Art and Music in the Fiction of Helen Weinzweig

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March 27, 2000

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the degree of Master's of Arts (English),
Lakehead University

For Helen Weinzweig

Abstract

Critics Northrop Frye and, more recently, Linda Hutcheon have commented tellingly on the relationships that exist among Canadian art, music and literature. Perhaps surprisingly, aside from an incidental comment here and a descriptive comment there, Canadian criticism has been very reluctant to investigate this promising complex of ideas. The training in music, for example, of such writers as Charles G. D. Roberts, Robert Finch and Sinclair Ross has usually been treated as a matter of biographical fact rather than as something which might be of significance to their work.

Helen Weinzweig, a Canadian writer, has made extensive and significant use of music and visual art in her fiction. It may be an informative comment on the focus of Canadian criticism that Weinzweig's published work to date -- two novels and a number of short stories -- remains largely unexplored, and, on the issue of her use of music and art in her work, virtually ignored. But a close examination of the work shows that Weinzweig uses both music and art in an integral way not merely to indicate the broad cultural spectrum from which she can draw to enrich the texture of her work, but also in a structural way to link pattern and meaning. For the most part rejecting conventional fictional structures, Weinzweig employs music and art, under the integrating power of memory, in order to offer her readers more fully charged, alternative views of life.

This thesis proposes to examine Weinzweig's use of allusions and structures from music and art, in concert with the power of memory, in an effort to explicate the peculiar power of her prose fiction. Emphasis in the thesis will be on the short stories although there will be some discussion of the novels as well. The thesis will be organized in the following way. Following a brief introduction, chapter one will examine Weinzweig's use of visual art and artists in the stories; chapter two will explore musical allusions and structures in the stories and in the novel, *Basic Black with Pearls*; a brief conclusion will be provided.

Contents

Introduction

Helen Weinzweig's published literary work consists of two short novels, *Passing Ceremony* (1973) and *Basic Black With Pearls* (1980) and several short stories from the late 1960's to the present. Weinzweig has received a Canada council senior arts grant and has been nominated for the Governor General's Award (Jenoff 4). Her book, *Basic Black With Pearls* won the City of Toronto Book Award (Panofsky 73). Helen Weinzweig is a postmodern Canadian writer who rebels against traditional forms of fiction, using structures and methods of music and art as integral parts of her fiction. However, despite some official recognition, Weinzweig's published work to date – two novels and a number of short stories – remains largely unexplored, and, on the particular issue of her use of music and art in her work, virtually ignored.

Reflecting many of the views of the New Criticism, her work questions many of the truths attached to fiction: the transparency of language, the omnipotent power and intentions of the writer, the relationship between life and art (realism), and the experiential basis of knowledge (Belsey 15-20). The role of the author or creator in Weinzweig's work is diminished in favour of the involvement of the reader, and the resulting fictions express many possibilities. Weinzweig acknowledges the reader's pivotal role in disentangling the fiction and serving as the focus point for its duplicitous meanings, as critic Roland Barthes proclaimed in his essay, "The Death of the Author" (Barthes 167-172). Weinzweig explains the role of the reader:

> In new works the mind is challenged, the intelligence appealed to, with the result that the discovery finally is the reader's. Equal strength of narrative is given to what is left out as well as what is put in – the reader supplies the missing narrative from his own experience and/or his own imagination ("So What Is Real?" 74-77).

Weinzweig's fiction offers many interpretations, and meanings are released in the process of reading (Belsey 20). From the chaos, the reader must decipher the results of the reading.

An avid reader, Weinzweig found that something new was required to express her ideas and experience of life. She started writing because "There isn't anything more [of conventional fiction] that I can read that interests me, really. My eyes read but my mind is bored. I no longer want to read what other people think" (Jenoff 5). Weinzweig's fiction questions conventional fiction's portrayal of absolute truths and/or reality, replacing these with perceptions, memories, and illusions. While authorial guidance is evident, the assumption of realism within the fiction is uncertain. Abandoning conventional patterns of fiction in favour of musical forms and art techniques, Weinzweig presents a series of events, memories or objects, thus exploring the possibilities of universal themes in a contemporary way.

Northrop Frye (*The Bush Garden vi-x, 207-212*) and, more recently, Linda Hutcheon (*The Canadian Postmodern* 78) have commented tellingly on the relationships that exist among Canadian art, music and literature. An ongoing relationship exists among Canadian musicians and artists, and writers. Composers Jean Coulthard, Barbara Pentland and Oskar Morawetz have composed vocal music based on poetry by Elizabeth Gourlay, Dorothy Livesay, Archibald Lampman, Bliss Carman and Ann Wilkinson. Critical studies of British and American authors and their musical influences have been conducted: Emily Bronte and Beethoven (Wallace), Jane Austen and Mozart (Wallace), Walt Whitman and music in Leaves of Grass (Perlman) are but a few examples. However, Canadian critics have been reluctant to investigate in a more than casual way this promising complex of ideas. The training in music, for examples of such writers as Charles G.D. Roberts, Robert Finch and Sinclair Ross has usually been treated as a matter of incidental biographical fact rather than as something that might be of significance to their work.

Canadian writers such as Robertson Davies and Margaret Laurence employ musical allusions throughout their novels and Margaret Atwood's fiction exhibits many allusions and structures from art and photography. In addition, other Canadian authors, such as Alice Munro, and Michael Ondaatje, have experimented with aspects of photography, art and music in their works.

In the postmodern age with its different foci on structuralism, post-structuralism, semiotics, new historicism, deconstruction, narratology, and feminism, to cite only the most prominent, new forms are being used within fiction, in order to expand new meanings of language. Other Canadian authors, such as Alice Munro, Margaret Atwood, Margaret Laurence and Michael Ondaatje have experimented with aspects of photography, art and music in their works. Weinzweig explains the change in forms of fiction:

> Form has changed – it can be fragmented into any number of disconnected parts, or it can pretend to be a fixed canvas and you discover it disintegrates before your very eyes ("So What Is Real?" 76).

Helen Weinzweig employs the structures and techniques of music and art within her fiction as central structures. Unconventional and initially illogical, these forms provide new ways of relating Weinzweig's life experiences and her perceptions of a confusing and often cruelly misleading world. There are different codes for the reader now. Chronological time is not used on the theory that time is not present in the memory. Weinzweig explains,

> "But unlike previous writers who attempted to create order out of chaos, the modern writer, living in a world ordered by technology, by the multinational, by governments, attempts to create chaos out of order ("So What Is Real?" 76).

Helen Weinzweig abandons the concept of linear unity, rejecting the conventional "beginning - middle - end" form. While context and perspective must be considered in the reader's interpretation, language has its limits: Helen Weinzweig reassures her readers, "[whatever else] ... do not be deceived, there is always a story there" (Weinzweig, *Quarry* 76).

For Weinzweig, form and content are inseparable. In some of her short stories, she relies on musical structures: a quadrille (dance suite), the circle of fifths, equal-tempered piano tuning, jazz. In the novel *Basic Black With Pearls*, Weinzweig employs a serialistic compositional method: sequences of events are repeated and re-arranged; the changes in these sets are vital to the meaning of the work. In some of the short stories, Weinzweig borrows techniques from the art world: Van Gogh's colours, abstract painting, art shows. A painting by Bonnard is the focus of the fiction in one section of the novel.

Weinzweig intentionally blurs the lines between art and fiction, and music and fiction as she attempts to change the traditional uses of time and space in fiction. The inclusion of art and music structures and techniques requires the reader to experience the fiction within new boundaries. The overall effect of the art and music in the stories and novels is to draw the reader into the fiction in order to fill in the missing links, to order and value the characters and events. Just as all of the colours and shapes in a painting must be considered, and individual notes or tones are considered equally in a piece of serialistic music (there is no tonal centre), so the final judgment of events and characters is left to the reading experiences of the readers. They must evaluate the relationships, thoughts and motivations of the characters in order to derive meaning from the fiction. Relationships, changes in repeated elements, and contexts are important in Weinzweig's fiction: there are few absolutes and many relative truths. As Weinzweig blurs the lines between art, music and fiction, she explores the boundaries between illusion and reality. Her foci include human relationships, alienation and abandonment; the nature of reading and writing. Within her work, she considers the nature of memory and its reconstructions of the past.

In the few critical examinations of Weinzweig's fiction that exist, book reviewers and readers alike have responded with interest. However, as literary critic Bernard Selinger points

out, much of the essence of her work remains largely unexplored by the critics (Selinger 38). In Weinzweig's fiction, the reader follows an unconventional process of discovery through the central structures of music and art that Weinzweig employs. While some themes exist, Weinzweig invites the reader to consider many possibilities. In this thesis, some of Helen Weinzweig's fiction will be examined. Specifically, the use of elements of music and art will be the focus. She has published more than a dozen short stories and two novels; in order to provide a concentrated analysis, this thesis will focus on two of the short stories and her second novel, *Basic Black with Pearls*. Chapter One will focus Weinzweig's use of art in the short story, "The Means" and in the novel, *Basic Black With Pearls.* Chapter Two will explore music within the story, "Hold That Tiger" and then the novel *Basic Black With Pearls*. An overview of Weinzweig's achievement in her fiction concludes the thesis.

Art in "The Means" and *Basic Black With Pearls*

Within her fiction, Weinzweig explores the reliability of art and fiction as definitions of life or reality. Works of art, artists and techniques of painting and drawing are central to the structure and development of some of the short stories. A middle-aged woman sabotages a piece of modern art to unmask a fraudulent art-dealer's anti-Semitism ("A View From The Roof"); a woman travels to Arles, France, retracing the steps of Vincent Van Gogh and experiences insanity and despair ("The Means"); a woman challenges her artist husband's agent, and thereby takes control of her marriage ("L'Envoi"); and a faintly drawn character in a Bonnard painting begs for release (*Basic Black With Pearls*). In the short stories, as well as within the novel *Basic Black With Pearls*, Weinzweig assumes techniques and works of art as structures for the fiction. These function not as metaphors or descriptors, but as central organizing factors within the narratives. Weinzweig uses art works and artists within the fiction to explore her themes about human relationships, and the nature of art and fiction. Themes about human relationships recur. Loneliness, abandonment, and despair: the quest to connect with other human beings is not always successful.

In this portion of the thesis, Weinzweig's use of elements of art in the short story "The Means" and within the novel, *Basic Black With Pearls* will be considered. In "The Means", the main character tries to interpret the events of her life as if she were a character within a painting by Vincent Van Gogh[1]. She attempts to apply Van Gogh's colours and art techniques to her life in her search for the truth. In an excerpt from the novel, *Basic Black With Pearls*, the main character, Shirley/Lola engages in a dialogue with a character she meets within a painting by Pierre Bonnard in the Art Gallery of Ontario. The lines between art and life dissolve as

Shirley/Lola searches for truths. In both cases, art proves to be a faulty representation of reality and/or life; it fails to provide the answers that the characters are seeking. These works have been selected as focus points because works of art and/or the life of the artist are central to the structure and development of the fiction.

In the short story, "The Means," Weinzweig incorporates elements from the paintings of Vincent Van Gogh and aspects of his life with the quest of the main character, Margaret. References to specific paintings by Van Gogh and his subjects and colours are layered within the story, along with Margaret's memories of her father, and her present experiences with a younger man, a tourist guide. Themes about reality and illusion, memory and fantasy are explored. A major theme concerns relationships, and the way people use each other to accomplish their goals. In this short story, the main character, forty-three year old Margaret, travels to the French Mediterranean town of Arles, via the train from Paris to Marseilles. Upon arriving in Marseilles, she loses consciousness in the Saint-Charles Station; fellow passengers revive her and she continues to Arles. She claims she is following the life of the artist, Vincent Van Gogh, who left Paris and lived in Arles in 1888 (Schapiro 92-93). However, Margaret is also undertaking an internal quest to recall the trip she made to Marseilles when she was eighteen years old to meet her estranged father. In Arles, she checks into a hotel before she begins wandering the streets, looking for evidence of Van Gogh's life. She meets commercialism and antiquity; she seeks the colours of his art, but the city is disintegrating and filthy, and she cannot find the city of Vincent Van Gogh's time. She meets a younger man, a tourist guide who reminds her of a former boyfriend/acquaintance, and she begs him to stay with her until she returns to Paris. They have a sexual encounter, and he accompanies her back to Marseilles. On the train, she relates the details of her father's abandonment of her mother because she was Jewish. When she was eighteen,

Margaret stayed with her father for three months in Marseilles; he treated her cruelly, and imprisoned her in his small apartment because she had met a young tourist (Raoul) at a café. Eventually, she escaped.

When Margaret and the guide return to the St. Charles Station, she experiences the same physical collapse that she had on her arrival; the guide provides support to her, emotionally and physically. In Marseilles, she retraces her footsteps to her father's apartment. She tells the guide that her father found her there and threw her suitcase and passport into the sea. The guide relates that he understands her father's motives and his lack of forgiveness towards her. He says that Margaret asks what is not possible. He points out that she has taken him, the guide, as Raoul's replacement, as an escape from the situation. They make love once more, and then he leaves her. She realizes that she cannot remember his name. She leaves Marseilles satisfied that her quest has been successful.

