

Excerpt from *The Cultic Code, The Living Books of Paul Bowles*, III.VI. The cultic organism

## VI. The cultic organism

Insight has helped to identify places of metanarrativity, then a fusion of insight and synopsis opened the emblem. Having recognised the **subtle body and subtle head of substance**, now **pure synopsis**, “perceptive synthesis”<sup>1</sup> is necessary to see it as a specific, precise system. For the substance of the books is not only a texture, but a **system**, which holds together the seemingly scattered metanarrative parts and the seemingly removed tag of the title. What can be said about this system, how can it be handled, its order mapped? My suggestion is that the observed system is not only Bowlesian, not only generally literary, but also universally organic. What he coded in the metanarrative layer of his quartet is a universal message, a path of metanoia, and a state of elevation. Ultimately, the **total organism** of the metanarrative body can be observed in the analyses in four elements: as a flow, as a structure, as a seed, and potentially as transition.

The basic observation about the analysed texts is that out of the sequences of gravitational narrative waves (shadow) emerges a **non-sequential** metanarrative body (substance), a **living entity**, the spirit of the book sleeping beneath the surface of the story. The key to the door of literature as alive, conscious, and balanced substance is **organic form**, at which Bowles explicitly aimed to arrive.<sup>2</sup> What is meant by organic form? What do we know about the **general model of the unit** of any organic phenomenon? Here I demonstrate the model of the organic metanarrative unit as it appears in literary form.<sup>3</sup> Metanarrative is the unit of all narratives, since the organism of shadow is a mere projection of the substance’s organism. When postmodern criticism claims that there is “no humanly made structure that endures,”<sup>4</sup> the significant point should be highlighted that metanarrative structure enduring the passage of time is **not arbitrary** but organic. Metanarrativity provides a clear view of how vertical energy infuses narrative time and space with meaning. The morphogenesis of a meaningful, relevant unit of speech may be witnessed, the whole ritual passage, from death through baptism by light to reintegration in narrative, which is the enactment of the trinity represented in physical existence. The process points to a vanishing point both inwards and outwards, the nature of which can be observed as the dual nature of the metanarrative unit’s core.

### 1. The metanarrative unit

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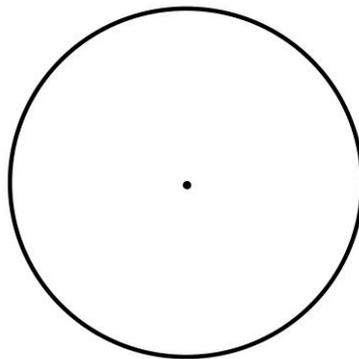
<sup>1</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 201.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Bowles, Evans interview, in: Lawrence D. Stewart, *Paul Bowles: The Illumination of North Africa*, 86., also Caponi-interview in Gena Dagal Caponi (ed.), “*Conversations with Paul Bowles*,” 57.

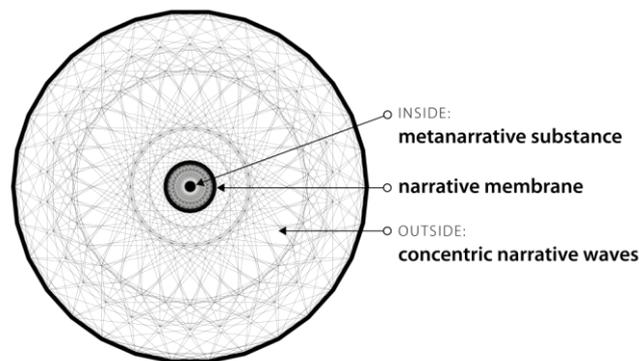
<sup>3</sup> It may be no wonder that after all the theoretical textual mapping, I found an image which precisely depicts my metanarrative substance: the mathematical-geographical figure E8. If objective scientists say, this is the structure of the material universe, I can only confirm it from my discipline at once objective and subjective. And to reclaim the lost respect of the humanities, who can say in truth that a word is worth less than a world? For my figures, I use the E8 with further distinctions and additions, such as the definitive centre point. The image I found best fitting with how I see the field of substance light up, is of the hologramic cosmos.

<sup>4</sup> Richard F. Patteson, *A World Outside: The Fiction of Paul Bowles*, x.

The unit of substance is a *holon*: a minimal scenic unit, an autonomous textual part representing (or rather pre-presenting) the whole book. In its operation, nature, and structure, it is identical with an atomic unit of matter. The **model of the organic metanarrative unit** distinguishes primarily between an outer zone of concentric waves (narrative, contextual, and interpretive), and an inner circle of central situations and their still centres. The outer membrane or narrative interface seals and at once connects the unit horizontally. The inner core or seed secures its stability, inner dynamic, and connects it vertically, making the essence of tales generally relatable and relevant. This is the minimal form which contains and generates the life of these books.



*Figure 8. The two-dimensional metanarrative unit: point and circle, inside and outside.*



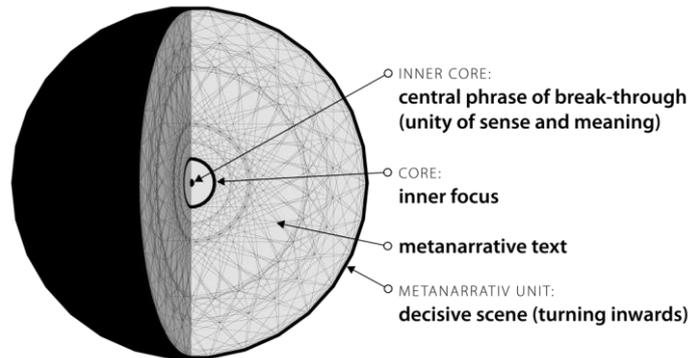
*Figure 9. The outer zone of the unit: temporal narrative membrane. The inner zone: a-temporal metanarrative substance. This pattern mirrors itself into a flower-like blossoming, the opening of a world of meaning from a closed bud of text.<sup>5</sup>*

