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The Bushwhacked Piano and the Bushwhacked Reader: The Willing Construction of Disbelief

The opening paragraphs of Thomas McGuane's novel, *The Bushwhacked Piano*, seem destined to transport readers to an engaging narrative world:

Years ago, a child in a tree with a small caliber rifle bushwhacked a piano through the open summer window of a neighbor's living room. The child's name was Nicholas Payne.

Dragged from the tree by the piano's owner, his rifle smashed up on a rock and flung, he was held by the neck in the living room and obliged to view the piano point blank, to dig into its interior and see the cut strings, the splintered holes that let slender shafts of light ignite small circles of dark inside the piano.

"You have spoiled my piano." (11)

How do readers respond to these paragraphs? Researchers in cognitive psychology have most often focused on what readers are *compelled* to do: Theories have centered on the *automatic processes* that provide the backbone of readers' experiences of texts (for reviews, see Guéraud and O'Brien). Such processes are called *automatic* because their high degree of practice makes it possible for them to occur in almost all circumstances and without explicit planning. Those theories might specify, for example, how readers' inferential processes enable them to understand the "splintered holes" as the products of bullets that are never mentioned.

In this article, we embrace the traditional cognitive psychological imperative to specify what texts compel readers to do. However, we develop a somewhat untraditional perspective by outlining the *types* of processes that become relevant rather than attending to specific representations or inferences. In particular, we argue that people have two classes of processes that guide their life experiences: judgments based on intuition and judgments based on reflection (Kahneman and Frederick; Sloman, "Two Systems," "Empirical Case"; Stanovich and West).

We begin by exemplifying process differences between these two types of judgments. We then provide three case studies of how readers' narrative experiences are constrained by the operation of these two types of processes. The first case study examines how readers make sense of characters' actions with respect to the latter's

goals. The second case study concerns readers' moral engagement with characters. The final case study delineates circumstances in which readers' experiences of narratives have an impact on their real-world judgments. We anchor each case study with excerpts from *The Bushwhacked Piano*. We chose McGuane's novel because it provides pervasive evidence for the tension between the products of the two types of processes. In the article's final section, we draw upon literary analyses to discuss how individuals may become more reflective in their reading.

Intuitive and Reflective Processes

Consider the following story which was written by Tversky and Kahneman to study processes of everyday judgment:

John P. is a meek man, 42 years old, married with two children. His neighbors describe him as mild-mannered, but somewhat secretive. He owns an import-export company based in New York City, and he travels frequently to Europe and the Far East. Mr. P. was convicted once for smuggling precious stones and metals (including uranium) and received a suspended sentence of 6 months in jail and a large fine.

Mr. P is currently under police investigation. (307)

After experimental participants read this text, Tversky and Kahneman asked them to rank order a set of statements "by the probability that they will be among the conclusions of the investigation." Roughly half of the participants ranked these four statements:

1. Mr. P. is a child molester.
2. Mr. P. is involved in espionage and the sale of secret documents.
3. Mr. P. is a drug addict.
4. Mr. P. killed one of his employees.

For the second half of the participants, the list had a different final statement: "4A. Mr. P. killed one of his employees to prevent him from talking to the police." The addition of a motive had a consistent impact on participants' judgments. For example, without the motive 23% of the participants thought it was more likely that Mr. P killed an employee than that he was a drug addict. With the motive, 50% of participants thought it was more likely that Mr. P. had killed one of his employees.

This shift in judgment is a product of intuitive processes: The idea that Mr. P. might kill an employee to protect himself makes intuitive sense. More specifically, Tversky and Kahneman suggested that participants were using a process they called *representativeness*. When people use representativeness, they are tacitly assessing the correspondence between the given outcome and a model of the situation. In this case, by providing a motive, the statement "Mr. P. killed one of his employees

to prevent him from talking to the police” increases the correspondence of Mr. P.’s possible behavior to readers’ underlying models of why people kill.