The life and work of Vincent Van Gogh are essential to the story line and themes of loneliness and isolation in this story. The life history and inner conflict of the forty-three year old heroine, Margaret, are displayed against the backdrop of the life and art of Van Gogh during his years in Arles, France. Weinzweig's juxtaposition of the realities in this story is ironic. Van Gogh's genius is contrasted with Margaret's emotional upheaval and her fantasies about the past. These blended elements add drama to the story, and accent the sometimes ridiculous inner workings of human relationships.

In "The Means", Weinzweig makes specific reference to six paintings by Van Gogh: *Sunflowers* (*A View From The Roof* 28, hereafter *View*), *La Berceuse* (28), and L'Arlesienne (29), *Bedroom at* Arles (29), *On the Banks of the Rhone* (32) and *Starry Night* (35). Margaret describes the people she meets in terms of Van Gogh's paintings. The middle-aged woman who

travels with her on the train is "La Berceuse" (28); Margaret disguised herself as "L'Arlesienne" (29) when she travelled by boat to France as a young girl; and the guide that she meets has "A heavy, blunt reality about him, like Van Gogh's Dutch peasants" (33). However, beyond the colours and names she associates with these acquaintances, they have no reality to her. In her interactions with the hotel maid and the guide, she takes no interest in their personal lives. The guide points this fact out to her near the end of the story: "I do not exist for you..."(44). Margaret's experience of these people is restricted to her initial definition of them through the art of Van Gogh. Thus, a gap exists between her perception and their reality.

A gap also exists between her expectations and the realities of her visit to Arles. Margaret seeks to experience the city of Arles as Vincent Van Gogh did, and she hopes that her experiences in Arles will release her from her memories.[2]

> I found that the grey of Paris did indeed change to blinding light. By standards of Canadian distances, this happened quickly. The skies became bluer, the light more brilliant. It was early May and the fields lay open to the sun. Trees were showing their first tender green; fruit trees were in blossom. Renewal everywhere. Across the ledges of second-storey windows were flung the red comforters of winter, spread to air in the spring sun. The exact red of Van Gogh's blanket in Bedroom at Arles. Then miles of vineyards with little vines close to the earth. An excitement rose: I could feel Vincent's resurgence of hope as he approached his destination. The change in the light would bring a change in fortune. The bleak past would vanish. The hot sun of the Midi would ease his tortured spirit. Finally, glimpses of the Mediterranean, his blue sea; and beside the railroad tracks, (his) wild irises in that joyous purple-blue. My eyes were so full of bright pictures that I couldn't see clearly when the train pulled into the station at Marseilles...Between me and what I saw and heard, was an infinite distance I could never bridge (29-30).

Like Van Gogh, Margaret is blinded by the colours she sees, or imagines she sees. This entry into Van Gogh's world separates her from reality and this gap increases as Margaret explores Arles. She is disappointed by the filth and decay she finds in the streets and on the riverbank, and in the seeming lack of evidence of Van Gogh's artwork. In the present-day milieu of Arles,

Margaret finds that the reality is far removed from the created world of art. "I have lost a connection. The world of van Gogh does not exist. I only imagined it" (33). Margaret's observation of the changes in Arles since the time of Van Gogh are revealed in her comment, "Vincent was indifferent to antiquity, and antiquity has prevailed" (32). The life force that he was attempting to capture in his paintings has given way to the spectacle of a forgotten, dead artist. Margaret thinks that the truths of Van Gogh's art have been buried; the morbid fascination of an eccentric life was not Van Gogh's goal in his art.

Margaret is disillusioned as she recognizes the discrepancy between the intention of the artist and the artwork itself. Appearance and reality have blurred for Margaret, as they did for Van Gogh. The "connection" that Margaret loses in Arles is the subject of Van Gogh's art, the reality or truths she had hoped to find in Arles. This truth is nonexistent.

Margaret attempts to use the colours that Van Gogh employed to interpret and define her surroundings; these become overpowering to her. At the station and in the hotel, Margaret refers to the excessively bright colours around her, and she attaches her emotional reactions to some of the colours and shapes she sees. For Margaret, the train station contains the darker colour, while the sun provides bright yellow. Van Gogh attached meanings to the colours he used in his paintings. For example, "heartbreaking malachite green" was the "deeper green which represents the terrible passions of mankind" while the yellow of his sunflowers and his house in Arles represented life and hope (Schapiro 93, 96). Margaret submerges herself in these colours, but they separate her from reality, and from the people around her.

Van Gogh attempted to capture his initial perception of things in his work. The art critic Bernard Schapiro points out, that, for Van Gogh, "The loading of the pigment is in part a reflex ... a frantic effort to preserve in the image of things their tangible matter and to create something

equally solid and concrete on the canvas" (Schapiro 90, 93). During his stay in Arles, Van Gogh's interest in pure colours as central focal points in his paintings increased, to the exclusion of other aspects of art. In a similar way, Margaret attempts to define her world in terms of Van Gogh's artwork and colours.

Parallels exist between the lives of Van Gogh and Margaret, the main character, and Weinzweig uses these aspects to further blur the lines between illusion and reality, art and life, present and memory. The intertwining of the lives of Van Gogh and the main character (past and present) disrupts the typical chronology of the fiction. The reader must consider the events of both the past and the present, superimposed over the colours of Van Gogh's art, to determine the outcomes and events of this short story. Both Van Gogh and Margaret came to Arles to escape mental anxiety (Schapiro 92, 99). Upon arrival, Margaret experiences a physical collapse. She has difficulty communicating with the passengers on the train (*View* 30) and the hotel maid (31, 33). At the same time, she recalls the disagreements with her father many years ago in Marseilles (34). At the age of eighteen, Margaret leaves Canada to live with her estranged father in Arles, France. (This fictitious event is paralleled by Weinzweig's unhappy reunification with her father in Italy when she was a teenager.) The freedom and adventure Margaret had hoped for dissolve as she realizes her father's poverty and lack of understanding of her. Ultimately, he seeks to control her actions and life. He imprisons her in his apartment for two months. When she decides to leave, he destroys her hopes by throwing her suitcase containing all of her belongings, including her passport, into the ocean.

Margaret's disappointment with her father is similar to the disappointment that Van Gogh experienced in his relationships. When he went to Arles, Van Gogh had hoped to establish an artist's cooperative but this dream proved to be impossible (Masini 13, 45). His colleague

Gauguin visited him; the two disagreed, and Van Gogh lapsed into mental illness (Masini 45). Van Gogh's hopes for artistic and physical freedom in Arles are destroyed by his disagreement with the fellow-artist, Gauguin. Like Margaret, he becomes a prisoner of his own actions when his encounter with Gauguin results in a relapse of his mental illness. Similarly, Margaret is disillusioned in her relationship with her father. Van Gogh's desperate action of slicing his ear and mailing it to the prostitute is comparable to Margaret's loss of her suitcase. Both lose a part of themselves in their desperate but blind search for freedom and self-expression. Margaret's recognition of the nature of despair is shown in her own revelation, " Just before I passed out, I noted to myself that pain has to be physical to be bearable. Or else why would Vincent have cut off an ear, if not to displace his soul's anguish to a spot he could touch?" *(View* 30) Margaret has made Van Gogh's personal pain of loneliness, rejection and isolation, her own. The illusory nature of her hopes and dreams are painfully juxtaposed against the harsh truth of reality. If pain is unidentified, it is unbearable; personal anguish must have a correlative or expression in the real world. Van Gogh's use of colour to the exclusion of other aspects in his paintings was his objective correlative or physical embodiment of what he thought or felt. For Margaret, Van Gogh and his art are her objective correlatives. In this story, Margaret's quest is to identify and define the source of her pain, and she attempts to do this through the art and life of Vincent Van Gogh.

Weinzweig uses the interwoven stories of Van Gogh and Margaret to contrast desire and reality as they appear in art, fiction and life. She also stresses the fallibility of the artist's intentions as they appear in the finished work. Sometimes people want what they cannot have, and they are blinded by their own desires to the reality of the situation. The guide says, " Van Gogh knew what he wanted, and what he wanted was at odds with circumstances. You

[Margaret] are like that" (43). The guide explains to Margaret that she did not really see the truth about her father; Van Gogh and Margaret attempted to manipulate people to achieve their own goals and dreams, and the gap between reality and their unachievable expectations of others is filled by their own insanity. While Margaret is blinded by her unreasonable expectations of her father, the guide sees an alternate view of the father/daughter relationship.

Following the visit to the Marseilles cliff where her father severed their relationship by throwing Margaret's suitcase into the sea, the guide explains that he understands her father.

> ... "the sympathy is for your father. It is *he* I understand, I understand what was the necessity for him. You ... you... go against the circumstance."
> "My father, "I whispered, "was angry because I did not get on my knees. Is that what you mean?"
> "No ... yes ... to have lost a daughter, to have suffered much, certainly to have the guilt, then ... a miracle! You appear. To forgive, perhaps. But no. You have not an interest in him, it is the adventure you wish. He punishes you. For what it is I do not know: perhaps it is the disappointment." ..."You appear the weak one, the lost one, but at the bottom you are made of iron. It is confusing. It angers one not to know, perhaps to have made a mistake. Since yesterday I often have the desire to finish the masquerade" (43).

The tourist guide explains Margaret's myopic vision. Her vision of her father was unrealistic because he could not grant her the freedom she was seeking. Margaret could not understand or accept her father's reality and his guilt for rejecting her mother; she wanted what he was not capable of giving. Instead, the father blamed her for her mother's indiscretions, and vented his guilt on her. The guide points out to Margaret that in her quest to be free as a young woman, she excluded her father's desires and views.

Margaret applies her singular vision to her relationship with the tourist guide, and once again, her expectations are unrealistic. Margaret imposes her hopes from the past, and her attempts to resurrect her memories onto the guide, obliterating any true picture about his hopes, dreams or life. Margaret is driven by a search for a "cause, a plan, a purpose" (35). Just as Van

Gogh idealized his subject in each of his paintings to the exclusion of other objects in foreground or background, so Margaret focuses on her own desires, to the exclusion of everything and everyone else. From their first encounter, she knows that she wants the guide to provide a resolution:

> He [the guide] is waiting for me to reveal a cause, a plan, a purpose. I have none. At the same time, I know he is the cause, the plan, the purpose. In what way, I must find out... I watch him closely. I feel I am on the verge of some knowledge: something more than my implied invitation bargained for....From the very first, everything about this man reminded me of the boy I met in a café on a hot afternoon in Marseilles twenty-five years ago (35-36).

As he accompanies her on her quest, this friend points out to her that he is just an object to help her resolve the conflict of the past. The guide asks, "I am in his place?" (41) and at the end of her search, "I have served my purpose?" (42). She equates him with her lost past, of the lost possibilities of the relationship with the young man she met when she was eighteen years old. The guide knows that once she knows the truth about herself and her father, he will be of no use to her.

Margaret experiences pinpricks of reality as she uses the guide to accomplish her purpose, begging him to stay with her until she returns to Paris. She observes the wine he is drinking when they first dine together (34), and the creases in his shirt (33), but these little human details are dismissed, and she virtually ignores his attempts to tell her about his life. The guide sees the underlying truth of her relationship with him, at the end of the story, when he points out that she has never called him by name. She is blind to his needs and existence because of her own purposes. By her own admission earlier in the story, she was afraid she would call him Raoul, the young man she met so many years ago. "I do not exist for you," he went on," you set out to put an end to something and I was the means. Adieu, Madame" (44). She uses him as

an emotional and physical support in order to accomplish her mission. The guide existed only as a symbol of Margaret's past hopes, and in the end, he has ceased to exist.

Thus, the story lines of Vincent Van Gogh's life and the past and present of Margaret's life are layered together to show the gap between perception and reality within relationships. Preoccupation with one's own desires results in blindness to the truth about others. Insanity, broken relationships and pain can only result. Blinded by his hopes to the improbability of a partnership with Gauguin and the other artists, Van Gogh's persistence led to his breakdown. Similarly, Margaret's expectations of her father to provide her with support, love, money and adventure led to his imprisonment of her. She refused to recognize that he was physically, emotionally and financially unable to fulfill any of her hopes.

Margaret loses her "connections" in Arles through the rediscovery of her past. When she leaves Arles on the express train to Paris, "The countryside was still burgeoning with Spring, but it had nothing to do with anything or anyone in particular" (44). She has identified the truth: her own part in the conflict with her father, and the guilt involved. And with this admission, she is freed from the past by her acceptance of her isolation and loneliness. The parallel action in the life of Van Gogh was his break with Gauguin, and the realization that his dreams were impossible.