The unit of substance may be seen as a spheric **force field consisting of a point** (monadic nucleus) **and consequent concentric textual waves** (strata of energy emanating from and feeding back into the nucleus, their impetus transgresses the border of units). In analysis,

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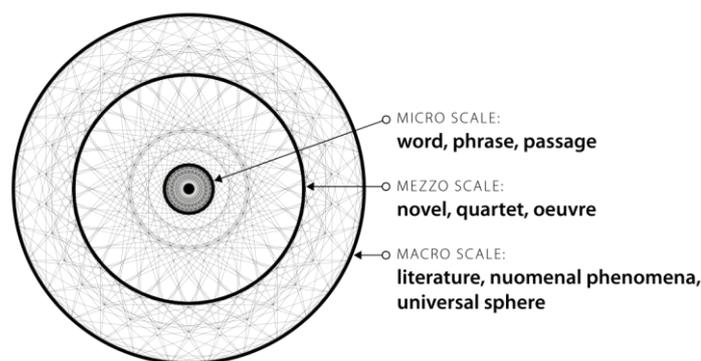
<sup>5</sup> See the mathematical/geometric structure “E8.” See also cultic identifications of this basic cosmic structure of the point, such as the mystical rose, lotus, flower, the Celtic cross, or the cross as such as Sun symbols.

the standard **unit, the atom of metanarrative substance** proves to be the passage: a **cycle** (definite passage), a textual part of optimal scale (textual mid-scale) where the inner story becomes visible in its very act of transformation, and so it is also a ritual passage.



*Figure 10. The 3 dimensional metanarrative unit: shells. Textual layers (concentric waves) are peeled away one after the other. At the core, the nucleus of break-through is to be seen.*

In a broad concern, the **unit of substance** may be observed **on many levels**: unit is a morpheme, a word, a phrase, a passage, a character, a novel, the quartet, the Bowlesian oeuvre, literature, all organic human (nuomenal or substantive) phenomena such as language, time, ritual, and all organic natural-human-cosmic nuomenal phenomena. The deep meaning of this is that in all organic structural units, all the others resound. Figuratively, through every human song, the golden flower speaks and the heavenly falcon soars. Units on all of these scales present the exact same operation, nature, and structure of substance, and their complex sphere a proper hologram, wherein each unit presents part and whole of the totality. The ultimate configuration of these levels is the very body of subtle substance as a kind of super-matter.



*Figure 11. The analogous-hologramic system of metanarrative units. The standard unit of passage reflected on further levels: word, phrase, passage; a novel, the quartet, the Bowlesian oeuvre; literature, nuomenal human phenomena (language, time, ritual), and natural-cosmic phenomena.*

Taking the **liminal passage as the atomic standard**, as the representative entity to demonstrate the system, let us first of all observe the atom of textual substance in effect. Let us look at the **example** of the central scene of *Up Above*, the passage of break-through (179-182). We are in the jungle house of the charming millionaire, who just had his mother murdered. Day is on a bizarre trip with her cynical old husband, lost off-track. Only the two of them are left, Day with a sprout of suspicion, and Grove manically searching to gain access to Day's memory bank. The old monastery is a labyrinth, the house of blue-beard. (179) Grove "[pilots] Day through the dim dining room," ending up in the kitchen with "vaulted beams." Through the windings of narrative, the mystical counterparts, Night and Day, the falling and the rising are finally together. "Now we've got direct contact," he said under his breath." (179) This is the membrane of the key passage to come, the peel of the metanarrative sphere. They start talking, their conversation entirely ambiguous. While Day means marriage (thinking Grove is worried about Luchita), Grove means the troubles of bad conscience. Day claims as the essence of life: "you'll never be happy until you do what you know's the right thing. That's what life's about, after all." (180) Grove replies: "What life's about! ... What is life about? Yes. What's the subject matter? ... It's about who's going to clean up the shit." They are speaking two different languages: one driven by compassion, the other by fear. They are in the same bubble of a situation, but one with open consciousness, the other with closed: in different modes of being. They both know it's a decisive situation. Day knows "she must stay with him and prove, at least to herself, that she was not afraid of him." (181) It is a dual, a proper contest between two oppositional counterpoints. Then Grove mentions his troubles, revealing a secret spot: bitterness. Day contests the word twice: "Troubles? ... You have troubles?" "His face darkened" as he admits to having troubles, not everything going so smoothly in his life. Perhaps he blushes at the obvious lie. For out of context, everyone has the right to troubles, but his trouble happens to be with drugging two innocent tourists, holding them hostage in order to find out if they witnessed the event of his mother's murder, which he himself directed, with Thorny playing his hand. His right to compassion is nil. But perhaps this is exactly what he was aiming at: stealing her compassion, her heart, to steal her mind, her memory. And he passes through, they pass together. She goes further by retorting that troubles should be gotten ahead of: "I have a feeling you'll get them behind you. It's a question of making up your mind." Grove thinks of the murder scene, Day thinks of his marriage. The two different senses mark the difference between shadow and substance: two opposing senses whirl around each other in the *mise en abyme*, and they can never understand one another, for they come from two different worlds. The force standing between, connecting and drawing them is his fear she clearly senses: the "shadowy bond between them... she felt the cold impact of physical fear. And for some hidden reason she hoped never to discover, he was afraid of her." (182) Once she recognises this "bond," we enter into the very core of substance. The following single paragraph is the core, the *holon* wherein the whole hologram of the metanarrative unit, the cultic organism is reflected. At the end and beginning stand the external conditions infused with the meaning of the situation. Getting closer to the core, the impetus of the sentences grows, as their inner intensity of spinning grows. First the contact of superimposition is made through the eyes, where the truth of Soto's substance,

his essential driving force is mirrored. Then the time cycle turns in saying something before it happens in the narrative sequence. Finally the mind is swallowed, as Soto's downward spiral is miraculously reversed in the ascending, relieving abyss of a paradox. Once the distinctions of the mind disappear, the self-identification of the ego disappears, and a new, shared identity emerges. This inner core, the seed of the passage, and of the whole novel, is at once its point of outer grasp, where the reader can get involved, so to speak.