Everything seems fine here until readers bring reflective processes to bear on the problem. There are any number of reasons why Mr. P. might have killed one of his employees: Mr. P. might have killed the employee for embezzling from the company; he might have killed the employee in self-defense; he might have killed the employee as retribution for bushwhacking his piano. The statement “Mr. P. killed one of his employees to prevent him from talking to the police” provides only one possible scenario. For that reason, the statement that pairs an outcome with a motive *must* be less probable than the less specific (more inclusive) statement, “Mr. P. killed one of his employees.”

This example yields two insights. Up close, it demonstrates how a good story can cause readers to make errors in judgment by swiftly making improbable events seem more likely. More generally, the example illustrates the distinction between intuitive and reflective processes. Intuitive processes are rapid and effortless. Reflective processes require explicit planning; they are slow, and effortful. For examples like Mr. P., readers often find it difficult to retrieve and apply, via reflective processes, the logical principle (i.e., the conjunction of action and motivation cannot be more probable than the action or the motivation alone) that helps them see why the more immediate intuitive judgment was an error.

Note that we need not assume that intuitive and reflective processes elaborate information in a radically different way or that they are the result of the activity of two different cognitive systems. The distinction we are making is based on the idea that intuitive and reflective processes stand at the two extremes of a processing continuum that has as its endpoints automaticity vs. control. Close to the extremes, processes cluster together because they function in a very similar fashion. In addition, the clusters of processes at the continuum’s extremes are very different from each other. For that reason, we can conceptualize those clusters as two discrete types of processes—intuitive vs. reflective.

We emphasize that intuitive judgments are not inherently flawed. We can conceptualize these processes as the institutionalization of experience: People are able to produce swift responses in recurring situations; they can make important decisions without always involving long courses of deliberation. For example, it is often entirely reasonable for people to make judgments based on representativeness. When Nicholas Payne’s neighbor declares, “You have spoiled my piano,” that judgment accords with the model that severed strings and splinter holes bode ill for an instrument’s future. Reflective processes give people an extra option: They

allow people to take effortful control over their judgments when circumstances indicate that such control is warranted. (Researchers in psychology have proven to be quite adept at identifying circumstances in which people fail to recognize that they should engage reflective processes.)

The major claim we make in this essay is that intuitive processes provide the foundations for literary reading. Our three case studies identify some consequences of that claim. To indicate when mostly intuitive processes or mostly reflective processes are at work, we will refer to Readers_{INT} and Readers_{REF} respectively. Note that, because intuitive processes are automatic, those processes apply to reading in most circumstances. For that reason, Readers_{REF} indicates circumstances in which readers have engaged reflective processes in addition to or alongside those intuitive processes.

We emphasize that Readers_{INT} and Readers_{REF} are not different people. The same individuals will be Readers_{INT} and Readers_{REF} at different times, depending on the details of a text (i.e., what type of reading the text itself encourages) and the particular goals and knowledge they bring to the experience of the text. In addition, individuals can quickly make the transition from Reader_{INT} to Reader_{REF} and vice versa, as a text prompts them to undertake or abandon explicit control over the cognitive processes that guide narrative experiences.

We turn now to three case studies that allow us to demonstrate why it matters that people are most often Readers_{INT}.

Characters' Goals and Characters' Actions

As people experience narratives, they have regular opportunities to acquire or infer knowledge of characters' goals. With that knowledge, they can assess the extent to which characters' actions accord with those goals. Consider this passage from *The Bushwhacked Piano*, which establishes how urgently the owner of a service station needs customers:

The red Texaco star was not so high against the sky as the Crazy Mountains behind it. What you wanted to be high behind the red Texaco star, thought its owner, was not the Crazy Mountains, or any others, but buildings full of people who owned automobiles that needed fuel and service. Day after day, the small traffic heading for White Sulphur Springs passed the place, already gassed up for the journey. He got only stragglers; and day after day, the same Cokes, Nehis, Hires, Fanta Oranges, Nesbitts and Dr. Peppers stood in the same uninterrupted order in the plastic window of the dispenser. Unless he bought one. Then something else stared out at him, the same; like the candy wrappers in the display case with the sunbleached wrappers; or the missing tools on the peg-board in the garage whose silhouettes described their absence.

