worldview represent a deadlock. This simultaneously prevents the completion of her transition phase, so that as the narrative comes dangerously close to its ending Frankie is still stuck in a non-advancing state, which is miraculously resolved almost by accident:

But she recalled the silence in the hotel room; and all at once a fit in a front room, the silence, the nasty talk behind the garage – these separate recollections fell together in the darkness of her mind, as shafting searchlights meet in the night sky upon an aeroplane, so that in a flash there came in her an understanding. There was a feeling of cold surprise; she stopped a minute, then went on toward the Blue Moon. (181)

It is significant that this moment is phrased in terms of separate pieces falling together – technically, Frankie has been in possession of the necessary insights all along, but until this point in her development “she did not let these separate glimpses fall together” (162). This obstruction is carried out first through the outright refusal to acknowledge the problem and then through the alternative strategy of delegating and categorising it wrongly. The instant in which the recollections finally fall together is of immense significance for Frankie’s cognitive development and yet the effect it produces on her emotions and the prominence granted to it in the novel are underwhelming at best. This restraint can be attributed to the interruptive and curtailing function of the problem throughout the phase of transition. It manifests itself in the disruption and

arresting of her attention, in the linguistic blockage and in her overall detained understanding. The moment in which the missing piece falls into place is simultaneously the instant in which the conventional mental functioning returns. The significance of this scene is not inherent in the content of what Frankie understands, but in the fact that it serves to induce the proper resolution of the difficulties that characterised her mental functioning throughout the narrative. As Frankie finally understands and adequately models her worldview according to this knowledge, she can resume her forward movement and transitions out of the coming of age setting.

## 7 Conclusion

The central quest of this thesis was unleashed by the special kind of mental functioning that manifests itself during the phase of coming of age. In order to explore the uniqueness of this narrative moment, a theoretical model was set up, on the basis of which the extensive mental states and events of the Coming-of-Age story could become palpable. These were then investigated with the help of tools from cognitive narratology, with the final result that the process underlying the peculiar cognitive situation in *The Member of the Wedding* was attributed to the detraction of information. The entire dynamics of Frankie Addams' phase of transition is sparked by one crucial piece of knowledge which threatens to disrupt the ideology endorsing her cognition up to this point. This threat leads to the instantaneous expulsion of the issue, so that the power of its impact is averted, and leads to the frustrated mental functioning that dominates the majority of the narrative. The different textual levels on which Frankie's mind is manifested are all affected and their performance consequently becomes skewed and peculiar. Her consciousness is endowed with a dual quality and this split bears on the perception of her environment. This initial instability is compounded by a linguistic impotence which dramatises Frankie's general inability to attribute her state with proper causation. Throughout the phase of transition this epistemic eclipse generates a complex of phenomena which lend the narrative its unique character. Frankie's attempts at a resolution, whether it is the creation of alternative identity concepts, the urge to involve herself in foreign worldly events or the obsessive impulse to become the third member of a conventional heterosexual union, all take place under this eclipse. As a result, they merely harbour and replicate the initial unresolved issue, condemning her to consistent frustration and circularity.

The epistemic tension is a productive strategy to delineate the particular fictional mental functioning dominating the storyworld and simultaneously account for the issues raised in the novel. A large number of the discoveries were only made possible through the tools suggested by Alan Palmer. Even though the propositions of Palmer in particular (see Hogan; Jahn, *Mind*) and cognitive narratology in general (see Ryan) have been subject to a variety of doubts and criticism, the points of departure they offer are highly valuable and

allow for the exploration of new perspectives within literary criticism. The framework established in *Fictional Minds* enriches the study of the transitioning mind that is presented in this Coming-of-Age account and extracts levels of evidence which would have remained invisible otherwise. In transcending the limited realm of direct presentations of consciousness, Palmer's model serves to disclose an intricate network of mental manifestations that provide depth to the protagonist, the storyworld and the larger teleology. What is consequently induced is an understanding of the narrative that is wholesome and balanced, showcasing the inherent advantages of applying interdisciplinary insights to fiction that cognitive narratology epitomises.



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## German Abstract

Die Masterarbeit befasst sich mit der Darstellung der Psyche in Carson McCullers' *The Member of the Wedding*. Der Roman gehört zur Genretradition der Coming-of-Age story und präsentiert somit einen besonderen Entwicklungsabschnitt in der Funktionsweise des Verstandes. Diese Phase zeichnet sich durch die verstärkte Verhandlung von Ideologie, Selbstbild, Weltanschauung, grundlegende Wertvorstellungen und Identität aus, einhergehend mit den entsprechenden kognitiven Prozessen. Ziel der Arbeit ist es, die Darstellung dieser spezifischen mentalen Funktionsweise handfest zu machen und zu demonstrieren auf welchen Ebenen sich die Einzigartigkeit der Psyche offenbart. Zu diesem Zweck wird eine theoretische Konzeptualisierung vom Coming-of-Age Genre mit methodologischen Einsichten aus dem Bereich der Kognitiven Narratologie verbunden. Im Besonderen wird das theoretische Gerüst, welches Alan Palmer in seinem Werk *Fictional Minds* konstruiert, als Basis für die Untersuchung unkonventioneller Erscheinungsformen eingesetzt. Diese Ansatzpunkte werden in einem Modell integriert, welches auf *The Member of the Wedding* angewandt wird. Die Funktionsweise der Psyche der Protagonistin wird von mehreren Perspektiven untersucht und es bilden sich fünf Hauptkategorien – die Verteilung der Aufmerksamkeit, die Erzählsituation, das Scheitern der verbalen Ausdrucksform, Ersatzhandlungen und Informationsaufnahme – mit denen die Problematik angepackt wird.

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