In this short story, the main character applies the techniques and elements of art to the problems of her life. Cut off from its creator, the work of art exists in its own time and space. This separation from reality releases the artwork to the interpretation of the viewer. Although it may not present reality, the work of art allows the viewer to concentrate on selected aspects of reality, and then to relate the art to his/her own life. Through Margaret's experiences, and the recalled aspects of Van Gogh's life, Weinzweig expresses the alienating force of art: art

dislocates its subjects from real life; context is lost as one or two elements occupy the foreground of the work. At the same time, the art of Vincent Van Gogh allows Margaret to explore the possibilities of her life, without the hindrances of her own expectations. At the end of the story, Margaret sees the impossibility of her expectations of the relationship with her father, and she comes to this realization through her "artful" experience of Arles, and through the actions of the guide.

Weinzweig explores the representational role of art and its relationship to reality. To Weinzweig, the meaning of art is changing because the intentions of its creator are unknown and because the meaning of the art varies according to the experience of the viewer. The role of art, therefore, is to present possible solutions to the viewer. Art, like Margaret's guide, is a "means", not a representation of reality.

In Arles, Margaret has "lost her connections". While Vincent Van Gogh experienced insanity there, Margaret has found the resolution to her past through her explorations of Van Gogh's art and through her relationship with the guide.

In her second novel, *Basic Black With Pearls* (hereafter referred to as *B.B.*), Weinzweig blurs the boundaries between art, fiction and reality. A summary of the novel and an examination of its musical aspects are included later in Chapter two of this thesis. Within one portion of the novel, the main character becomes part of a painting. Here Weinzweig examines the boundaries and context of art. The intention and purpose of art are unstable, and the audience's reaction is variable and individual.

Near the beginning of the novel, the main character, Shirley/Lola[3], visits the Art Gallery of Ontario. There she views a painting by Impressionist painter Pierre Bonnard[4]: "Dining Room on the Garden, before 1933" (*B.B.* 55).[5] She becomes absorbed into its colours and shapes; the

colours, tastes and smells become real to Shirley/Lola as she advances into the painting (55). She meets a young woman within the painting, who is "a wraith -like form, barely discernible in the right-hand corner beside the window" (55). Shirley/Lola enters into an exchange with this girl. Her father has confined her to his house because she danced with a young man at a local hotel. A doctor is called to assess her virginity. The father then holds her captive, awaiting either ransom money from her mother or a marriage proposal to set her free. The young girl appeals to Shirley/Lola to contact the Canadian Consul (57). Shirley/Lola promises to do this but later forgets (59).

Seeking escape from her own circumstances, Shirley/Lola becomes absorbed in the painting. The lines between reality and illusion become blurred: "I eat fruit from white-stemmed, golden bowls; I drink from a white pitcher ... I advance into the canvas towards the windows which I intend to open to the perfume of the garden below."(55). Shirley/Lola has become part of the painting.

In this scene, the boundaries between art and life dissolve for the main character. She cannot distinguish between her own truth and that of the young girl in the painting. The young girl's story of imprisonment by her father is similar to Shirley/Lola's imprisonment by her father.

However, Weinzweig points out the deception of the art as the young woman details the falsities of the painting:

> There is nothing beyond this painted room. No sky, no trees, no garden. Oh these artists and their tricks! They deal in illusion: everything is a matter of perspective. See those pink flowers? You would imagine that you could just reach out and pluck them. Not at all. The pink flowers are two storeys below in the garden next door. It's not only what he paints in – all those green trees and the lovely blue sky – it's what he leaves out – that's part of the deception too. What you don't see is the twelve-foot stone wall around the yard. There is no gate (56).

And

> "The fruit in the bowl? It is made of wax. No, there is nothing in the pitcher. It has all been created for effect" (57).

At the same time that the girl in the painting reveals the deceptive nature of art, Shirley/Lola accepts the reality of the girl's situation. In essence, the young girl's story is one that Shirley/Lola chooses to believe. In this encounter, Weinzweig expresses the duplicitous nature of art. Although it presents an illusion, the art also may present aspects of reality. The lines between these two are at best, blurry.

The illusion/reality link is again revealed as Shirley/Lola adopts the young girl's illness (epilepsy) when she collapses in front of the painting and the security guards remove her. Shirley/Lola incorporates the deceptions of art into her life. Thus Shirley/Lola becomes the girl in the picture: the boundaries in her life have disintegrated. Her definition of herself is fluid and changing, but also trapped within the confines of a set of circumstances. Shirley/Lola assumes responsibility to act on behalf of the young woman; she fails to act.

The girl's story is questionable, and the intention of the creator unknown. Thus, Weinzweig raises questions about the reliability of art and the purposes of its creator. Shirley/Lola believes the story presented by the girl in the painting, but the link between her belief in the art and her physical actions is broken. Shirley/Lola forgets to contact the authorities on behalf of the girl. The artwork delivers a message, but the reaction of the viewer is unpredictable. The girl's pain and suffering, however, continues, suspended in time within the artwork. Art captures only partial truths, to the exclusion of other things, in the same way fiction does.

Perspective alters the delivered meaning of the work of art and fiction. As the young girl in the painting demonstrates, things appear differently from within the artwork. The art exists only within the Art Gallery, and this designation is one of "discontinuous fragments" (Dura 114). The art can be interpreted only from the context of the frame in which it exists; that is, as one of several selected and designated "artworks", isolated from reality and the creator's intentions. Even its location within the art collection lends a false interpretation, one that the artist may not envisage. The role of the artwork, however, is similar to that of Shirley/Lola. She wanders the art gallery, shoeless, in her basic black dress with pearls. She, too, has no boundaries and leads a fluid existence, adapting to each situation as she encounters it in her travels. Thus she finds it easy to slip into the painting, and interact with its subject.

Both viewing and reading are essentially acts of performance as the potential meanings of the art are released or received by the reader. Because the creator's original intentions, meanings and referents are lost, the reader/viewer is left to create his/her own interpretations of the fiction. Weinzweig employs existing art works within her own works of fiction, creating new performances that are given to the readers as stories. As Weinzweig writes in *B.B.*, "Every reader a writer...(85)."

These two samples of Weinzweig's use of art in her fiction are critical to an understanding of her approach to fiction. In both the short story and the excerpt from the novel, linear narrative structures are abandoned. In "The Means", Weinzweig applies elements of art (colour, focus, context) to her fiction. In the Bonnard painting scene in the novel, Weinzweig applies aspects of fiction to a piece of art (character, dialogue, setting). In both examples, the combined effort of art and fiction as interpreters of reality and truth is limited. Art, like fiction, has a distant relationship to reality. Art exists within its own frame, alienated by its nature from

reality. Because the intentions of the creator are unclear, the reader must rely on his/her own experiences to interpret the truths within art and fiction. Gaps exist, and only the reader can fill these. The reader, then, must become a co-creator with the artist writer of the "reality" that is the fiction and its meaning.

Music in "Hold That Tiger" and *Basic Black With Pearls*

Weinzweig adopts musical forms and techniques in her short stories in order to explore the many possibilities available to her characters, and to invite the readers to become involved in the possible meanings. Stories in which she employs musical structures and forms are "Quadrille", "Circle of Fifths", "Hold That Tiger", "Causation", and "What Happened to Ravel's Bolero?" In the short story "Hold That Tiger", Weinzweig employs structures and techniques from jazz[6] music to present the inescapable memories that haunt the narrator's life. This short story bears elements that resemble the components of the jazz standard, "Tiger Rag."[7] While it is not necessary to be familiar with the original jazz music in order to read the story, Weinzweig applies aspects of jazz music in order to involve the readers in the same way that jazz music entices its listeners. Weinzweig's use of the improvisations[8] of jazz suggests the expansive nature of "truth" within fiction. Illusion, paranoia and memory figure prominently in the improvised story of the narrator. Through the adoption of musical structures, Weinzweig suggests possible solutions to the problems of life, but she also invites the reader to join in the construction of meaning.

In this short story, the first-person narrator answers the ten questions on the Annual Development and Advancement Program Test (hereafter referred to as the ADAPT), an annual test administered by the corporation for which he works to all of its employees. It is ironic that the employee/narrator (hereafter referred to as N.) suspects the motives of the corporation in the administration and assessment of the test: this instrument of advancement will be N.'s downfall, he fears. Weinzweig divides the story into eighteen sections, encompassing the ten questions, N.'s answers, and his thoughts while he is taking the ADAPT test.

The facts of the writer's personal story can be re-created from his thoughts and responses. N.'s mother was taken away from him, screaming, while a policeman held him back; he became an orphan but had a foster-mother. He and his friend Fred purposely failed their last year of high school in order to postpone their futures. Fred played jazz; N. enjoyed the music greatly. In 1948, he and a girl, Rose-Lynn, won a dancing competition at the Palace Pier, dancing to "Tiger Rag." When he was twenty, N. quit his job as a shipper and helped distribute a Marxist newspaper called *The New Proletarian*. His idealist-friend, Wilhelm Schroeder, gave him three toys representing Hitler, Goering and Goebbels as keepsakes, which he still has. He admits that he and a co-worker, Sam, left the 1964 Select Employees' Conference in Amsterdam and hired prostitutes for the evening. Meanwhile, his wife went into premature labour; both she and their baby died.

These facts are interspersed amongst N.'s feelings and responses to the questions on the ADAPT test. The narrator abandons the faceless judgment of the computer that will ultimately be marking the test and he addresses his thoughts and answers to the young woman coworker who is also completing the test. In his thoughts, he warns her of the duplicity of the company, its all-encompassing knowledge of his life and work, and the hopelessness of ever achieving a promotion. As he recounts the events of his life, a fatalistic despair dominates his responses. At the end of the test and the story, N. asks his silent office partner to absolve his guilt and to free him from the monster that is his own memory.

This simplified chronology can be drawn out of the wanderings of the narrator's written answers and thoughts; this short story does not follow a linear narrative pattern or structure. Instead, the movements of the fiction imitate elements of jazz music. Jazz is a type of music with specific characteristics: strong rhythmic patterns including syncopation or subdivided beats,

emphasis on certain harmonic progressions; and, distinctive reliance on improvisation, that is, spontaneous individual expression of a musical idea. Weinzweig's short story, "Hold That Tiger" resembles a piece of jazz music in three ways: structure, rhythm and improvisation. Specifically, the fiction has much in common with the jazz standard, "Tiger Rag," which figures largely in the N's teenage years.

"Tiger Rag" was recorded in 1918 by the "Original Dixieland Jazz Band", and later, by such jazzmen as Jelly Roll Morton and Louis Armstrong (Tirro 170, 212). The original creation of the piece is attributed to the Jack Carey Band. The initial theme of the piece was borrowed from the quadrille; then the band "evolved the second and third strains to show off the clarinetist ... and the final strain ("Hold that tiger" section) was worked out by Jack [Carey], a trombonist, and the cornet player, Punch Miller (Tirro 170)". In the Preservation Hall Jazz Band recording, the initial bugle call-like introduction is presented by a new Orleans style jazz combo (cornet, trombone, and trumpet backed by piano banjo and drums (Tirro 76,77)) and contains two themes: "get your partners" or "hold that tiger", and the answer, "Tiger Rag." The second section of the piece features the clarinet, improvising on the themes; a third section follows this, which is a theme and variations[9] exploration of the initial two themes. This section begins with an ensemble "free-for-all" and then individual improvisations by the trombone, trumpet, banjo and piano. The theme and variations conclude with all instruments on the original themes. Throughout the piece, the rhythm section comprises tuba, piano, drums and banjo, keeping the beat steadily running (Lyttelton 17-22). The beat is punctuated by occasional "tacets", or stops, within the music between sections or improvisations.

In each improvisation, the featured instrumentalist embellishes, extends and elaborates on one or both of the initial themes, displaying his virtuosity and the qualities of the instrument.

Thus, during their respective spotlights, the clarinet adds quick arpeggios and a descending and then ascending chromatic scale; the vocalists growl like tigers, the trombone introduces sonorous slides that also imitate tiger roars (Lyttelton 21) and the piano introduces a percussive syncopated bass pattern (Decosta).

Weinzweig's story follows the structure of "Tiger Rag": an initial statement of the theme, followed by a theme and variations. Subdivided rhythmic sections and syncopations occur within the rhythm of the sentences, and the answers of N. contain improvisations on the initial themes. The fiction and music are similar in structure, rhythm and improvisation. Weinzweig creates suggestive parallels between plot and melody, harmony and character.

The theme of the labyrinth is introduced at the beginning of the story in a prologue-like section. The theme has two components: that of the maze and its dead-end paths and singular solution, and that of the Minotaur or monster that lives within the Maze. The theme of the labyrinth is initially presented as the N. enters the warehouse-like building with its card-controlled entry and temporary partition-walled cubicles. Weinzweig uses the word "labyrinthic" (*View* 137) to describe the lettered and numbered cubicles. Part of the maze includes the ceiling-mounted cameras. Weinzweig identifies the "Minotaur" as "a large writing pad with yellow sheets, lined" (137); the test itself is the monster. As N. reviews the questions, they appear illogical: "Their purpose was not clear; there was no logical sequence. A sense of desperation came over me ..." (137). Thus the test becomes an emotional and mental challenge or maze to N. as he begins to try to answer its questions.