That is why when Payne coming at the crack of dawn, rolling a herd of flat tires, pursuing the stragglers all over the highway, seemed unusual enough that the station owner helplessly moved a few imperceptible steps toward him in greeting, “Nice day.” (97-8)

Under these circumstances, Readers_{INT} might expect the owner to accept Payne’s business willingly. However, there’s a hitch: The tires have been shot; that explains why they are flat.

The owner wants to know how the tires came to be shot. He says, “I don’t move without an explanation” and later, “I am not going to a federal penitentiary in order to protect a dollar and a half’s worth of repair biness [sic]” (99). Here we see a conflict between goals: The owner wants Payne’s business, but he does not wish to be caught up in some nefarious situation. When Payne makes the case that he shot the tires himself, the owner proceeds with the repair:

The man finished and charged Payne three dollars. Payne told him he thought he’d been protecting a dollar and a half’s worth of biness. “Rate went up,” said the man, “with complications of a legal nature.” (99)

We suggest that, as Readers_{INT} experience this episode of *The Bushwhacked Piano*, they are making tacit judgments about the fit between the owners’ goals and his actions. Experiments in psychology have demonstrated the behavioral consequences of those tacit judgments. When actions mismatch characters’ goals, Readers_{INT} find it difficult to integrate those actions into their discourse representations. Consider a story that mentions a character’s (Dick’s) explicit goal to vacation “where he could swim and sunbathe” (Huitema, et al. 1054). For half of the experimental participants, the story included a consistent action (“He went to his local travel agent and asked for a plane ticket to Florida.” [1054]); for the other half, the story included an inconsistent action (“He went to his local travel agent and asked for a plane ticket to Alaska.” [1054]). Participants took reliably longer to read sentences that described actions inconsistent with their understanding of characters’ goals.

It is possible that, under some circumstances, Readers_{REF} might generate explicit expectations about what Dick is likely to do in the presence of his vacation goal—so that the detection of a mismatch would be explicit. However, most often judgments of the fit between actions and goals will emerge from intuitive processes that generally adjudicate norms for particular situations (Kahneman and Miller). Those norms are most often constructed once an event has been realized. Thus, the difficulty Readers_{INT} experience when trying to assimilate mismatched actions into their discourse representations follow from ordinary intuitive processes.

This claim about readers’ tacit judgments leads to more interesting consequences when characters have multiple or conflicting goals, as was the case when the gas

station owner interacted with Nicholas Payne. Research on stories with multiple goals has generated the robust finding that readers are most affected by the match between characters' actions and the goal most recently mentioned in the text. Two explanations have been offered for this finding. One theory of text processing asserts that readers give special attention to the most recent goal until that goal is achieved (Magliano and Radvansky; Suh and Trabasso; Trabasso and Wiley). An alternative theory asserts that the distal goal becomes inaccessible because the more recent goal supplants that distal goal in working memory (Gerrig and O'Brien; McKoon and Ratcliff; Myers, O'Brien, Albrecht, and Mason). Both of these explanations are explanations based on intuitive processes: They specify the rapid processes that cause readers to be more attentive to local goals.

In our own research, we have provided evidence that individuals' judgments about goals and actions shift in a dramatic fashion when they approach texts as Readers_{INT} or Readers_{REF} (Egidi and Gerrig). We wished, in part, to provide a very strong demonstration that intuitive processes lead Readers_{INT} to attend most closely to local goals. Consider this story from our experiments:

John had been in desperate need of money. He robbed a Starbucks and was driving away from the city. He thought that if he could make it to Mexico before noon, the police would not get him. He wanted to cross the border. When he stopped to buy gas, he realized that he was tired.

This story indicates one goal that is explicit and urgent (i.e., John needs to cross the border) and hints at a second goal (i.e., John wishes to relieve his fatigue). The story continued in one of two ways:

John released the hand break and went on.
John stretched on the front seat and dozed off.

The first action is consistent with John's urgent goal. The second is consistent with John's tacit goal. With this story, we've attempted to create a narrative context that might eliminate Readers_{INT}' greater attentiveness to the local goal—we've made the distal goal urgent and the local goal vague. Should the effect of local goals survive these stories, we can have increased certainty that this is how Readers_{INT} generally read.