They sat down at a long marble-topped table near the fireplace. The smell of garlic and spices was in the stream that rose from the sauce, but she had no appetite for it when he passed it to her. It had been a fraction of a second that she had looked into his eyes as they opened after having been focused on an inner world of torment, but she had been caught up and drawn into orbit along with him. By the time she had thought: I am I, it was finished, yet for that flash the difference between them had been next to nothing. It was a fact as much as the water dripping from the tap (now into a shallow dish) or the electric clock whirring on top of the refrigerator, or the smoky façade of the chimney above the fireplace. (182)

The phrase “for that flash the difference between them had been next to nothing” is the **centre point**. *Difference, to be, and nothing* are the key words from which the **minimal structure of identification** arises.

The scene moves into narrativity with the two finishing dinner with calmed nerves, having their ice cream by the fire “in the familiar *sala*.” Back from the unknown, in the formalities of the familiar, they are driven apart by their respective personal paths. Their common ground has been conquered. From the reader thinking “We are in the jungle house of the charming millionaire...,” the realization arises: I am in the house, in the kitchen, I am identified in that flash. It is I who is liberated from the imprisonment of personal conditions, and who must choose between the role of murderer or victim. It is my attitude towards my life that is challenged to transform, basically into a purified vision, the drive for betterment, and an over-all gratitude for not having directly to be either murderer or victim. Thus the element of substance directly achieves the transformation of vision. The single point of contact between the pragmatic words on the page and the abstract consciousness of the reader is the metaphoricity of language: its immanent nature of extensivity between dimensions.

The **systematism** of substance lies in the fact that it can be observed as a complex, cohesive, and autonomous entity within the novels. The exact conclusion of the analyses is that through metanarrative we are looking at a par excellence **cultic structure**. The abstract form of substance suggests a model and a code. The general model concerns the unit of substance in its binary aspect (still and dynamic), trinary function (operation, nature, structure), and transformative capacity. Organic form, therefore, postulates that the work of art is balanced, total, and alive. In the common substance of cultic forms, operation is extension, nature is outer autonomy and inner rhythm, and structure is atomic. At the end of this chapter, interdisciplinary associations are invited to show the vertically limitless **analogy** of the metanarrative system.

## 1.1 Narrative waves

The horizontal structuring process of narrative is diametrically opposed to the vertical structuring process of metanarrative. Gravitational narrative waves configure into a linear displaced structure, abstract from its model of undisplaced atomic form. Circles of narrative, changing in intensity, signal a vortex, a concentric movement nearing and faring a specific gravitational centre point of story, as a gravitational centre point of existence. The substantive point of break-through, as the beating heart of these living books, primarily **generates** the narrative force of the entire story, and ultimately induces the **magnetism** which draws narrative waves back into itself: this simultaneous activity provides the **immanent pulsation of these organic fields**.<sup>6</sup> This point in metanarrative turns out to be the gateway to an entirely different perception of the same reality. The story which is at once linear and circular is forced to spiral to and from the point of release. The act of spiralling is the enactment of the journey, while the static state achieved is the infinite peace and bliss of the encounter. The former creates displaced structure, the latter creates undisplaced form. Art is after the perfection of forms, not in abstraction but as a way of being in perfection.

From the perspective of narrative, story lines are shown to lead to and from **circles** of passages. Therefore these passages may be seen as magnetic or centripetal, and radiating or centrifugal vortexes. In either case, the apparent story lines are really **concentric waves**. According to hermeneutics, causality i.e. the narrative process of a story, is analogical<sup>7</sup> and cyclical<sup>8</sup>. These linear forms suggest a meta-form, a metaphor or original cosmic-human-natural organic mould. The fact that narrative is indirectly metanarrative, and that linear causality is indirectly cyclical seems evident. There proves to be direct transference or transmission between vertical and horizontal energy: direct connection between inside and outside. Ricoeur's mimesis "contributes particularly to breaking down the prejudice that opposes an 'inside' and an 'outside' of a text. ... The notion of a structuring activity ... transcends this opposition."<sup>9</sup> Narrative waves are indirectly metanarrative, for narrative structure (concentric wave) derives from meta-structure (circle, centre, pulsation). Direct access to substance may be, therefore, achieved through the direct analogical interaction or transmission between structures of shadow and substance. The spirals of story lead to a stand-still both within the textual body (metanarrative body) and beyond it (emblematic head). This stand-still signals the arrival at the unit of substance. In the previous chapter the emblems have been analysed as units at once autonomous and generative. Here, in the sea of the very story, the waves of plot take the reader to islands of metanarrative passage. These are considered the atomic, standard units of textual substance.

## 1.2 Atomic substance

Liminal passages seem to be the atomic standard, the centre of scale (which goes from the morphogenesis of breath to the aim of human cult). The suspension of shadows allows

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<sup>6</sup> Perhaps the two directions of effect may be related to the alpha and omega forces of the same centre, ritual or universal.

<sup>7</sup> See Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 277.

<sup>8</sup> See Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 158.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 1:76.

extension into substance. Narrative is superseded and in these passages as distinct units, metanarrative structure may be directly observed. This “undisplaced structure,”<sup>10</sup> the beating heart of the **liminal passage is the unit** of organic form. **The total cohesion of the text is provided by the inner point of balance.**

**Liminal passages** generate and magnetize story waves, and are entirely non-narrative. These are passages both in the textual sense, in that they are to a great extent autonomous, and in the ritual sense, referring to a proper ritual taking place. They are formed around **central points**. At these points, a transgression takes place within the protagonist, an inner barrier is crossed. The function of these passages is integration for the narrative: for the protagonist to find the well-spring of life and the tree of knowledge, by which the story is resolved – and where the story initially generates.