The question/answer section (hereafter referred to as Q1/A1, Q2/A2, and so on) of the story is similar to the theme and variations portion of "Tiger Rag". The "breaks" in the test question/answer sequences are addresses from N. to Ariadne[10], his co-worker, and are similar to

the clarinet's improvisation in the music. The fictive equivalents are also improvisational in nature, and therefore, will be presently considered.

After the prologue, the story is then divided into ten short questions, prepared and marked by N.'s company. The responses reveal the maze that exists within N.'s mind: his motivations, memories and past actions. The Minotaur or "tiger" that pursues him takes a variety of forms: in the early answers to the test questions, the Minotaur appears to be the company that employs N. In later questions, the Minotaur is revealed to be the unknown future, the inevitable world of work and adult responsibilities. At the end of the story, the monster is N.'s own actions, and finally, he realizes that "The monster still stalks this labyrinth; he will not be slain. He is Memory" *(View* 149).

The first question[11] asks N. to describe habits that may interfere with his work. N. responds by describing minute, personal, obsessive habits. Although these appear at first to be only quirky, they are excessive. He describes them as "routine", citing only his attachment to his three toy replicas as "obsessive". This first answer reveals N.'s attempt to deal with the maze that is his life, the complicated web of memory, work, marriage, disappointment and abandonment. Just as a laboratory animal such as a rat or mole will repeat the same set of actions, so N. has a set of defined daily habits that help him deal with the overwhelming maze of his life, however unproductive and meaningless these actions may be. These are much like the "dead-ends" of the maze. Everyday routines and actions are reassuring to him. His unexplained obsession with the three toy replicas on his desk suggests that these objects are somehow linked to an event in his past.

In this first variation on the theme of the Minotaur/labyrinth, N. describes his efforts to control the despair in his life, and he suggests that all is well: his work is not affected by his

actions; he has the maze and its monster under control. At the same time, his efforts to maintain control appear pitifully futile as the underlying beat of his suspicions shows through in his obsessive behaviors. He can barely "hold the tiger" of fear at bay.

In the second question/answer set, N. reveals more of the truth about his past. The test question identifies four specific fears, and then N. identifies their significance in the poverty of his youthful existence. The last of his fears (a man's arm around your shoulder) is linked to his memory of his mother being taken away by police. This second Q/A set reveals another variation of the Minotaur or monster in N.'s life: his childhood memories of abandonment, despair and fear. These memories resurface in his obsessions described in both Q/A 1 and Q/A 2: repetitive actions fuelled by continuing fear. However, Q 2 reveals more from N.'s past. The emotional and mental maze that is N.'s life is slowly being revealed.

N.'s obsessions and the disruptions in his work and home life appear in Q/A set 3. He explains his own peculiar "system of compromise" with regards to "Truth Absolute" (141). In this answer, N.'s worklife appears more complicated as he reveals his suspicions that the Company is watching and manipulating him. His uneasiness about his employer spilled over into his home-life, and tensions increased between him and Vivian, his wife. An emotional wall began to emerge between them, and they slept "back to back" (140). Images of the labyrinth appear in N.'s answer to this question. First, N.'s actions at work appear to be under scrutiny by his employer. Although his work has "gone unnoticed" by the Company (140) he paradoxically suspects that he is being watched by someone: he is called to explain his memos, letters, phone calls, he is transferred to another office; his telephone "doodles" and lunch are examined (140). This list of actions suggests to him that there is a conspiracy against him. The final maze-like reference is to his new office: "a windowless inside room" (140).

In the final portion of his answer, N. strikes the solution to his problem. He suggests that the root of his work problem is that " Truth, like Time and Space, is relative", and yet, he is required to tell the truth (141). In his youth, his foster mother had warned him about the dangers of lying: "A liar becomes a thief, a thief becomes a murderer! Images of being hanged, drawn and quartered, images of my hands being cut off; images of being seated in a chair with wires to my shaved head; images that made me resolve never to tell a lie" (140-141). N. overcame this dilemma of never telling a lie by manipulating the truth (141). Now, he manages a temporary escape out of the labyrinth of his life by alternating truth-telling on the days of the week (141). This evasion on N.'s part is successful in soothing the Minotaur: he is often invited out after work on the days that he "disguises the facts", and thus, a "balance is struck between conscience and necessity" (144). This balance is similar to the equilibrium in the jazz music between the original theme and the variations and improvisations worked on it.

Thus, in Q/A 3, N. identifies the increasingly complicated web of suspicion and paranoia at work and the rising difficulties at home. He identifies the Minotaur primarily as his employer, and attempts to appease his supervisors by lying. Thus he eases the despair and frustration within himself. These variations on the theme of N.'s life suggest that certain facts or events can be adjusted, rearranged. By N.'s own admission, self-deception and elaboration are acceptable if the fabrications control the tiger of fear within him.

Q 4 presents another attempt by N. to escape from his life. N. lies to his employer in order to use a "sick day" to visit with an old friend from high school. Fred played drums while N. and his girl friend Rose-Lynn danced. In this variation on the theme of entrapment and escape, N. reveals that his deliberate failure of his last year of high school was an attempt to escape the inevitable future: "[Fred's] being to go to university and success; and mine to go to

work and uncertainty" (142). The maze and Minotaur have appeared before in N.'s life, as the inevitable future. His visit with Fred is yet another attempt to escape the present and future: "I suppose it could be termed a kind of sickness, this persistent illusion that somehow I would be transformed from a clerk in Leamington, riding on the number 18 bus daily, into one of Fred's vice-presidents flying on the Concorde" (143). Previously in his test answers, N. insisted on identifying his employer as the Minotaur. But now, in a carefully articulated variation on the initial theme, N. reveals that the monster has appeared as the inevitability of the future and work.

N.'s escape from his future and work into the dance world of jazz music is detailed in N.'s answer to Q 5. Dancing became N.'s escape, and its repetitive patterns and beat his refuge: "[I] lived to dance ... And when the trombone repeated "Hold That Tiger!" over and over, we charged down the length of the dance floor, returned to the bandstand in a variety of steps, and charged down again to the other end. Life could offer no more: I had a job and a beautiful dance partner; I won prizes" (144). N. reveals, in his answer to ADAPT Q 5, that this snapshot is from one of the happiest times in his life. The predictable, upbeat dance music provided a happy diversion from his life, a contrast to the suspicion, paranoia and desperation of his present life.

While his dance craze allowed him to escape the labyrinth of his life for a short year, it had its own set of maze-like patterns within the dance steps. However, N.'s surrender to the music allowed him to forget or at least postpone the unknown future. In Q/A 5, the Minotaur is not external to N., but internal. Fear and despair were the monsters from which N. escaped, and the music and dancing were false escapes that allowed N. to "Hold That Tiger" – his fear of commitment and boredom. Eventually the future became reality as Rose-Lynn's parents dismissed him as unsuitable for her. N. became entrapped in the future that he had tried so hard

to escape. This situation is the inverse of the happiness he felt when he danced to the jazz music with Rose-Lynn.

In Q 6, a variation of the theme occurs as N. describes his escape into the Marxist newspaper and his relationship with the editor. Q 6 involves N.'s charitable or community work, and here N. refers to his involvement in the printing and distribution of a Marxist newspaper. The editor befriended him, took him in, and eventually gave him the three toys of Hitler, Goering and Goebbels (145). N. relates his initial shock at the event of receiving the miniatures, and then reflects: "I see now that it is very important to face things that one is afraid of in order to conquer fear." This reference to personal fears may be related to his memories of his mother being taken away while a policeman held him back (see Q/A 2), although the reader must make this connection. Here N. thinks that he is conquering his fear by constantly viewing the miniatures of the men who inflicted pain, suffering and death on others. The value of his work on the newspaper, N. claims, is "that I gave hope and inspiration to the poor and the dispossessed" (145). Thus he seeks to bring freedom to his readers, just as the music freed him from fear. In this way, the variation on the Minotaur theme is developed: N. thinks he is taming or conquering his past horrors by facing symbols of them on a daily basis. He also sees his work on the newspaper as a gesture to freeing oppressed people.

N.'s involvement with the newspaper is a form of escape from his work, as he quits his job as a shipper to work with the Marxist editor, Bill. N.'s acceptance of the gifts and his rationale are a twisted attempt to escape the fear and desperation of his life. "Bill" becomes a father figure for N., and an escape from the pain and abandonment of the broken relationships he has experienced. The Minotaur of pain and despair has been disguised within another form, and N. mistakenly thinks he is confronting his fears. The monster of his past has traded forms in this

escape. This variation re-asserts the transient nature of meaning and Memory: as toys, the miniatures Bill has given N. are transfigured from reminders of the horrors of the Holocaust and human suffering to the emblems of friendship.

The Company probes the events of N.'s recent past in QQ 8 and 9: the events surrounding the Select Employees' Conference in 1964 and his declining relationship with his wife. N. evades the question about the Conference, telling the Minotaur what he thinks it wants to hear: "each and every one of us in the Company performs a function vital to someone else. Without my input, another person cannot do his or her job" (147). N.'s response here directly negates his previously expressed hostility towards the company and its employees. This variation on the Minotaur/labyrinth theme is N.'s attempt to conquer the Minotaur by accepting it and its ways. In Q 9, he cannot evade the truth about his love for his wife, Vivian: some days he loves her, and can express this love through his actions; other days, he cannot even define love: "perhaps it is only a chemical charge for the propagation of the species" (148). In Q 8, he evades the Minotaur of his employer, but in Q 9, he cannot escape the fears he has about life and love, the fears that live within his mind. In these variations, futility has changed N. and Vivian's marriage: love cannot be defined in objective terms.

Q 10 reveals the true nature of the labyrinth and the Minotaur that pursues N. He is asked about the lack of a chorus and its usual role of commentary in Ibsen's play, *Ghosts*. N. responds by saying that commentary is not required: the intent of the play is clear without additional explanation (148). He answers this question with more details from his experiences in Amsterdam. In an attempt to escape his work and the relationship with his wife, he visits a prostitute. At this time, his wife goes into premature labour: both she and the baby die. N. makes one more escape: when he returns home, he picks up a few belongings and leaves. N.

writes these facts clearly and coldly: he leaves the reader to interpret the facts of his life, but there is little elaboration here.

In this way, the theme and variations of the labyrinth are presented within the short story. Each Q/A set stands alone as a brief view or picture into N.'s life. However, read as a whole, the variations on the theme present a changing view of N., his motivations and his life. Obsessive habits grow into paranoia; nostalgia into fear of the future; self-gratification into self-blame. Thus, Helen Weinzweig relies on a theme and variations organization in this short story. The usefulness of this form is that, through the question and answer format, Weinzweig can examine the small truths or facts within the life of N. N.'s motivations, his escapes from the past, present and future are shifting and open to interpretation. Each reader will bring to the re-creation of the narrative his/her own values and so respond somewhat differently to what is presented.

Similarly, the elaborations by the instruments within jazz music illuminate and embellish the initial statement of the theme. Each time the themes appear, a new aspect of the music is presented. For example, the descending and ascending chromatic scales of the clarinet suggest flight or a climbing action; the trombone slides suggest tiger roars; the banjo presents a steady, running pattern which is then complicated by the syncopated beat of the piano bass. The overall effect is of increasing agitation. "Tiger Rag" is a piece of music that threatens to go out of control, and this is thrilling and frightening for the performers as well as the audience. In the music, the monster is unleashed and then, at the end caged. In the fiction, the tiger pushes N. to the edge of his own paranoia, and he feels trapped by his own memory. He cannot escape, although he attempts to do so through his improvisations. The reader must piece together and compare the changes as the variations occur in order to understand the many possibilities of N.'s life. To some extent, the act of reading is a wild and unknown ride, improvisatory in nature,

filled with dangers and excitement. This contextual act of reading is required to fully examine the story.

Weinzweig imitates jazz rhythms within the sentence structures of N.'s answers; specifically, offbeats, syncopation, subdivided beats or sub-groups appear (Dankworth 34). A second characteristic of jazz rhythm is the use of the "break", in which the beat momentarily ceases and a soloist carries the melody or an improvisation on it. Recurring patterns are de-stabilized or counteracted by a disruptive offbeat and changing pattern within paragraphs or sections of the story. The effect within the fiction is a sense of futility and doubt towards the credibility of the narrator: just as the words and sentences are pointing to one statement or interpretation another beat grouping or pattern is introduced. These rhythms also reinforce the increasing suspicions, agitation and desperation of N. Examples of jazz-like rhythms can be found throughout the Q/A form of the story. At the prologue-like start of the story, the test instructions are given in a steady pattern of short, direct statements (*View* 137). This presentation establishes a rhythmic pattern that suggests to the readers that the answers will appear in a direct, steady manner, clearly defined and measurable. However, N.'s answers to the questions throw this rhythm off, suggesting that the answers he provides are unpredictable.