Our initial experiment measured the ease with which Readers_{INT} assimilated one or the other action sentence into their discourse representations. Participants read the stories line by line on a computer screen. We measured how long participants took to indicate that they had read and understood each line. Participants read equal numbers of stories that ended with actions consistent with the distal or local goals.

To assess the particular impact of goal urgency we also used versions of the story for which the distal goal was less urgent:

John was having a great time traveling across the country. He had agreed to meeting a couple of friends in Mexico in two hours. He still had more than 150 miles to cover. He wanted to cross the border. When he stopped to buy gas, he realized that he was tired.

The contrast in urgency of the distal goal afforded us the opportunity to learn how overwhelmingly Readers_{INT} attention is drawn to the local goal.

Despite our best efforts to make the distal goals urgent and the local goals vague, participants read the actions consistent with the local goal reliably more quickly than they read those consistent with the distal goal. This result provides dramatic confirmation for the prediction that local goals most actively guide Readers_{INT} experiences of texts. We did, in addition, find some impact from of the urgency of the distal goal. Participants read the action sentence consistent with the local goal somewhat more slowly when the distal goal was relatively urgent. Still, the major force of the results is to confirm how effectively intuitive processes constrain Readers_{INT}' reading behaviors.

In a second experiment, we created circumstances that we hoped would prompt our participants to engage reflective processes. As in our original experiment, participants read stories line by line. However, for this experiment we asked participants to make explicit judgments with respect to the stories' final sentence. One of the two actions appeared on the computer screen. Participants indicated—yes or no—whether the sentence accurately described what they felt would happen next in the story. We predicted that, by making the judgments overt, our participants would become Readers_{REF}.

In fact, when making overt judgments, participants in our study were considerably more likely to agree that characters would carry out the action consistent with the distal goal. On a great majority of occasions, participants accepted the appropriate action (e.g., John released the hand break and went on.) and rejected the inappropriate action (e.g., John stretched on the front seat and dozed off.). Participants' judgments were the most polarized when the distal goal was urgent. However, they made judgments that favored the distal goal even when that goal was more moderate.

This pair of experiments provides an interesting perspective on the texture of literary reading. We learn with reasonable certainty that Readers_{INT}' tacit judgments are unrelentingly local. To the extent that intuitive processes accomplish the major tasks of ordinary reading, we cannot count on Readers_{INT} to use information from a text that appears, in more careful analysis, to be very hard to ignore. Of course,

that more careful analysis is the product of reflective processes. Our experiments demonstrate how radically Readers_{REF}' understanding of a text changes when they have reasons to take control of their cognitive processes. This perspective on literary reading explains why the products of deliberate literary analysis may, almost as a matter of course, mismatch Readers_{INT}' moment-by-moment narrative experiences.

Judgments about the Morality of Characters' Actions

In our first case study, we demonstrated that intuitive processes prompt Readers_{INT} to make swift judgments about the match between characters' goals and their actions. In this second case study, we argue that intuitive processes also produce rapid judgments about the morality of characters' actions. Consider an episode from *The Bushwhacked Piano*. Nicholas Payne wishes to investigate the "possible infidelities" of his inamorata, Ann Fitzgerald. To do so, he breaks into her family's home. He is drunk, so the break-in is both comic and inept. Still, the episode has some discomfiting moments as when, for example, Payne enters the Fitzgerald's bedroom with a shotgun in hand:

His coordination departed and he made unnecessary noise with his feet. He still bravely managed to get to the edge of the bed and look down at the muzzle of the shotgun bobbing under Missus Fitzgerald's nose. He had occasion to recall the myriad exquisite ways she had found to make him uncomfortable. (30)

On reading this passage, it seems that Readers_{INT} should have an immediate response that Payne's actions are fundamentally wrong. How might that be so?