Here a serious distinction must be made between proper and **pseudo passages**. There are many places where a threshold crossing is strongly attempted, in a struggle to reach some existential clearing, unsuccessfully. There are also places where a threshold is crossed into a demonic world of chaos, disintegration, and destruction. Finally there are places where some crucial revelation comes up from the unconscious, but without the will or the awareness of the character. These do not form part of the subtle body of substance, as my search began initially along traces which **integrate, sustain, and inspire the participant**. The fact that there are passages which are formally similar to illuminating ones only further demonstrates the organic nature of text: even the phenomenon of **mimicry** can be found in it. For a reader to identify with a pseudo passage may be of perilous consequence. This is why critical adequacy is not a social position, but a vital responsibility. The disintegration of protagonists may be witnessed along the same passage where enlightenment may also be attained. The structure of the passage can be observed, however, and through its observation a wondrous yet exact vision can be attained of the atom of substance.

From the outside, the liminal passages may be seen as being whole. The passage is the fruit, the whole, as one sees it. Within it, one becomes part of the verbal form, the sense, and the intellect of the subtle body of substance. The liminal passages are all different concoctions, but their form, the ritual process or cultic organism is the same. The model looks like an emblem of transformation. In operation, a distinct elevation from narrative space-time and from the conditionings of the ego may be observed. In nature, dynamic stasis is seen at the core, as dynamism emanating from stasis. In structure, a constant juxtaposition and coordination of the two, inner and outer nature is seen to be embodied.

The **liminal centres** of liminal passages are their **core** containing the very essence. The core is the conic point of these passages that is liminal par excellence, its circle is its direct sphere of effect. These metanarrative core contains the words, phrases of resolution and regeneration. The core may be drawn on different scales: head title, pillars, series of break-throughs, and a single microcosmic centre. The centre of cohesion and balance in each novel is at once its own **source of becoming**, and the reader’s **point of turning fictional into vital energy**. The point of balance, at once the point of resolution, is the

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<sup>10</sup> Northrop Frye, *Words with Power*, 142.

metanarrative centre: the point of break-through is the **nucleus**, the inner-inner core of the text. In the case of several such points, we may speak of a complex organism.

Looking at the unit of the novel, the **coherence** of each work, as indeed any living entity, comes not from exterior force, but from inside: inner cohesion provided by a **core** which is at once form (shadow) and energy (substance). This central core, then, generates, balances, and completes its metanarrative parts directly, and narrative parts indirectly. What can be seen in the very seed of substance? In the monad there lies a duality of nature, as both limitlessness and differentiation can be experienced. This aspectual duality is the root, source, archetype of the narrative-metanarrative distinction.

**Thematically a sense of timelessness characterizes the core, which at once feels like a fulfilment of narrative time.** The closure or opening of time takes place, as a halt is achieved in story (closed) but life goes on (opened). When time seems to stop, it is the time of the story which stops: suspended i.e. nothing happens, nothing said or done. It is also the time of the story which is fulfilled i.e. the protagonist reaches the goal of his/her inner journey: it is the end of the path of psychic division, anxiety, doubt, fear etc. At the same time, it is made clear that this is also where another kind of life, one without a story, begins. It is neither unfortunate, not terrible that “in the meantime, you eat” (*Let It* 194), and one must “draw the breath that would destroy” (*Spider’s* 394) the heavenly inner music, because the reality of total inner life is such that it has no end: it *is*, and is potentially always *becoming*. The formal features of metanarrative textual centres manifest this dual nature of real life explicitly.

We have reached the still metaphysical centre, which is most fully and absolutely present and definitive: the “**still center of the order of words.**”<sup>11</sup> “It is as a quest that our whole literary experience is in relation to this “still centre of words.”<sup>12</sup> It is still in the sense of being a moment of stop, repose, concentration: inner reflection, insight. **It is autonomous and fulfilled** both in its relation to narrative and in its non-relative immanence. It must be recognised, however, that this stillness is seen from outside, as the apparently, externally closed form of poetry.

From the inside of the core, there is an inner rhythm to be sensed. **Besides stasis, dynamism can also be observed in the metanarrative textual centre, as the other side of its dual nature.** There is no sense of dead immobility, but a pulsation at the very centre: there is always inner movement to be seen. Bowles ventures inside of his protagonists, who, while appearing to be asleep, dead to the world, experience the wildest voyages, the most blissful flights of vision and recognition, impossible unions, and immersions in unthinkable qualities of pure life. Linguistically, too, these metanarrative centres are far from being stagnant or dogmatic. The cycles present a boundless inner flight of poetry, and the very centres a sheer sense of unconditioned existence. Such movement within metanarrative cores may be witnessed in e.g. “the transcending fact of the living individual,” (*Let It* 194), or a paradox “the difference between them ...next to nothing,” or particularly, in the most pure and powerful way, in the emblems.

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<sup>11</sup> Northop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 117.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 2:19.

This dual nature creates an inner pulsation, in form as well as in sense. The metanarrative pulsation of textual cores is a sign of the same nature of time, as the core presents the unit of time. I have already quoted the following exact abstraction of Gadamer, but now it appears in more clarity: “The work of art does resemble a living organism with its internally structured unity. In other words, it too displays autonomous temporality.”<sup>13</sup> The metanarrative core is not only **homeostatic being** but also **homeodynamic becoming**: it pulsates within.