In his answer to question 1., N. explains that he has "certain fixed habits" (138) in shaving, dressing, eating, organizing phone numbers. He admits to one obsession: "I do have certain fixed habits. I shave with a strop razor; all my socks are black, even the two pair I wear inside my jogging shoes; I eat my salad last; ... etc." (138). The flow of this long list is contrasted by the shorter subdivisions of the final sentence of N.'s answer to question one: "No one must touch, that is, move in any way, my three toy replicas on my desk" (138). This last sentence breaks the running pattern of the previous sentence, suggesting that N.'s little habits

culminate for some unknown reason in his final obsession. The disruption in the rhythm pattern here suggests a build-up or climax, much like a key change or move to another section in the jazz music.

In his answer to the second question, N. discusses his obsessive fears of "Mice. Lice. A man's arm around your shoulder. A woman's screams" (139). A short rhythm pattern is introduced here, and then longer groupings follow. This change in pattern from subdivided to longer is similar to changes that occur in jazz music. The rhythm of these statements suggests an equality of value within the test answer, and within the mind of the reader. This subdivision occurs again in A 2: N. describes his suspicions that the company was watching him. A long list is followed by a shorter statement:

> About a year later I became aware that my telephone doodles were being taken out of the wastebasket while I was in the washroom; that my brown paper bag containing my lunch was being opened and the contents examined; a typist from the typists' pool would bring a tape recorder instead of a notebook. The following year I was moved from the front office to a windowless inside room (140).

This shorter direct statement cuts the flow of the longer list. An established rhythmic pattern is broken, adding a sense of finality to the last sentence.

In Q 4, several examples of a subdivided beat are evident within the sentence structures: "Jack, you old son-of-a-gun, how are you?" ... and "We lunched at the Toronto Club. I liked the hushed atmosphere, the dark, polished wood, the heavy silver, the obsequious service" (142). The quick pace of the initial question reveals N.'s excitement to see his friend, and the long, rhythmically balanced sentence that follows presents a seamless view of N.'s dream for his future, a possibility that exists within his mind.

A sudden offbeat, or disruption of the steady rhythm occurs when N. discusses his high school girlfriend: "Rose-Lynn was sent away to school in Switzerland at the end of our last year

at Jarvis," I told him. "I never saw her again." Here the happy dance rhythm is disrupted, just as N.'s hopes for his future were abruptly destroyed.

N.'s answer to Q 5, in which he discusses his craze for jazz and dancing in his early adulthood, imitates the quicker, underlying beat divisions of jazz music:
"She [Rose-Lynn] was slight, blond and, like me, lived to dance." This quick patter-like rhythm is contrasted with the longer sentence, subordination and subdivision of the last sentence: "Life could offer no more: I had a job and a beautiful partner; I won prizes" (144). In this example, the rhythm pattern is shorter. This change creates a stop to the flow that has been previously created within this answer. This sort of syncopation occurs increasingly in the rest of N.'s thoughts and test answers:

> [To Ariadne] Take your time; don't fret: do not attempt to influence the results: we reveal ourselves no matter what we say (144).

And,

> Had we [the company] been infiltrated by an industrial spy? By the CIA? By the RCMP? Was I supposed to know something ....? (146).

These running patterns underline N.'s paranoia towards the Company, and the futility of his efforts to deceive the employer: the relentless beat is similar to the quickly running bass pattern in "Tiger Rag".

A stronger rhythm pattern emerges in questions 8-10, accentuating N.'s increasing paranoia and delusion: "[To Ariadne] The bell sounds. You raise your head. Your chair scrapes. I see you leave. You walk briskly" (147). These observations are external to N.'s thoughts. The finality of Ariadne's abandonment of N. is underlined by the steady, staccato rhythm of the short sentences. The initial beat of N.'s paranoia has been overcome by the

stronger beat of reality, the external departure of Ariadne. His hope for salvation has been destroyed. He has no control over the steady beat of reality.

In his answer to Q 9, N. presents the reality of his marriage, as he sees it: [regarding the decline in his marriage] "I worked. I saved. I was faithful. I came home every night, ate, unbuckled and slept" (148). The simple pattern of short statements is followed by a longer pattern that is divided into running sub-beats. The shorter sentences suggest a predictable pattern has been established, only to be disrupted by the longer wandering rhythms of the sentences that finish N.'s answer:

> On Monday, Wednesday and Friday, I said, Of course I love you, my darling. On Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday, I had to tell her, I don't know what love is; perhaps it is only a chemical charge for the propagation of the species (148).

The steady beat of N.'s assumptions about his marriage is offset by the doubts he now has about his relationship with his wife, and the nature of their love. This imitates a musical counterpoint, similar to the tuba/piano/drum interaction in some of the variations within "Tiger Rag". The result of these repeated patterns of desolation and isolation is increased intensity and agitation.

In A 10, the shorter sentences of N., followed by a longer sentence create a jagged rhythm pattern: "The sins of the father. Sin. An illicit pleasure – once only – and the drama unfolds, inexorably, inevitably. No chorus of comments is necessary" (148). These sentences are followed by longer, subdivided sentences, until the ultimate pattern of running subdivisions followed by two short statements accents the memory that is driving N.'s delusions and despair:

> And while the other 198 specially selected employees were sitting in the Hotel Krasnapolski, being hectored on marketing methods, we entered the houses. And while I was paying a stranger for the act of love, Vivian's dark head was tossing in agony. While I was exhausting myself on that compliant woman, the lifeblood of my wife was ebbing away. Vivian died. The baby died (149).

The two shorter sentences at the end of this paragraph stop the flow of the preceding sentences, underlining the indisputable nature of the events: these are facts that cannot be changed or embellished by N. At the climax of this short story, and N.'s life, the beat is thrown off. Syncopation occurs, and the rhythm comes to a critical halt. This pattern is similar to one of the "breaks" within the ensemble playing of "Tiger Rag." The complacency of the everyday routine is offset by N.'s doubts about love and the purpose of life. His attempt to control the rhythm of his life has left him dissatisfied and troubled. Any sense of purpose, pattern or responsibility within N.'s life is questionable: there are many uncertainties.

Thus, examples of jazz-like rhythmic patterns occur in Weinzweig's story. Quite often, Weinzweig establishes a rhythm pattern within the sentence structure and then presents a different pattern. This change in rhythmic pattern is matched by a change in tone, intent or action within the sentences. The shorter sentences imply absolute facts or inarguable detail, while the longer rhythms reinforce the wandering of N.'s thoughts. The overall effect is to create an offbeat as the story proceeds: meaning and causality are not easily traced through Weinzweig's fiction. Breaks or halts occur in the rhythm of the sentences, particularly at the end of some sections. The flow of language is disrupted, requiring the reader to examine each change and consequent new meanings.

The changing rhythm patterns also match the theme and variations previously examined, and reinforce the narrator's increasing paranoia and despair. The sudden halts within the rhythm of the sentences increase near the end of the story, suggesting the dead-ends found within the labyrinth of N.'s mind.

One of the most distinctive aspects of jazz music is its invitation to improvisation. Within the theme and structure of a given jazz composition, instrumentalists (soloists or

combinations) are given opportunities to create the music in a spontaneous manner: "instrumental virtuosity" is highlighted within the performance of jazz music (Salzman 174).

Using the given composition as a starting point, the instrumentalist is free to express him/herself rhythmically, melodically and harmonically. Other musicians may join in this spontaneous event, adding creative support to the lead instrument's improvisation. However, the improvising players are still bound to a harmonic structure set out by the composer in the original musical composition (Dankworth 16).

In "Hold That Tiger", N. makes several attempts to "improvise" on the theme of escape. He deliberately fails his last year of high school, quits his job to help print a Marxist newspaper, and lies to his employer in efforts to improve his life and escape his fears. Finally, he appeals to his female co-worker. Each form of escape from the Minotaur has its appeal to him, but he is defeated in each attempt. The truths of his life remain: the memory of his choices and the death of his wife and child remain, and no amount of delusion, elaboration, blame or paranoia will change these facts. The many improvisations of N. are similar to the musical explorations of the theme by the solo instruments in "Tiger Rag."

At the end of the story, many questions are left unsolved. While some of the facts of N.'s life are clear, many are not. The reader is unsure of the nature and source of N.'s fears, and the result of the ADAPT test. Through the improvisations within N.'s test answers and his addresses to Ariadne, Weinzweig stresses the idea that "truth" is relative. There are many ways to interpret fact, and there are many possible stories and endings. There is no escape from internal memory, but even this is unreliable.

Weinzweig's story is similar to the jazz music, "Tiger Rag", in its prologue/theme and variations, the syncopated and running rhythms with the "breaks", and the instrumental

improvisations. The jazz music includes a final, reiterative ensemble statement of the initial theme. At the end of the story, the reader must decide if N. has managed to "Hold That Tiger" or contain the despair of his past within his memory: "Don't let him get away", as the chorus states. The jazz elements that occur in this story create an open-ended, unconventional form of fiction that requires the readers to participate in its outcome. Here Weinzweig takes a non-traditional approach to the themes of modern angst, personal despair and professional ennui. The end result of the fiction is that the readers must improvise the answers from the themes presented by Weinzweig.

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At first glance, Helen Weinzweig's novel, *Basic Black With Pearls*, appears to unravel in a random style, suggestive of free-associative thought or the automatic writing of the French surrealists (Selinger 40). The structure of the novel resembles that of a serialistic, atonal musical composition. In Weinzweig's open text, many possible stories are presented through repeated motifs, events and memories. Language is shown to be multi-faceted and flexible. Absolute meanings are in constant question, and assumed realities prove to be illusions. Weinzweig's use of a serialistic form requires the interaction of the reader as meanings change within new contexts throughout the story.

Published in 1980, this second novel by Helen Weinzweig won the City of Toronto Book Award (Panofsky 73). Literary critics received the book with interest and positive general comments, but few have examined it in any detail. Literary critic Bernard Selinger has analyzed the structure of the work in some detail: he takes a deconstructionist approach, "decoding" the layers of the novel and analyzing the motifs and symbols to reveal the opposing forces and definitions within the novel (Selinger 54-55). Selinger analyzes the novel's structure as "radial;

that is, it circles about, repeating and elaborating a central principle. Like a musical phrase ... the novel derives whatever meaning it may have from repetition in different context, and not from reference" (Selinger 40). Biographer Ruth Panofsky adopts a similar approach, noting, "structurally the work operates as small cyclical narratives framed by a large cyclical action of flight"(76).

Another analysis is possible: a contextual, responsive reading to Weinzweig's fiction reveals the many possibilities she is presenting. Weinzweig's language must be considered within each new context of its presentation. Meaning and traditional narrative relationships cannot be assumed. *Basic Black With Pearls* (hereafter referred to as *B.B.*) exhibits an organizational structure similar to the compositional procedure in music that is known as serialism.[12] Its strictest form is the method of organization called "twelve-tone" music, originated by the composer Arnold Schoenberg (Turner 1204). Weinzweig previously employed serialism in a short story entitled, "What Happened to Ravel's *Bolero*?" (MacGillivray and Ivancic 225-234). There are prominent characteristics of music that is composed using this serialistic procedure. One is the organizational method used to create the music: a group of twelve tones is selected from the chromatic scale, and arranged as the composer chooses: each tone may only appear once in each tone-row; however, some elements may be omitted (Sadie 163). Next, this selection is inverted, mirror-imaged and then inverted once again; the initial grouping may also be repeated in another key. The resulting mathematical pattern is difficult to identify aurally. The resulting compositions sound as if they are composed randomly or freely, but a mathematical-like process of organization binds the composer. With each repetition or series of events, a new meaning or possibility is presented, and the listener must fill in the gaps, and continue to form his/her opinion of the work.

A second important characteristic of serial music is its atonal nature. Because it lacks the relationships between keys that are present in traditional harmonies, twelve-tone music sounds dissonant, so the listener must continually strive to note the relationships between individual notes or repeated elements.[13] More importantly, equality of all tones is the essence of this music, and the serial technique of composition releases the composer from a traditional hierarchy of sounds. Weinzweig's fiction also works in this way without a central unifying structure: the relationships between serial elements must be considered as new ideas each time they are encountered. This fiction/music comparison using atonality and serialism goes beyond the contextual analysis of Bernard Selinger as it does not recognize one central principle within the fiction: this tonal centre is constantly shifting, changing and open to interpretation by the reader.

A third aspect of serial composition is that the "theme," or main idea of the music, is often difficult to identify initially, and can only be deciphered when the composition is complete. This is due to the interrelationships in the work (Perle 9-10). Helen Weinzweig selects a series of elements and then repeats these a number of times, changing the order of the events in each repetition. This serialism is similar to the twelve-tone serialism used by the composer Schoenberg in his music. Although the actual order of the elements changes over each day of the novel, the overall change in the events reflects the shapes identified by Schoenberg (prime row, inversion, retrograde and inverse retrograde) (Sadie 162). It is challenging to trace the prime row (initial series) or identify its exact repetitions through the fiction because of the large number of elements introduced and included in each day of the novel.