Much of the research discourse on moral judgments has concerned itself with reflective processes: Scholars have focused on the judgments people make when they effortfully deliberate about particularly thorny moral dilemmas. Sunstein has argued persuasively that those analyses misrepresent the intuitive processes that generate everyday moral judgments. On his account, people's moral judgments often arise from *heuristics*—automatic rules of thumb. Sunstein articulated a series of heuristics that, he argued, guide people's judgments. For example, he suggested that people make use of the heuristic, "Punish, and do not reward, betrayals of trust" (537). This statement captures a moral truth that would seemingly pass the muster of reflective processes' scrutiny. Sunstein's claim, however, is that because the heuristic functions in an automatic fashion, people apply it to generate decisions that reflective deliberation should rule out. To make this point, Sunstein described research by Koehler and Gershoff in which experimental participants were asked to choose between two cars with two different air bags:

According to crash tests, there was a 2% chance that drivers of Car A, with Air Bag A, will die in serious accidents as a result of the impact of the crash. With Car B, and Air Bag B, there was a 1% chance of death, but also an additional chance of one in 10,000 (0.01%) of death as a result of deployment of the air bag.

Car A presents a 2% risk of death; Car B presents only a 1.01% chance of death. However, over two-thirds of participants chose Car A. What, apparently, made Car B undesirable was a sense of betrayal: Air bags are meant to keep people safe, not bring about their deaths. Here, we see the same pattern we illustrated earlier for representativeness (which also counts as a heuristic): The automatic application of a wholly sensible rule of thumb will sometimes lead to errors. In fact, those errors constitute the evidence that a heuristic is part of the intuitive processes repertory.

To the extent that Sunstein correctly catalogued moral heuristics, we would expect to see those heuristics have an impact on Readers_{INT} narrative experiences. We could, for example, gloss Payne's housebreaking antics as a betrayal of trust—typically people trust their acquaintances not to enter their bedrooms and point guns at them. On that analysis, Readers_{INT} should express moral distress at Payne's behavior. Sunstein suggested another, perhaps more basic, heuristic that also could explain Readers_{INT}' responses, the *outrage* heuristic: an “automatic revulsion” to harmful acts that produces “a sharp sense of outrage and a propensity to react in proportion to [them]” (534). We might expect Readers_{INT} to experience outrage in response to Payne's actions and, for that reason, deem his actions to be morally dubious—and worthy of a proportionate response.

However, further analysis of *The Bushwhacked Piano* suggests that this account is incomplete. As the scene unfolds, Payne doesn't shoot Mrs. Fitzgerald. Instead, he exits the bedroom. A few noisy minutes later, the Fitzgeralds awaken and discover the barely hidden Payne. Upon locating him, Mrs. Fitzgerald looks into Payne's future:

“You're going to get a crack at cooling your heels in our admirable county jail,” she said, moving toward him. “Do you know that?”
 “I just want my walking papers.”
 “No. You're going to jail you shabby, shabby boy.” (31)

As they read these words, it seems quite likely that Readers_{INT} will encode a mental response along the lines of “Payne can't go to jail!”

How could that response emerge? As we have just argued, Sunstein's account of moral heuristics suggests that Readers_{INT} should find Payne's behavior offensive. If they engage in overt moral reasoning, Readers_{REF} should conclude that Payne belongs in jail. Still, it's reasonably easy to find analogous instances in which Readers_{INT} appear to cast their mental votes in favor of outcomes that contradict

moral expectations (see Gerrig, “Moral Judgments”). To explain Readers_{INT}’ responses in these myriad instances, we need an explanation that keeps intuitive processes at its center. In particular, we need to entertain the possibility that other heuristics apply in the context of narrative texts that, in one way or another, have precedence over the ordinary operation of moral heuristics.

Consider, for example, the possibility that Readers_{INT}’ narrative experiences are guided by the heuristic, “The hero should succeed.” If this heuristic were in place, we would be unsurprised to have Readers_{INT} encode the mental preference, for example, that Payne not be punished for his trespasses. In fact, we could imagine that Readers_{INT} could make such judgments by means of representativeness: They would assess the correspondence between a model (i.e., what it would mean for the hero to succeed in a particular situation) and the details of the text. Sunstein proposed that people have a range of moral heuristics that inform their everyday judgments. We can suggest, in parallel, that Readers_{INT} have a range of heuristics—let’s call them aesthetic heuristics—that operate in narrative settings.