**The central point** of the thesis is that dynamism is needed by stillness, and shadow is needed by substance. Their **pulsation** is the condition of life. In this sense, life itself may be seen as a form of endless cult, in which shadows lead to their source, the still substance, which itself manifests a mysterious inner rhythm. The treasure we have set out to find has brought us through encounter to identification in common substance, ultimately to the identification of the **unit of substance**.

## **2. The metanarrative bind**

There proves to be an organic bind between metanarrative units which are analogous in structure and complementary of conditions. Their analogy and complementation offers a positive fusion mould, one so intensely needed by Western mentality and psyche. As the colonial paradigm shows, there is no Western formula that would be radically binding, deeply rooting and connecting. We have seen that this historical, narrative condition is due to the dividing and subordinating linguistic mould. Now the alternative is to be seen, the radical fusion pattern of autonomous entities of substance. In Bowles’s works, this pattern is manifest in character constellations, metanarrative fields, and metanarrative causality.

### **2.1 Character constellations**

To each character belongs a distinct set of metanarrative experiences, and so they are stigmatized by these. The metanarrative field of a certain protagonist is always balanced, there are no liminally incomplete figures. Bowles shows each of his heroes in several different situations of identification, always with a single key passage of insight. Therefore the character field is also a metanarrative unit. What is even more significant is that there are character constellations in the novels, where the liminal fields of characters merge and complement each other. Dual pairs of characters as counterparts form larger organic metanarrative units, turning in their cycle of metamorphosis based on an identity of and in substance. The scenes of their mystical union provide a certain point of balance “all its own” of each metanarrative field. In these absolutely nothing happens, yet something crucial is established: a moment of equilibrium after and before extreme differentiation. Port and Kit in the desert share emotional unity. Dyar and Thami share unity in being outside. Stenham and Amar share unity in artistic sensibility perhaps. Soto and Day share unity in their descending-ascending spiral.

The different fields superimposed provide a separate metanarrative unit, yet another dimension, so to speak. This may prove that metanarrative fields converge, as opposed to stories which tend to diverge. The character constellations are **substance dyads consisting of a pair of metanarrative fields**. Narrative waves shelter a **diptych** in *The Sheltering Sky*: the tale of Port and of Kit appears as autonomous but complementary narrative entities. The other three

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<sup>13</sup>Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, 43.

novels are also tales of **fulfilled or unfulfilled communion** between a set of protagonists. What conjoins the fates or portraits is their **common involvement in the single journey of the reader**.

Here I limit the demonstration to constellations of characters who go through properly explicated rituals. However, it must be acknowledged that besides the fixed character dyads, there are **optional triads** which can be played with. Who is the third character balancing the dyad of Port and Kit, for instance, in the *Sheltering?* Tunner? It may rather be Marhnia, who, unlike the forerunner of the American yuppie, has a very real effect. There may be several minor constellations also of reversed, perverted, corrupted i.e. imbalanced sets of characters. In a way, every minor character fits the dyads. The third member is always an odd one out. Their remaining outside the dyad is either due to their incapacity to properly enter the metanarrative game e.g. Tunner, Eunice, Lee, Dr. Slade, or due to their consciously exterior stance e.g. Marhnia, Hadija, Luchita, or due to being consciously evil e.g. Thorny. From here, it's a real game, trying to fit events and characters together. "Structure is also play, because—despite this theoretical unity—it achieves its full being only each time it is played."<sup>14</sup>

## 2.2 Fields

The metanarrative bodies of the four novels may now appear as **four distinct fields**. In the introductory chapter, I have presented a fused synopsis of narrative and metanarrative contents. The enigma of the novels marks them each as a distinct metanarrative unit. But the quartet, the larger **unit of the four novels** is also more than mere generic unity, it is a separate metanarrative entity of its own inner balance. The entity of the quartet is made up of mutually complementary sub-entities (novels). A synopsis of the quartet allows a view of all the metanarrative parts in one.

Hermeneutics recognises this possibility: "the meaning of a literary work forms a part of a larger whole. ...It is better to think ... not simply of a sequence of meanings, but of a sequence of contexts or relationships [which Frye calls 'phases'] in which the whole work of literary art can be placed."<sup>15</sup> Therefore the metanarrative, cultic organism can be found on different scales of context, from the single work to larger systematic units of works.

In the sum of the Bowlesian quartet, a qualitative "increase in being" is added not only to their separate objective value, but to the reader's subjective quality of vision: a larger perspective of connections is revealed. In a wider scope of vision, the focal point of the single centre releases further revelative energy. Recognising Amar's passage as the central one of the quartet provides an increasingly cathartic identification with the boy as the single victor.

The four tales manifest four separate narrative cycles of **transformation**, the end feeding back into the beginning. The four entities together form a single generic structure of a natural seasonal cycle. Their linear chronological sequence presents a transformation of the author's focus. From being preoccupied with one's dreams (Port), through the question of moral responsibility (Dyar and Stenham), he reaches a height over the whole of Western civilization and the colonial paradigm: back to the source of evils, and forward to the devastating end of complete destruction (Soto).

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<sup>14</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 117.

<sup>15</sup> Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 73.

It is the liberty of art that the linear order of the **natural seasonal cycle** can be restructured. It may be argued that *Sheltering* is a novel of Summer, of the blazing sun, *Let It* is one of autumn with its cold rains and unadorned nature, *Spider's* is clearly one of Spring, with the uprising, the sacrificial rite, and the youth of Amar, and finally *Up Above* is the novel of winter, with no warmth of feeling or light of truth. The reordered sequence of the seasons in the chronology of the books suggests **different orders of reading, like different orders of scripture**: the elements, the configured signs are given, and the puzzle may be arranged from right to left, from top to bottom, each resulting in a different expression. Either way, while the flat scripture and flat wheel of fortune keep the mind in the two-dimensional dichotomy of up-down and left-right, a three-dimensional figure may also be deciphered. A building or a human figure may be envisioned, perhaps even a universal human being with different centres of substance activated. The more personal and immediate the recognition of the figure, the more alive the books become – and the more vital energy the reader may gain from them.