The significance of the repetition of specific objects or events in sets lies in the subtle changes that occur with each repetition. In Weinzweig's fiction, each event or element in the repeated set has its own possible meaning, along with its relevance to the other repeated

elements, and then within the context of the entire novel. Previous meanings and inferences cannot be assumed. By Schoenberg's definition, twelve-tone music is "a new method of musical organization in twelve different tones related only to one another..."(Turner 1204). Similarly, the reader of Weinzweig's fiction must piece together the changes in each appearance of the group of elements. The story unfolds in a life-like way as the readers explore the main character's innermost thoughts and recollections. Within her fiction, Weinzweig leaves spaces for the reader to draw his/her own conclusion. Just as the musical listener must draw his/her own conclusions from a piece of serialistic music, the reader is faced with a variety of options. The reader's participation is required.

The novel is divided into sections varying in length from a few lines to pages in length. The novel is also divided chronologically by the days Wednesday to Sunday. However, the events of each day are far from chronological: memories from the main character's youth, adolescence, marriage and love affair are mixed with hopes, plans, observations, fantasies and unrelated stories. Over the presentation of each day, the following events or objects occur at least once: a basic black dress with pearls, the act of writing, the life of the city (people on streets, crowds, couples walking, etc.), subways or planes, locked doors and keys, a musical composition, a literary allusion or quote, postcards and the act of sexual intercourse. The image of a mother and child, usually in conflict, also occurs repetitively. On each day, a non-related narrative or intertextual story is included. Other objects or events occur on three or four of the five days, but not on every day. The order of the presentation of the objects or events changes: this is the very essence of serialism. Some items or objects occur more than once in a day or tone-row. On Thursday, the entire tone-row of events is almost completely repeated twice. This brings the total number of tone-rows, or series, to six for the entire novel.

Each day in the novel may be considered as one row, containing all of the eleven elements identified previously. The novel adopts the "shapes" of the tone-rows as the twelve-tone composer Schoenberg proposes them (Sadie 162-163), and these can be titled as follows to indicate the events of each day:

Prime Row – [Wednesday] Return to Toronto/Life With Coenraad [Past Relationship]

Retrogrades 1 and 2 – [Thursday and Friday] Past Life/Youth/Search for Coenraad [Fantasy Relationship]

Inversion – [Saturday] Encounter with Andy [New Relationship]

Retrograde-Inversion –[Sunday] Visit to Home, Rejection of Life With Zbigniew [Husband]

The novel begins as Shirley/Lola arrives in Toronto to search, once again, for her secret lover. (For ease of reference, the character will be referred to as Shirley/Lola in this thesis, although uses of her name vary in the novel.) In the past, he has communicated plans for their liaisons to her through written clues imbedded in the texts of magazines, pamphlets, articles etc. (*B.B.* 7). Memories of the near past with Coenraad flood her mind as she returns to the city of her youth, Toronto. Shirley/Lola notes the first sexual excitement that she feels whenever they meet. She is wearing her usual costume of a basic black dress with pearls when she arrives by plane in Toronto. She glances through the postcards she has collected before she goes to sleep in her hotel room; one postcard of a statue reminds her of her husband, Zbigniew (18).

The events on Thursday and Friday in the novel may be considered two or three "Retrograde" tone rows of the first day as Shirley wanders the streets of Toronto, searching for Elm Street, attempting to crack her lover's code. As she walks, memories of her lonely and miserable youth are mixed with recalled events from her life with Coenraad. References to her black dress occur: she notices that the waitress in the hotel coffee shop also wears black (25); she

smoothes the fabric, checks her necklace clasp. She recalls that Coenraad taped their love-making although she was not allowed to record any aspect of their relationship (41). At the end of the day, while reviewing her postcards, Shirley/Lola recalls a quarrel in Hamburg, after which they slept with their backs to one another (75). There is a darker side to the sensual relationship with the elusive spy. Shirley/Lola recalls the rejection, cruelty, loneliness and poverty of her youth. Three intertextual stories present tales of people who are trapped physically and mentally within miserable lives: their efforts to escape are narrated.

On the third day of the novel, Friday, the events are retrograded from the initial day in their full context. Shirley/Lola realizes she has indeed misread the Elm disease pamphlet (94). There is no message from Coenraad. The black dress appears on this day as her reflection in the mirror (95). She meets the botanist Andy in the hotel for a botanists' conference, and he gives her his address (99). The day ends as she recalls her first sexual encounter with Coenraad (100-101).

The events and elements repeated on Saturday may be considered the inverse of the initial day, Wednesday. Here everything is inverted. The postcards are on the floor (102); Andy gives her a key (104). Before this, she used only hotel keys and she could only remember doors being slammed in her face, or a door closing behind Coenraad. A street photographer takes her picture and she destroys it in a fury (113). She cannot stand her old image, and later she admits it does not fit with her new surroundings at Andy's apartment. She visits Andy, opening the door herself; they make love (110). When she leaves, she knows that his door will always be open to her.

On Sunday, Shirley/Lola's life is not only upside down but inside out as well. She throws the postcards into the garbage (113), and then she returns to the home she occupied as

Zbigniew's wife (118). She cannot find her keys, so she must break in through the door on the deck. As she visits with Zbigniew's new lover, Francesca, Shirley/Lola is annoyed by the unbroken routine in her home: Francesca opens the peaches that Shirley/Lola canned (125). At the end of the evening, Shirley/Lola watches in bed as Francesca and Zbigniew have sex (131-133). She rejects her life with Zbigniew, abandoning her dress, pearls, house, husband and children to Francesca (133-134). Although she will miss her life with Coenraad, there is nothing from this life with Zbigniew that she wants. She takes a taxi to Andy's apartment (135).

Over the five days of the novel, Shirley/Lola moves gradually from her relationship with her phantom/spy lover to a new encounter with Andy, the botanist. Her final encounter is with her husband. She rejects her old married life to enter a new relationship with Andy. The reality and fantasy of any of these relationships is unclear, but her determination to start a new life is obvious.

The novel *B.B.* is serialistic in that repeated elements occur throughout the five days of the narration. The overall effect of each row reflects the four shapes described by Schoenberg in his definition of musical serialism, although the exact repetition of the series in each tone-row or day is difficult to trace, due to the many possible elements involved. The changes in the repeated elements reveal Shirley/Lola's view of herself, and the relationship she now appears to choose with Andy. The story that is presented at the end of the novel is different from the one at the beginning. There may be no new words, phrases or elements, but there can be new solutions, Weinzweig suggests. Weinzweig deliberately leaves blanks or spaces in her fiction, unanswered questions that only the reader can decide. Her writing has much in common with serialistic music, as she omits predictable cadences and defining resolutions of conventional fiction.

Within the tone-rows of repeated elements, Weinzweig unravels themes about reading and writing, relationships, and the nature of human relationships. That is, repeated elements occur within the tone-rows, but the meaning of the element must be considered in each situation. The treatment of the following repeated elements in the fiction will be examined: the basic black dress with pearls, the acts of reading and writing, sexual encounters, and the intertextual stories. These elements have been chosen because they appear in each day or tone-row of the novel; also, they are each quite different from each other, and they present aspects of the themes in different ways.

Shirley/Lola's basic black dress is a repeated element within the novel. Each time this recurs, a different meaning is attached; thus Weinzweig explores some facet of appearance and reality, in the life the main character. On the first day of the novel, Wednesday, Shirley/Lola arrives at the airport in Toronto. As she passes through Immigration she thinks,

> These are strange times and I must be careful. I finger the pearls at my throat, my coat is open to reveal a basic black dress. Now that I am middle-aged I have a slight advantage in these situations. I try to give off that mixture of confusion and unhappiness that will make him [the immigration officer] reluctant to detain me, for in that state I remind him of his mother. (*B.B.* 11-12)

In this first mention of her dress and pearls, Shirley uses her appearance as a disguise: she is posing as a matronly figure in order to achieve her mission, another secret meeting with Coenraad. The simplicity and serious nature of her attire belies the secrecy and excitement of her life; she knows the power of this deception; she recognizes the "slight advantage" of this disguise, and acknowledges the success of her duplicity: "Even as he stamps my passport he is already appraising the next person in line" (12).

The next day, Thursday, Shirley goes to the coffee shop in the Royal York Hotel for breakfast. When she enters the hotel, she notes,

> Here, as elsewhere, unless I clearly revealed what was regarded as wealth, position, or, at the very least, respectability, I came under scrutiny, direct and indirect, from everyone. [She quickly gets directions to the coffee shop.] I followed the hostess who was dressed, like myself, in a basic black dress with pearls (25).

Shirley recalls the differences between eating in a restaurant alone as opposed to the times when Coenraad accompanies her:

> For a long time I have suspected that when I come alone into a restaurant I am going to be seated next to swinging kitchen doors or behind bins of dirty dishes. In contrast, when Coenraad and I enter a dining room there is a snapping of fingers and a scurry to seat us at an advantage.... I hesitated to give my order [to the waitress]. Truth was, I felt I should not be here. There is something indecent in eating breakfast in public. It's like getting out of bed in a roomful of strangers...(26).

Shirley/Lola's dress and pearls give her a slight advantage in the coffee shop setting: her appearance ascertains her acceptance by the hotel staff, but her singular female presence is not as socially acceptable as that of a couple, a man and a woman. She is respectable, but on the same social level as the hostess.

Later in the day, Shirley enters a bakery in the district in which she grew up. She wishes she were dressed like the shopkeeper:

> I wished I had on a printed rayon dress with a clean printed cotton apron over it, as she was wearing. I regretted being dressed in my black dress, the tailored tweed coat, the pearls. If you have grown up in these streets it is the act of a traitor to return smelling of expensive perfume and sporting the costume of another class. It isn't going away that causes resentment: after all, out of sight, out of mind. But once out of sight, I should stay out of sight. It is an unwritten law. Not only can you not *go* home again, you must not *come* home again (BB 42-43).

Shirley/Lola's disguise fails her in this setting from her childhood: she cannot hide from the past here; the memories and experiences from the past prevail; acquired wealth and perceived success

are regarded as snobbery. Lola does not exist here, only the Shirley of her youth. The shopkeeper

> ... was taking her time acknowledging my presence...Perhaps she did know me, we were about the same age, although her face was more lined than mine and her hands work-worn. We might even have gone to Ryerson Public School at the same time (42).

Shirley/Lola's dress and pearls do not camouflage her from the past; the memories exist and she cannot hide from them.

Later in the day, Shirley visits the Art Gallery of Ontario. Discouraged in her search for Coenraad, her coat and shoes wet from the rain, she takes refuge in the quiet art gallery.

> I took note of signs pointing to washroom and cafeteria, smoothed my black dress, fingered my pearls to check the clasp and set out to lose myself in silent rooms...Even were I to find him in my bed at the hotel to-night, I was in no mood to be with my lover. Right now I was not the spirited, attractive woman he knows and wants (53).

Once again, Shirley uses the black dress and pearls to disappear into a background. This time, she is shoeless. This makes her appearance somewhat ridiculous: the ticket attendant regards Shirley/Lola's stocking feet with suspicion, but she assumes that she is attending an awards dinner in the cafeteria. Shirley/Lola's incomplete outfit is still acceptable in this setting; she blends into the crowd easily. This afternoon, Shirley wants to be completely inconspicuous from everyone, including her lover, and her appearance allows her to do this successfully.

When Shirley returns to the King Edward Hotel, she acknowledges that her costume does not

> command the respect of those paid to serve. I am forced to see myself through their eyes: a woman, no longer young, in a tweed coat open over a plain black dress. A closer look would reveal only that the pearls around my throat are genuine. Since I am a middle-aged woman traveling alone, I cannot be identified by the company I keep ... I am regarded as a woman with no apparent purpose,

> offering no reason for my present. When I leave, everyone's attitude changes: they smile as I pay the bill; another clerk voluntarily checks to see if there is a final message ... Their fears are ended. I have caused no disturbance (60).

Shirley/Lola's appearance does not incite acceptance in all settings; in the social scheme of hotels and restaurants, by herself, she is a peculiarity, a suspicious character. Neither single nor paired, her identity is not easily defined, and this creates an aura of discomfort for individuals in the service industry. To improve the disguise, she assumes a limp. This increases her status immediately:

> The clerks and the tired old men dressed as bus-boys, and some botanists... all watched with sympathy...When the odds are against me I go into an act. See, I'm crippled, I haven't had your advantages; it's been rough, but what can you know about it (61).

Thus her camouflage does not always work. Like a chameleon, she changes herself to improve her advantages. The humorous aspect of this scene in the novel is enhanced by the immediate success of the deception:

> By the time I reached the desk, the clerk was truly sorry he had no message for me. He wished me a pleasant evening....[Shirley quickly changes into dry shoes.] Downstairs again, I was careful to remember to limp back across the lobby. A bus-boy ran forward to start the doors revolving for me (61).