If Readers_{INT} possess aesthetic heuristics, we have an account based on intuitive processes for why Readers_{INT} wish for Payne to go free. What remains mysterious is why one sort of automatic response (the product of aesthetic heuristics) takes precedence over another sort of automatic response (the product of moral heuristics). Why are Readers_{INT}’ responses dominated by what’s good for a character rather than what’s good for society? Are there cases in which the order of precedence (of heuristic responses) is reversed? Might genre have an impact on the order of precedence? When do characters’ behaviors become so disturbing that Readers_{INT} can no longer wish for their success? These questions also point to the complexities in how we might conceptualize the ways in which Readers_{INT} identify with characters. We are reluctant to believe that Readers_{INT} would identify with Payne—given that he mostly behaves in a reprehensible fashion—and yet they seem, in important ways, to support his bad choices. We suspect that these conflicts represent intuitive processes working at cross purposes.

As with our first case study, these observations illustrate how much narrative experiences change if, and when, Readers_{INT} become Readers_{REF}. We would expect Readers_{REF} to undertake a deeper moral analysis of Payne’s behavior. We might expect Readers_{REF} to be deeply troubled by their gut responses to the moral universe of *The Bushwhacked Piano*. In fact, critical responses to *The Bushwhacked Piano*, and to McGuane’s novels more generally, have consistently focused on the tensions between the characters’ actions and the underlying moral principles. McClintock argued that McGuane’s novels are often inflected by his Catholicism, as they explore

themes of redemption: McGuane's protagonists "grope toward spiritual renewal despite their unextended selves and unformed visions" (150). Westrum found a similar search for meaning in Payne's tale: Payne "has put it together, determined who he is and that life has value in spite of prevailing absurdity" (39). In both these instances, we see moral analysis informed by reflective processes—as Readers_{REF} take control of their responses to the text. The broader moral scope of the works is played off against the works' more immediate impact of intuitive processes.

Narrative Experiences and Real-World Judgments

For this final case study, we shift our focus to the long-term consequences of narrative experiences. We explore, in particular, circumstances in which people ultimately bring information they encounter in texts to bear on real-world judgments. What will matter, once again, is the application of intuitive and reflective processes. To set the stage for this discussion, we turn once more to excerpts from *The Bushwhacked Piano*. Here, we learn what Mrs. Fitzgerald has done with money her husband has provided to her:

She had built, with her share [of Mr. Fitzgerald's G.M. earnings], a wig bank on Woodward Avenue for the storage of hairpieces in up-to-date, sanitary conditions.... Fitzgerald had visited his wife's operation, walking through the ultraviolet vaults filled from floor to ceiling with disinfected hairpieces. It was not the Mountain West in there. Stunted workmen in pale green uniforms wheeled stainless wagons of billowing human hair down sloping corridors. Prototypes of wig style rested on undetailed plastic heads. (69)

This passage might prompt Readers_{INT} to encode the possibility that such a facility actually exists. Later in the novel, Readers_{INT} encounter a paragraph that provides a more overtly persuasive analysis of Mrs. Fitzgerald's wig bank. After Ann responds with an unenthusiastic "oh" to her mother's mention of the wig bank, Mrs. Fitzgerald takes the opportunity to inform her daughter:

"I wonder if you would say 'oh' if you were a part-time secretary at the bank if Wyandotte who had dropped December's salary on a teased blonde beehive which you had stored all through the summer and broken out for the Fireman's Ball in November only to find that the expensive article contained a real thriving colony of roaches and weevils; so you spray it with DDT or 2, 4-D or Black Flag or Roach-No-Mo and all the bugs, all the roaches, all the weevils run out and that wig bursts in to flames by *spontaneous combustion* and the house which you and your hubby—because that's what they call their husbands, these people: *hubbies*—burns down around the wig and your nest egg goes up with the mortgage and it's the end. I wonder then, if you were her and had owned this wig which you had stored privately, I wonder if you would have wondered about a refrigerated fire-proofed wig bank after all? Or not."