**Substance appears in analogous units of different scales.** There is a vivid connection between the scales of substance, a textual continuum of analogy from the smallest unit e.g. an expression (not to go into morphic, even sonic units, which is also possible) through larger metanarrative cycles e.g. rites of passage, units of character, to the field of the book, and further to the unit of the four novels, further, into the oeuvre, revealing an entire literary, even organic continuum finally. The same substance reveals itself on different levels: same operation, nature, and structure. The transference of this formal and essential cyclicity and concentricity can only begin from the centre, and end in the centre.

### 2.3 Metanarrative causality

Metanarrative units are formed around monadic centres, as we have seen. Therefore the **bind between the pointal centre and its spheric unit** is mutual and complementary. The primary aspect of metanarrative causality is the emanation of semantic energy from the centre, the secondary aspect is the feed-back, the drive to be reintegrated into the core. The type of causality is the same in both directions, induction and deduction, and the two may be seen as “merely” a polarity. This causality of analogy is unlike narrative causality: it does not necessarily connect in temporal or spatial terms, nor does it necessarily connect dependent figures. It is a much stronger bond than rational, material causality, and may be seen as indeed **direct, first-degree causality**. It is a model of first-degree transformation: units of being are connected by the common source of substance, common becoming. Compared to the causality between the metanarrative centre and its sphere, the **connection between narrative and metanarrative is indirect, second degree causality**, due to the transmission between vertical and horizontal planes. These may be seen as the two types of metanarrative causality: they involve a qualitative leap, a jump in degree. **Narrative connection** of space-time relation and inter-dependence (what Western philosophy tends to call “causality”) may be understood as **third-degree causality**.

Let us observe the basic causal pattern, the figure of **metanarrative causality**. The lines of narrative content ebb and flow from and towards **sources and resolutions** of substance. While the initial narrative source is being born into the world, the condition of metanarrative is a death to the world. While narrative resolution is understood ultimately as the conclusion of

linear life, i.e. as death, the metanarrative resolution takes place in the centre of a cyclical structure of life, and may be understood as some sort of rebirth. Therefore the figure of **metanarrative causality** seems to be reversal, or rather analogical transmission between dimensions: between point and sphere, between vertical and horizontal.

Not only the monumental body of story, but its **pillars and title** also have been shown to bind the narrative and metanarrative aspects of each textual unit. Being directly related to both, they carry the formal aspects of both as well. These emblems are integrated into narrative in their **linearity**, in that they form a line of thought significant to the story. But here they automatically transform into metanarrative structures: as the stories are circular, following and completing a full circle of transformation, so the pillars of the text, the sub-titles, headings etc. also demonstrate this **circularity, cyclicity**. This demonstrates clearly how the beginning-middle-end linearity is an arc, literally the vessel of a larger cycle or sphere. Therefore the emblems are structurally both narrative and metanarrative at the same time, both of the thick body, and of the subtle body of the book. The relation between the sub-title system and the head title is the same. Their linear read works as a poem, with the head title both as its title and as its first line. The cyclical read works as analogy between the autonomous enigma, and the also autonomous structure of the pillars. It is clear here that analogy bridges formal scale and quantity, for in terms of substance matter, the two entities i.e. the title and the pillars present and hold the same.

Regarding the thematic relevance of the metanarrative causal process, the text itself stands for the objective world which it represents, and it comes to subjective life when a character has a total experience of life. The **impetus and direction** of the new narrative cycle is determined in the liminal experience, the breakdown of consciousness i.e. when the self is extended into receptivity, intuition, and creativity. The tendency of the initiation, however, is in every case dependent on the basic direction of the self. Bowles presents cases of joyous integration, like Kit's nocturnal baptism, or Amar's musical elation, where the subject is ultimately directed towards connectivity. He also presents cases of narcissistic triumph like Dyar's and Grover's, where the ego is full of malice, fear and ambition. Since Port is emotionally vacant, his integration is by emptiness. The distinct ritual cycles comprise a larger cycle of metamorphosis, which is the **transformational essence** of each novel. Therefore **metanarrative causality** may be understood as **the dynamic model of transformation**. The process of transmission between dimensions targets the reader, who is challenged to rise from horizontal to vertical existence: from sleeping in narrativity to awaken into a life and vision of substance. The dimensions may be also seen as degrees of causality between nature (potentiality) and structures (finality), between shadow and substance, which thus prove to differ in degree, but are on the same one scale.

### **3. The cultic principles of substance**

Hermeneutics demands "**central structural principles** that give literature its communicating power across the centuries through all ideological changes."<sup>16</sup> A **conclusive model and principles** may be drawn up now, based on previous observations.

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<sup>16</sup> Northop Frye, *Words with Power*, xiii. His continuation, however, loses the impetus of the thought: "Such structural principles are certainly conditioned by social and historical factors and do not transcend them, but they

The **dimension of narrative shadows** is based on the principle of interchangeable roles, relative conditions and scales. Cyclical stories connect to, and are part of substance through the principle of metanarrative causality, by which horizontal flow integrates into the principal, vertical flow through transmission.

The **dimension of substance** is based on two basic principles, **the metanarrative unit's being, and its becoming**. The **first principle** concerns the unit's undivided totality in flow, structure, and seed, the **second principle** concerns its mode of transformativity. **Flow** (operation) is the generative impetus, constant verticality: dynamic presence in each unit of substance i.e. speech or time. **Structure** (form) is cultic structure. It is organic form: total, and alive. Its attributes are centrality and concentricity, as the point and sphere of balance. **Seed** (nature) is autonomy, interior cohesion, non- or rather pre- and post-causality. The metanarrative unit's **mode of becoming is transformation**. This is a potential, to change the direction, intensity, and content of narrative flow, and thus to change the vision of the beholder. The transformative capacity is the fourth element only in relation, connecting the immanence of substance with its product, shadow. The liminal passage is the mode, the first cause of the metanarrative entity, so to speak: its movement from author to book, from book to audience.