A small modification such as this limp takes her from unacceptable and suspicious to acceptable and pitiable. She immediately blends into "an indeterminate crowd" when she steps out onto Yonge Street. She changes the definition and attitudes others have of her by altering herself in a very small way. And the most incredible aspect of this duplicity is the eagerness with which others meet it.

Later in the day, Shirley finds that she and the waitress are dressed similarly in the small Greek restaurant, "Naxos." She notes that this environment is her domain:

> The food and the prices, I thought, indicated a clientele I could be part of if I wanted to: I would fit right in with my good black dress and the pearls; I know how to order in French; how to use a knife and fork in the English manner; how to place without ostentation my credit card on the little silver tray with the bill (65).

There are no other women in the restaurant; she wonders if the wives of the men who are dining there are "still in the Old Country" (65). In her mind, Shirley is socially equal to the men dining in the restaurant; she is above these wives who have been left behind. She does not want to risk losing this status by knowing too much; she hesitates to ask a question about Greek mythology to a group of men who are talking about the military coup in Greece.

> I was afraid my words would not be taken at their simple value; perhaps they would be suspicious of my intrusion, looking upon it as a feminine ploy to gain access to their politics or their sex (66).

Although her attire assures her status, interaction with the men may dissolve her respectability. In this repetition of the basic black dress, the volatility of Shirley/Lola's image is revealed; she knows the distinction between creating an image and revealing too much about herself.

In the events, memories and impressions that comprise Saturday in the story, Shirley/Lola's attire is mentioned twice. Both times, she rejects her appearance. She becomes infuriated when a street photographer takes a picture of her; she rips up the picture:

> He could not have known that he copied a likeness I no longer wanted.... Perhaps, it occurred to me, through the 'evil eye of the box'' the photographer had removed a soul that was weary of wandering. Despite the breeze, the pieces of my soul just lay there. Good, I said to myself. Good riddance (103).

By Saturday, Shirley has tired of her unsuccessful quest for Coenraad, and she turns to a new lover, the red-headed botanist Andy. She visits his orchid-filled apartment and is overwhelmed by the colours of the orchids, and the sun-filled room:

> Andy's excitement at my arrival didn't strike me as such at the time, in the midst of music, the exotic flowers, the geometry of light and shadow, and color everywhere (108).

Her basic black disguise is becoming redundant: she thinks, "I knew that were I to come here again I would not wear black" (108). She does not want this disguise any more; she is ready to shed this façade of acceptable clothing and social status.

When she leaves Andy, it is evening and the sun is just going down. On the street outside his apartment, the grief and pity of her life overcome her. Then, as the streetlights come on, she is struck by joy and triumph. This is followed by anger: "perhaps an anger with myself for a failure of courage" (113). She throws the postcards from her travels with Coenraad into the garbage can. These are the only tangible history she has of their times together.

On Sunday, the last day of the novel, Shirley returns to her husband's home and meets her replacement, Francesca. At the end of the evening, she leaves her dress and pearls with Francesca, taking with her a lightweight, flowered dress: "I remembered it had an abstract design in slashes of red and blue and yellow on a green background, copied, I felt at the time I bought it, from the paintings of Hundertwasser" (133). She gets into a cab and leaves the house without kissing her children good-bye. "I will not miss being a stranger from whom nothing is wanted and from whom nothing is expected", (135) she thinks, as she drives away in a cab. Shirley has abandoned her black dress and pearls for a more colourful, active existence. She wants to stand out and be noticed, and to contribute to those around her. Blending into her surroundings is no longer enough for her.

Thus the image of the basic black dress with pearls occurs in a serial manner throughout the novel. In the Prime Row (Wednesday), Shirley/Lola uses her appearance to blend in to her surroundings and to be accepted by others. The presentation of the basic black dress with pearls is then retrograded on Thursday and Friday as Shirley/Lola visits the bakery, art gallery and

hotel. In these situations, she becomes dissatisfied with the effect of her appearance, and she makes small modifications, such as a limp, a strand of pearls, the removal of her shoes, and a faked epileptic fit in order to change the way others see her and, therefore, treat her. On Saturday, the basic black costume is inverted as Shirley/Lola destroys the picture the street photographer hands to her. She begins to reject her appearance altogether. In the Retrograde-Inversion (Sunday), Shirley/Lola returns to her family home, and sheds the costume altogether. The serial treatment of Shirley/Lola's basic black dress within the tone-rows of the novel shows her transition from a patient, waiting lover in a clandestine love affair to an active participant. This movement requires changes in her social status, physical presence, emotional welfare and, finally, her wardrobe.

In a similar way, Weinzweig presents the acts of reading and writing serially through the tone-rows of the novel. The attitudes and expectations others have towards Shirley/Lola change when she manipulates her appearance minimally, or when the setting is different. Thus too language can be regarded: like Shirley/Lola's costume, words have many meanings; they are easily manipulated. They, like Shirley/Lola's dress, can be deceptive, and readers can be easily manipulated by a reaction to a word, or phrase. The power in this game is not equal, for the receiving audience is waiting to believe, to be led by the author/creator. In this way, Weinzweig shows the manipulative role of the author, and the gullible role of the reader. A selected disguise or language is no longer applicable. When the wearer tires of it, or it fails to be effective, a new outfit and set of words is required. Weinzweig points out that this change is not without risk and requires courage on the parts of both the reader and the writer. As Shirley says at the end of the novel, "...I felt something like resolve grow in me, a resolve against waiting. There will be risks..." (135).

A second element that reappears throughout the novel is acts of reading and writing. Through the serialistic appearances, Weinzweig presents reading and writing as slippery, deceptive acts, easily manipulated and misinterpreted. Static or unchanging interpretations are no longer possible for Shirley/Lola or for the reader of the novel. Through the serialistic form of the novel, the readers are forced to examine each element, each appearance of an object or event within its context, and then within the larger picture of the novel. Assumptions are deceptive traps when used in the reading act: each word or phrase must be newly considered with each encounter. Words are fluid and changing, and the reader must consider each one individually as a possible illusion of reality. Just as Shirley/Lola must disregard the old lover's code and read for new meaning, so too the reader must constantly adjust the view as each repeated element appears. The power of the act of writing is overwhelming: creation and control of words often equates physical control. It is time for readers to become active participants in creating fiction.

Each tone-row or day of the novel includes at least one act of reading or writing. Through the repeated presentations of reading and writing, Shirley/Lola begins to understand that her lover's *National Geographic* code is defunct. This comes as a surprise to her, and she must learn to read the flatly written notes from her new lover, Andy, in a different way (102). These open acts of reading are sharply contrasted against the manipulative reading and closed writing of her husband, Zbigniew. He is all-powerful as translator, oral transmitter, poet and silencer (127-131). He controls language just as he controls his marriage partner in his home, silencing her with a horsewhip. Shirley/Lola makes attempts to write or create: she starts (but never finishes) letters to her children (23) and imagines essays, conversations (71) and drawings in her mind; she poses as an opera critic (89-92). As she ruminates on the fictive power of suicide notes and

confessional stories in the tabloids, she considers the power of fiction to change the lives of others (84-85).

At the beginning of the novel, (Prime-Row/Monday) Shirley/Lola approaches every magazine she reads as a hidden code from her lover, Coenraad. This code is waiting to be interpreted; the hidden message discovered and revealed. She searches between the words, cleverly relating the location of the next meeting with her lover. The message of the writing changes when the intent is private or personal, addressed to one individual or a group. There are no absolute interpretations. This idea is reiterated as Shirley/Lola re-reads the articles in the *National Geographic* magazines Coenraad sends to her, embedding his messages in the text. Once Shirley/Lola has decoded the message and met her lover, she spends her time reading the magazines and using them as guides to her locale. She reads some of these items to Coenraad, but eventually selects "only stories of an impersonal nature" because "We [Shirley and Coenraad] differed at the deepest level once on the interpretation of the marriage custom in Botswana" (66). Shirley recognizes the duplicity of language:

> And always, while reading the magazine alone in a hotel room, I could see Coenraad's blunt fingers turning the very same pages, his eyes following the identical lines. I had visions of a pen poised as he deliberated over the passage with the message ... (16).

The varying meanings within one piece of writing are obvious. Shirley indicates that even at this level, the writing causes disagreements between her and her lover. She recognizes the control and power of the writer who selects the words, and now she has tired of being the passive receiver of the message.

On Thursday and Friday, the acts of reading and writing are retrograded (reverse-ordered) several times as Shirley/Lola discovers that the code and her relationship with Coenraad no

longer work. She pours through the Dutch Elm disease pamphlet, looking for clues, walking through the (Elm) streets of Toronto. Shirley realizes her mistake:

> All my clever guesses had been wrong; there was no message on the plane; the pages of the botany journal had to do with doomed trees – nothing else. I had been entirely mistaken (94).

The personal message she was seeking did not exist.

As deceptive as Shirley-Lola suspects language is, she attempts to use it to define herself. She strives to create some written or auditory record of her times with Coenraad but he denies her this: "There must be no papers, documents, letters, notes, journals or diaries that would expose our love affair" (40). Coenraad refuses to allow her to record their trysts or meetings. He, on the other hand, has taped their love-making. The power of creation and recording of words, events and impressions is denied Shirley; she must be the passive receiver while Coenraad is the omniscient author and archiver of their relationship. The power of the writer is emphasized in Shirley/Lola's limitation within the relationship with Coenraad.

When the opportunity arises, she is afraid to write and cannot complete the act of writing. Silence is pressed upon her, but she also chooses silence in her relationship with Coenraad. She says, "his presence renders me speechless" and "when Coenraad and I are together, words are not necessary"(39). In her relationship with Andy, she is afraid of the light and freedom that she is so relieved to find. The silence in Shirley/Lola's relationship with Coenraad is much like the silence in the conventional reader/author relationship. The failure of communication in both of these situations is a retrograded presentation of the purpose of language.

At the beginning of the novel, Shirley/Lola considers writing fiction:

> Perhaps I ought to try my hand at fiction. I would have to be careful: for me the power of the written word is so great that there would be the danger of my believing what I imagined (40).

In Shirley/Lola's mind, there is a thin distinction between fantasy and reality, and language blurs this line. Even the writer cannot be sure about the truth of what he/she has written. The written word itself is more powerful than the intentions of the writer. In fiction, illusion and reality become confused.

The illusory nature of writing is further exemplified in the next appearance of the act of writing. Shirley/Lola contemplates an essay in her head on "Innocence and Its Loss", and considers discussing this topic with the hotel bellhop:

> It's just that I do not want to start something I cannot finish. No sooner do I get a dialogue under way than I have to leave... (62).

Shirley imagines that her writings cause the bellboy to examine his life, and move him to action:

> ... is it my fault that he quits, goes on unemployment insurance; doesn't know how to begin a day on his own, takes to drink – am I responsible for his fate? (62)

Shirley/Lola is questioning the impact of fiction, its purposes and motivations. The link between the author's intentions and the reader's reactions is tenuous, shifting, potentially powerful.

The next appearance of reading and writing is the consideration of a suicide note. Here, the fallibility of writing is once again revealed. Even a suicide note is suspect:

> -- Oh those notes, red herrings all of them! The imagination knows no bounds before the final act ... I know a failed writer whose hobby is collecting suicide notes – he beats the ambulance to the scene. He intends to publish them as found novels. He will write the setting, description of the dead protagonist, give the text of the note, and the reader will create his own novel. Every reader a writer, he told me, a suicide note is a work of fiction. But Elsie will know the truth: you cannot outwit her with a note (84-85).

In this reference to the act of writing, Weinzweig suggests that even the most sincerely written object (a note written to loved ones just before committing suicide) authored with a clear intention to express the truth about one's life can be manipulated to form the basis of a work of

fiction. Language and its truths must be carefully considered, because the writer's intentions vanish once the writing is removed from its original setting. Shirley/Lola relates that it is a failed writer who is collecting suicide notes as a basis for fiction. When the writer's imagination fails, factual writing can act as a source for inspiration, Shirley/Lola suggests. Given the basic factual details, the reader will make up the novel: "Every reader a writer ..." (BB 85). And essentially, this is what Shirley/Lola does to the waitress: she fills in the blanks with imagined details and creates a fictitious daughter, poet/boyfriend and existence for her. At the end, Shirley/Lola warns, only children cannot be fooled by the ruse of writing: they will know the truth. In this implosive manner, Weinzweig suggests that the author's intentions to portray reality are quickly lost as the reader fills in the blanks in the act of reading. Reading subverts reality.