A little voice: "I would have put my wig in the wig bank." (137-8)

Mrs. Fitzgerald uses hyperbole successfully to convince her daughter of the social value of the wig bank. Are Readers_{INT} thereby convinced that wig banks (of this sort) actually exist? Our analysis suggests that they very likely are convinced. Let's see why.

Within the field of psychology, the dichotomy of automatic and controlled processes has settled most definitively in the theories of persuasion. Consider the *elaboration likelihood model*, which makes a critical distinction in the ways that people engage with persuasive messages (Petty, et al.). One possibility, sometimes called the *peripheral route* to persuasion, is that intuitive processes will dominate people's engagement: They are guided by automatic responses and expend little effort to elaborate on the message. The second possibility, sometimes called the *central route* to persuasion, is that people will engage reflective processes: They will marshal processing resources to elaborate on the message. People who produce persuasive messages often count on low elaboration. The messages often do not hold up to reflective deliberation.

Such models of persuasion have clear applications to Readers_{INT}' experiences of texts. Prentice and Gerrig (see also Gerrig, "Experiencing Narrative Worlds"), outlined an account of people's responses to fiction that embraced the distinction between intuitive and reflective processes. Prentice and Gerrig argued, in particular, that narrative experiences are mostly guided by intuitive processes and, thus, people normally accept everything they read (see also Gilbert). To "accept," in this context, means to allow information to become encoded, unchallenged, into long-term memory. Thus, we would predict that Readers_{INT} would encode into long-term memory *The Bushwhacked Piano*'s information about wig banks. That information would then be available (in the same way any information from long-term memory is available) to affect subsequent judgments.

Of course, Readers_{REF} always have the option of taking effortful control over what they encode into memory. Readers_{REF} who wish to expend effort to contemplate the existence of wig banks can do so. That is what it means to engage in elaboration. Note, again, that the central claim is that Readers_{REF} must engage strategic effort so as not to encode narrative information. We need to consider that claim in light of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's oft-quoted phrase "the willing suspension of disbelief" (6). When scholars use that phrase, they appear to make the assumption that Readers_{INT} must turn off their natural impulse to disbelieve (for a review, see Carroll). However, as we have just argued, that's completely wrong. Readers_{INT} more easily *believe*—or at least they more easily *accept* (which often has the same long-term consequences). The only possibility for disbelief is

via reflective processes: Readers_{REF} must willingly *construct* disbelief (see Gerrig, “Experiencing Narrative Worlds”).

Research evidence supports this claim that Readers_{INT} don’t suspend disbelief, but, rather, Readers_{REF} construct it. Experiments have typically tried to define circumstances in which people would be more likely or less likely to engage in strategic effort to confront information in a text. For example, one important prediction is that readers who are relatively more transported to a narrative world will, as a consequence, be less likely to argue (mentally) against the putative facts of a text—immersion works against any impulse toward scrutiny (Gerrig, “Experiencing Narrative Worlds”). Green and her colleagues tested that prediction by developing a measurement device that specifically assessed the extent to which people had been transported (Green and Brock; cf. Nell). In their experiments, participants read brief texts and then responded on 7-point scales (with the end points labeled “very much” and “not at all”) to items of this type:

While I was reading the narrative, I could easily picture the events in it taking place.

While I was reading the narrative, activity going on in the room around me was on my mind.

I could picture myself in the scene of the events described in the narrative. (704)

Participants read texts that provided the possibility of attitude change. For example, one text was an adaptation of a real news story in which a young girl visiting a mall was stabbed to death by a psychiatric patient. Green and Brock demonstrated that those participants who reported themselves to be most highly transported were also most likely to experience belief and attitude change congruent with the facts of the story. Participants who had been more highly transported, for example, agreed more with the sentiment that “Psychiatric patients’ freedoms should be restricted.”

These data leave open the question of why the same texts transport people to different extents. The extent of transport is likely to be affected by a host of individual differences ranging from Readers_{INT}’ genre preferences to their ambient moods to their real-world knowledge. For example, some Readers_{INT} of *The Bushwhacked Piano* in 2006 will know that there *are* such things as wig banks. However, these wig banks are generally facilities that offer wigs free of charge to people undergoing chemotherapy. We would imagine that Readers_{INT} with knowledge of real-world wig banks would be more likely to construct disbelief with respect to the material in *The Bushwhacked Piano* (and, when doing so, become Readers_{REF}).