The **principle of the shadow-substance connection** has two aspects. The first concerns their common **resolution**: in gravity and relevance, the **centring** of the individual and the **rounding** of the story is completed. The second aspect concerns their bind, **metanarrative causality**: this is the direct transference or transmission between vertical and horizontal energy. Narrative flows from and towards metanarrative. The source and vanishing point of stories provides resolution, redemption, and resurrection, which is the metanarrative source and end. Seeing the point or not seeing it is a matter of perceptivity. Philosophically, this implies that beneath and above the dynamism of time there is a constant stasis of time: substance, as source and aim, embraces its shadows.

The **ultimate metanarrative principle** is that **substance** as flow, structure, seed, and transformation **is the element of creation**. The definition of its total, organic form, as it appears in literature, may be summed up in a **single complex model of four axioms**. First, substance is a single universal unit of all scales. Second, substance is aspectually binary entity. Its mode of being is simultaneous homeostatic and homeodynamic nature. Third, substance is a functionally trinary entity. Its mode of existence is in its flow (operation), its structure (form), and its seed (autonomous nature). On the level of the book as unit, substance becomes narrative, metanarrative, and emblem. Fourth, the fourth potential function of substance is transformation. It secures the passage across levels (scales) and between forms (analogous), as well as connects aspects of energy (vertical and horizontal).

#### 4. Summary

From its textual entanglement, the pure abstract form (model and code) of substance unravels. **The dual nature of substance** has been shown to be not the cause of friction, but the

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retain a continuity of form that points to an identity of the literary organism distinct from all its adaptations to its social environment.” (Ibid.) If the literary organism is distinct from ever-shifting social structures, and in fact manifests an unshakable structure itself, there is no reason to deny that the literary organism transcends social and historical mutations.

cause of **ceaseless life and a ceaseless fullness of time**, which is immanently **still and dynamic** at once. This type of **aspectual duality** may be a hard stone to chew for the mind, but in fact it is the very blessing principle of existence: **the nature of the unit of time**, as the observation of metanarrative textual seeds allows us to see. It is the key even to the adequate perception and cognition of books, as their substance cannot be extracted without the simultaneous stance of objectivity and subjectivity, being both outside and within the story.

**The triadic principle of substance** has been shown to be the **processive** basis of existence, as even of stories. This **functional trinity** in the metanarrative centres of literature may be observable in small units as flow (operation), structure (form), and seed (autonomous nature), and in the large unit of the book as story (narrative), substance (metanarrative), and name (emblem).

The **fourth, potential function** of substance, **transformation**, secures the passage across different levels (vertically: convergence and emanation) and between different forms (horizontally: hologram and intuition) of existential and metanarrative organism, as well as connecting the two aspects of energy (vertical and horizontal) in transmission. Primary transmission is metanarrative causality, the direct transference or transmission between vertical and horizontal energy.

Therefore the cultic figure of these analysed texts is the following: **binary nature** of the inner core (stasis and dynamism), **trinary operation** of the outer core (pointal, cyclical, and spheric), **and centrally defined structure** of the total unit (concentric). Formally, the metanarrative code is: **TWO IN ONE, THREE IN ONE, ALL IN ONE**.

The horizontal temporal plane appears as the projection of three phases which are equally necessary in the process of the literary rite: the undergoing into confusion (preliminal), the rise of consciousness (liminal), and the recreation of the world (postliminal). The harmonious flow, the clear structure, the seed of inner rhythm are the internal features of the metanarrative entity, while transformation is its external feature. These offer themselves to be the essential ingredients of life, language, as well as of good literature: an involving story, balanced dynamism of form, the right emblems, and a perceptive audience.

## **5. Inter-disciplinary perspective: Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Rupert Sheldrake**

In order to place this literary model into a minimal comparative perspective, two scientific proposals are invited here: the **cosmological** vision of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, and Rupert Sheldrake's **biological** results of formative causation. One is a macrocosmic, the other a microcosmic projection of the human scale. In this relation, the mezzocosm is art, the single genuinely human field of creation. Both systems are totally convergent with my analytical results. What we are looking at is the quantum field of the smallest and largest scale here. In comparison, the mid-scale, the human cultic mode, the cultic organism is completely analogous with these. The metanarrative field or substance of an intellectual cult (i.e. the experience of literature), therefore, is identical to the quantum field of physical organisms. The difference between them is that the cult is alive, while observation is experientially dead. It is this same field which Teilhard de Chardin and Sheldrake explore. At this point it is perhaps sufficient to say that the "song" of Bowles converges with the occasional poetry of science. Natural and cosmic science talks about the same essence of life in different ways. Here the potential of inter-

disciplinarity becomes visible, seeing the holographic picture of our world in more depth, if more pieces of the grand puzzle are put together. The basic principles are beginning to form.