The major conclusion we draw from this case study is that Readers_{INT}’ real-world judgments will quite regularly be affected by the information they have encountered in texts. This conclusion applies both to explicit and implicit judgments. With respect

to explicit judgments, we have seen that reading a brief text can influence the way in which people think, for example, about the freedoms granted to psychiatric patients. With respect to implicit judgments, we expect that narrative information will often inform people's intuitive responses about what seems appropriate or inappropriate out in the real world.

Becoming Readers_{REF}

The goal of this article has been to outline an account of literary reading based on the distinction between intuitive and reflective processes. We have suggested that intuitive processes compel Readers_{INT} to have certain automatic narrative experiences. Unless they explicitly engage reflective processes, Readers_{INT}' assessments of the appropriateness of characters' actions will be bound to the most recent goal. Readers_{INT}' judgments about the morality of characters' actions will arise from automatic rules of thumb. With a high likelihood, Readers_{INT} will accept the information a text presents.

Our analysis naturally leads to the question: Under what circumstances do readers engage reflective processes? In the introduction, we suggested that the likelihood that individuals will function as Readers_{INT} or Readers_{REF} depends on the details of a text and the particular goals and knowledge they bring to the experience of the text. Because we drew our case studies from cognitive psychological research, we have not reflected directly on the aspects of texts themselves that might prompt readers to exercise reflective control over their experiences. However, literary criticism provides a tradition of analyses that suggest how authors structure their texts to affect readers' particular types of engagement (e.g., Booth). Consider Auerbach's comments on Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*: "the author at times achieves the intended effect by representing herself to be someone who doubts, wonders, hesitates, as though the truth about her characters were not better known to her than it is to them or to the reader" (535). Woolf, perhaps, is representative of the type of author or the type of narrator who inspires readers to engage reflective processes. We can point, more generally, to Rabinowitz's concept of the *authorial audience* ("What Readers Do"). Authors, according to this analysis, shape texts for a hypothetical audience that has the willingness and knowledge to engage with the text. While articulating rules that guide reading, Rabinowitz asserts that readers "have to decide when to skip, when to skim, and when to be especially alert" (54). We make much the same point by asserting that Readers_{INT} must decide when to become Readers_{REF}. Authors lay the groundwork to help their audiences make that decision.

According to our analysis, literary criticism is almost entirely a product of reflective processes. At its core, literary criticism is predicated on a controlled

experience of the text. In addition, most literary analysis arises from re-reading rather than the initial reading of a text. Rabinowitz describes several implications of re-reading, including a process he calls “reading against memory” (“A Thousand Times”). In a tacit evocation of intuitive and reflective processes, he asserts that what readers learn about a text from a first reading potentially changes their moment-by-moment experience upon re-reading. Note, however, that irrespective of the number of times an individual reads a text, intuitive processes continue to wield an automatic impact. Individuals do not become Readers_{REF} by virtue of re-reading; they become Readers_{REF} by virtue of taking active control over their reading. Thus, although skilled literary readers will likely continue, for example, initially to accept most of what they read (via intuitive processes), they should also have greater ability to construct disbelief (via reflective processes). Still, intuitive processes represent an individual’s collection of automatic processes. It is quite possible that, by virtue of the regularity of their practice, skilled literary readers will have a different repertory of intuitive processes than novice readers: Because reflective processes, when practiced long enough, can eventually become rapid and intuitive, more of literary readers’ response to literature will be based on intuition rather than reflection. The account based on the distinction between intuitive and reflective processes allows us to conceptualize how literary experience changes even the immediate experience of reading.

However, even if the relative composition of intuitive and reflective processes change, the fundamental distinction between the two sets of processes remains in place. There will almost always be a divide between Readers_{INT} moment-by-moment experience of texts and Readers_{REF} subsequent appreciation of those texts. However, the account we have described allows us to understand the tension between how Readers_{INT} are compelled to read and how Readers_{REF} wish to read.

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