Teilhard de Chardin's "great Law of complexity and consciousness [is] a law that itself implies a psychically **convergent structure** [...] of the world."<sup>17</sup> In my research, the term integration stands for convergence, and is more appropriate. This implies a constant evolutive movement of the universe from and towards something: something which is spheric (my metanarrative circles and fields, i.e. the entire subtle body of substance) at the same time as being pointal, monadic (my metanarrative points of break-through i.e. the centres of resolution and regeneration): the literary source and aim of substance. For Teilhard de Chardin, the common sphere of consciousness is the *noosphere*<sup>18</sup>. As the liminal parts of the novels are the narrative threshold, so is the noosphere the threshold of the terrestrial planet<sup>19</sup>. According to Teilhard de Chardin, the "universe [propagates] itself along its main axis in the less probable direction of the higher forms of complexity and centrality."<sup>20</sup> In this sphere of consciousness, a "**sublime physics of centres**"<sup>21</sup> is the formative principle. The emerging new order is generated by the **Omega point**<sup>22</sup>, in which "the movement of synthesis culminates"<sup>23</sup>, and in which everything within the noosphere it is not only connected but one. Teilhard de Chardin is not referring to a distant point in time or space, but to an absolute, immanent presence. "A present and real noosphere goes with a real and present centre. To be supremely attractive, Omega must be supremely present."<sup>24</sup> As the ultimate emblematic resolution of the novels feed back into narrative, initiating it anew, Teilhard de Chardin also emphasises the "personalising action of the centre of centres."<sup>25</sup> In a profane way, Bowles's titles are the Omega points of the novels. In the total world of the novel, the title provides the anagogical source and goal, being revealed and concealed at the same time during the whole act of reading. It is in perfect overlap with my metanarrative results that he suggests there is a

three-fold property possessed by every consciousness: (i) of centring *everything* partially upon itself; (ii) of being able to centre itself upon itself *constantly*; and (iii) of being brought *more* by this very super-concentration *into association with all the other centres* surrounding it.<sup>26</sup>

Also totally relevant and analogous are the features he attributes to the monadic aspect of substance: "Autonomy, actuality, irreversibility, and thus finally transcendence are the four

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<sup>17</sup> Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 61.

<sup>18</sup> Teilhard de Chardin uses *nous* in the sense of mind, intelligence. As I have proposed in the *Introduction*, this is a basic misunderstanding. I agree that consciousness is entirely involved, but its source (and possibly goal) I locate in cardinal intuition. Nevertheless, his speculations of the noosphere are in total convergence with my analytical results.

<sup>19</sup> Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 180-184.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 271.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 268-272.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 269.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 271.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.

attributes of Omega.<sup>27</sup> As revealed on matanarrative thresholds, these attributes appear as the three aspects of **fulfilment** (natural, structural, and operative respectively) and the one **capacity** (transformation). Therefore his Omega is not only the dynamic aspect of the pointal monad but the complete metanarrative entity. These are not only analogous but entirely convergent with what I have termed the substance's flow (operation), structure (form), seed (nature), and its mode of transformation.

**Rupert Sheldrake's morphogenesis** approaches substance from its biological beginnings, as "the coming-into-being of characteristic and specific form in living organisms."<sup>28</sup> His observations correspond to the way narrative is generated in metanarrative centres. Morphogenesis, therefore, is analogous with what could be called the genesis of stories. "Morphogenesis does not take place in a vacuum. It can only begin from an already organized system that serves as a *morphogenetic germ*."<sup>29</sup> Indeed, the smallest monadic unit or metanarrative germ is a phrase e.g. a title, an expression, perhaps a single image of a word, like *the sky*. Bowles's monads of intuition shows strong analogy with the morphogenesis of a new biological creature: what takes place is the reconditionment of the character emerging from the metanarrative cocoon, as a proper rebirth – which it is potentially also for the literary audience. "During morphogenesis a new higher-level morphic unit comes into being around this germ, under the influence of a specific morphogenetic field."<sup>30</sup> The more complex unit is, of course, the metanarrative passage. Sheldrake's formative causation is "an **action across time and space** unlike any known type of physical action."<sup>31</sup> It is analogous with metanarrative causality being the movement of transmission between narrative and non-narrative time and space. Concerning the texture of the morphic unit, he claims:

No morphic unit can exist without form, and no material form can exist without energy. This physical **duality of form and energy** that is made explicit by the hypothesis of formative causation has much in common with the so-called **wave-particle** duality of quantum theory.<sup>32</sup>

In the same way, liminal passages are both narrative and metanarrative: referring to these as form and energy is indeed appropriate.<sup>33</sup> I believe the third element of the literary system is missing from the biological one. The inner balance of the literary work is completed by its title: the total organic consciousness of the work, so to speak, necessitates a name. The emblem is in this context a minimal form of maximal energy. Literary works, like people, need singular names, it is likely to be an existential necessity of balanced operation. Analogously, could it be possible that all living organisms need a name, singular or general, the right name as the head

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 271.

<sup>28</sup> Rupert Sheldrake, *A New Science of Life*, 34.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>33</sup> The term duality, however, is inappropriate. As I demonstrate, narrative is a level of metanarrative, just as physics can demonstrate that form is also a frequency of energy. Referring to this distinction as duality is imprecise.

corner stone of their being, in order to be complete entities? Perhaps even their operation could be dependent on it? Could it be possible that an underestimated and almost extinct field of enquiry such as literary scholarship could contribute such a valuable and far-reaching proposal to science, religion, and everyday life? As I have been suggesting total convergence between the genesis of text and genesis of experience (the detailed explication of which remains outside of this thesis), Sheldrake also sees the analogy between biological formation and the **morphogenesis of inspiration**. In my interpretation, he basically suggests that intuition and impulse, while “experienced as coming from an external source,”<sup>34</sup> at the same time presents “the experience of an inner unity with life.”<sup>35</sup> In other words, the organic biological entity, like the metanarrative entity, experiences life as both internal and external.

As I have suggested in the beginning, organic structure is **itself the minimal form of a message. It is the normal code of thought, sense, and conduct**, immanent in every aspect of life. The three key points of this structural code is: the unity of perspectival division (interiority and exteriority), the unity of functional division (operation, nature, structure), and the unity of scale (minimal and maximal form).<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Rupert Sheldrake, *A New Science of Life*, 243.

<sup>35</sup> Rupert Sheldrake, *A New Science of Life*, 244.

<sup>36</sup> See the linguistic analogy of agglutinative languages: 1. verb & noun, 2. three personal pronouns, 3. root & pre- and suffix or verb & sentence. These features carry the cultic code of the centre, the cycle, and the sphere.