On Thursday, another retrograde of the act of writing occurs as Shirley/Lola poses as an art critic (91), and writes, "I am a person of artistic sensibilities; in order to wear the mantle of the artist one has only to put one's arms through the sleeves." This is the ultimate disguise for Shirley, the invisible woman, as she poses as a critic of artistic expression. Writing is included in this "art of deception", and anyone can become an artist by donning the disguise, Shirley proclaims. She explores the deceptiveness and power of writing herself when she accidentally stumbles into a rehearsal of the operetta, Bluebeard:

> ... I realized they took me to be a person of artistic sensibilities, perhaps even a music critic. I continued to write in my notebook. The movement of pen on paper seemed to please them, for Bluebeard smiled down at Issa and she smiled up at him. What I wrote was, *I am a person of artistic sensibilities; in order to wear the mantle of the artist one has only to put one's arms through the sleeves* (91-92).

It is easy to assume the act of writing, of being an artist, of deceiving others, she notes. The act of writing can be deceptive and misleading.

On Saturday, Shirley/Lola receives a written note from the botanist, Andy. This note is an inversion of all of the previous presentations of the act of writing: "I am on the third floor. I won't hear the bell. Let yourself in"(102). A brass key is included with the note. His written message to her is straightforward and clear. There is little to interpret. If she wishes to communicate with him, she must do it by initiating the actions of using the key to open the door, and climbing the stairs to his apartment (107). Andy later relates his philosophy to Shirley/Lola: "What I'm trying to say is that we do things out of some mysterious necessity ...Nuance is everything" (109). Coenraad and Zbigniew had their own plans and controlled their own lives, just as they controlled the meaning of the messages they sent and the communications they entered. They controlled Shirley/Lola by denying her self-expression and directing her activities and life experiences. It is Andy who asks her directly, "Well,... what are you thinking? Will you stay?" (111). Andy has an office day job, and orchids are his hobby. He looks into his microscope and records observations in a notebook. He makes statements about the way things are, and he asks Shirley/Lola to do the same. Secrecy, silence and assumptions are not the basis of this relationship. He acknowledges Shirley/Lola's ability to choose her own future. Shirley recognizes the chances she is taking in assuming this new, active life:

> Starting anew has always meant for me leaving behind one thing for something better...--always a trade of some sort...Perhaps I will exchange a half-life of waiting for a life I have not tried yet (101).

In this way, Weinzweig presents language as a tool to record observation, and as an interactive behaviour between two people.

On the last day of the novel (Sunday), Shirley/Lola's husband, Zbigniew, carries out acts of reading and writing. This is a retrograde-inversion of the original presentation on Wednesday, because Zbigniew commands control over language as he did over Shirley/Lola, employing its

power for his own ends. However, the presentation of the act of writing is further inverted as Shirley/Lola rejects her married life with Zbigniew, and (perhaps) attempts a written communication with her children through a letter (or novel) to her children. In his job as court interpreter, Zbigniew controls the interpretation of language. The details he infers, imparts and withholds determine the outcome of court cases, and thus, people's lives. For Zbigniew, control over words is equated to physical control of others. This manipulation extends into his physical relationship with his wife. In conversation with Shirley/Lola, Francesca (Zbigniew's new lover) relates the case of the Jugoslavian husband who bound and gagged his wife to keep her from wandering around Toronto Harbour (128-129). Zbigniew contemplates that his father would know how to keep such a wife in line. (Zbigniew snaps his riding whip as he speaks.) Later, Francesca and Shirley exchange details about life with Zbigniew. Against Francesca's insistence that Zbigniew never uses the whip except on his horse, Shirley recounts Zbigniew's violent reaction when she returned home late one night after viewing the movie, "Children of Paradise":

> He wouldn't look at me. He struck me three times. I felt the whip on my face, my breasts and my legs. He said nothing. We went to bed. We had intercourse as we always do on Sunday (130).

Zbigniew's excessive control over words filters through to his physical dominance of his wife. Just as he determines the written meaning of words, he defines Shirley/Lola's existence within the marriage. He controls her through fear, silence and physical violence. This man further perverts language by writing love poetry. In this appearance of the acts of writing and reading, W. shows how written words can be manipulated. The reader cannot make assumptions about the character or motivations of the writer from the written work.

At the end of the novel, Shirley/Lola cannot complete a letter to her children, although she carries the tablet of paper with her, and has begun writing. What will she tell them about her

life that they will believe? "I passed in the hall, then, sad, I descended the stairs. In my letter I will try and explain why I could not stop to kiss them good-night."(133). Shirley/Lola falls back onto the written word to convey the most intense of emotions and conditions to her children. Her final attempt at writing to her children might be the novel, *B.B.*, explaining her actions and life.

Thus, through the serial presentation of the acts of reading and writing, the fallibility and deceptive nature of written language is stressed. Each time the element of reading or writing is presented, its context further reveals its nature. The fallibility of the writer is emphasized, along with the lack of reliable codes for writing. There is a broad disparity between authorial intent and the interpretation of the written word: "factual" journals (i.e. *National Geographic*, elm disease pamphlet) can be read in many ways for a variety of interpretations. Suicide notes can be manipulated. Anyone can be a writer, Shirley/Lola contends, as she assumes the role of opera critic. However, she struggles with the responsibility and finality of the act of writing.
In the appearances of writing and reading in the novel, words are powerful, and writing is the act of using this power. Shirley/Lola explores these ideas through the writing of her lovers. In her relationship with Coenraad, words have masked the reality of their love. There are no written documents or records of their relationship other than the *National Geographic* messages; and these are now meaningless because the code is defunct. Coenraad controlled Shirley/Lola's writing. In her relationship with Zbigniew, words were used with violence to control and silence her. Andy uses words to record observations, and this is new for Shirley/Lola.

Writing is easily misinterpreted and manipulated. Similarly, the writer and reader must abandon the old codes and structures of reading and writing, and become active participants, considering each word and phrase as it appears. Thus, each time the act of reading or writing is

presented in the novel, Weinzweig explores or emphasizes the fallibility of the art. Reading and writing are faulty and deceptive. Like Shirley/Lola, the reader must write the final story. Sexual encounters occur on each day of the narration of the novel. These events are recalled from the past, or occur in the present. A comparison of each of these events shows the serialistic treatment of this element within the fiction of the novel. Each sexual encounter has a different emotional nature for Shirley, and indicates a change in her relationships with her lovers, Zbigniew, Coenraad and Andy.

On the first day of the novel, Wednesday, Weinzweig provides several glimpses of Shirley/Lola's meetings with Coenraad. (This is the Prime row of the novel.) The most prominently presented sexual encounter is the night in Hong Kong. Prior to their lovemaking, Shirley recalls the horror of her existence with her husband, Zbigniew, and the mechanistic act of sexual intercourse in their marriage. This memory compels her to attempt to plan a future with her lover, Coenraad

> .... I made another attempt to gain a more secure place in Coenraad's life.... I was thinking particularly of Sundays at home when Zbigniew comes back from the stables, hangs up his riding crop beside the mantelpiece and settles in with the week's newspapers. The memory of what follows, every Sunday of the year, year after year, made me shudder. I announced to my lover then and there, at the window, that I was willing to move to Boston. Perhaps, some day ... he and I could ...?
> .... He bowed.
>
> -It is written that one meeting is worth ten partings. Yet one parting is of greater consequence than ten meetings. For if lovers keep regular hours, then meetings and partings are as the comings and goings to the supermarket.
>
> Fortunately, I can take evasiveness for an answer...Just the same I wished he could consider my point of view. I straight *yes* or a *no*. I am tired of having to interpret (21).

The relationship has become stale: the adventure, anticipation and excitement are now outweighed by the emotional tedium of waiting and guessing, solving the puzzles that Coenraad poses. Shirley/Lola yearns for future stability and the routines of a mutual relationship.

> [She describes the neat, orderly house she keeps in Toronto]...Every time I go away I leave the house in good shape. I miss putting things in order.... [She hangs up their clothing in the hotel room] I folded, hung and straightened until order was restored. Only then was I able to return to the pleasures of that hotel room (21).

She tries to impose a future plan on their relationship, but he resists, pointing out that love dies when it becomes a habit. Shirley/Lola does not pursue her request verbally, but continues to think of a possible future for their relationship. She notes that the décor in the room is eclectic, defying her attempts to put it into any order. This is also the nature of their relationship, resisting her attempts to create a future.

> The décor was an intriguing theme of East meeting West, or, as Auden defined poetry, the juxtaposition of irreconcilable elements. I was about to expatiate on the phenomenon of paradox, when I remembered that my philosophizing causes Coenraad to lose his erection. I lay still. Soon I was free to turn on my left side (22).

In this sketch of sexual intercourse, Weinzweig does not provide the usual romance novel details; the reader must fill in the blanks between "Coenraad's passionate embraces,... kisses and endearments" and the completion of the act, when Shirley was "free to turn on my left side" (22). This recalled description of her thoughts at the time reveals the nature of the relationship between Shirley/Lola and Coenraad. Shirley/Lola's emotional and intellectual needs run counter to Coenraad's physical desires. Thus the act of sexual intercourse as it first appears in the novel (Prime row), reveals the strain in the relationship between Shirley/Lola and her lover, Coenraad. In escaping the prison of her marriage, she is faced with the irreconcilable emotional, intellectual and physical desires of her relationship with Coenraad.

This first described act of sexual intercourse in the novel is ironic. Shirley/Lola appears frankly bored with the whole procedure: she examines the furniture in the room, repressing her verbal meandering so that Coenraad can obtain an erection, and waits for him to finish the act. The reader wonders if this can be any less routine than the Sunday night ritual with Zbigniew, Shirley/Lola's husband. Weinzweig does not give the reader the usual romance novel treatment of sexual intercourse. It is the lack of passion and even physical arousal on the part of the main character that gives the whole scene a sense of frustrated boredom or ennui that comes from constant movement from one hotel to another. The script that Shirley/Lola follows, responding to Coenraad's cues, has become stale and boring for her. Without the commitment of some future, or deepening within the relationship, Shirley/Lola cannot impose the intellectual and emotional order that she craves in her life.

On the second day of the novel, the sexual act is presented in a retrograde serial row, as Shirley/Lola recalls many details about past meetings with Coenraad. The most significant memory comes after a long geographical comparison of their lovemaking:

> I am forced to contrast our meetings in cold climates with those in warm zones. In countries around the equator our love is at its hottest...In the colder regions something goes wrong. Whatever the cause – the cold or the damp or the gray pall – we quarrel easily.... North of the forty-second parallel we always fuck without passion (75).

In Hamburg, Shirley/Lola meets the wife of a man who used his factories to make German tanks; he is about to be released from prison. The woman is dreading the release of her husband; when Shirley/Lola urges her to leave, she replies, "... I cannot exchange boredom for danger..." (78). She will accept her guilt and self-pity; she cannot change her life now. This woman's change in circumstance is similar to Shirley/Lola's existence. That night, Coenraad comes to

Shirley/Lola's room at midnight and chastises her for trusting the crying German woman, telling her not to trust strangers. Shirley/Lola accuses him of being paranoid, asking,

> --And does the Agency give you permission to make love to me?
> They don't need to; officially you do not exist.
> These last words left me silent and profoundly depressed, especially since they were spoken without the movement of a muscle... He added:
> --Moreover, when will you learn to lock your door? You endanger me with your carelessness.
> ....I have no postcards of Hamburg. I want no reminders of a night spent with our backs turned, and of Coenraad getting dressed just as light appeared at a space between the drapes and then slipping out as if I were not in the room.
>
> I was awake still with memories of Hamburg as disquieting as a nightmare. It was true that officially I did not exist. ...Yet this solitary life had its advantages: if no one cared about me, I need please no one. Except my lover. I was reminded of the time I asked him why, with an entire world of women, literally, to choose from, why it is me he loves. At that moment I was being held and kissed so that his reply can be recalled in its meaning only. I think he said something that indicated that he, too, is subject to nightmares; that he could not go on unless someone loved him; that he must have something to look forward to and that I was to be trusted (80).

The encounter with the German woman sets off a chain of actions and memories within the relationship of Shirley/Lola and Coenraad. Loyalty and love have dissolved to denial and embarrassment in the relationship between the German woman and her convict-husband. But the woman cannot bear to leave her comfortable existence and her own self-pity. This encounter triggers Coenraad's reminder that Shirley/Lola is non-existent to everyone but him. This particular night, they quarrel, and Coenraad treats Shirley/Lola as if she is invisible to him. This is actually a sexual non-encounter, as the two turn their backs to each other in the bed. This recalled event is a retrograde version of the sex act, a physical rejection of Shirley/Lola by her lover.

Alone with her thoughts, Shirley/Lola recalls the actions of Coenraad on a previous occasion. At this time, Shirley/Lola interpreted his lovemaking to mean that she provided a

glimmer of hope and trust in his life. Her purpose is to provide a secret refuge, and an inspiration for him to live. However, she cannot be sure of his meaning, because of its physical context. It may be that she imagined the entire inference. Essentially, Shirley/Lola realizes that perhaps she only imagined her role in Coenraad's life.

On the third day of the novel, Friday, Shirley/Lola recalls the night of her first encounter with Coenraad, in Chicago. His appearance in her hotel room is much like a "phantom lover":

> That night in Chicago I was in a deep, black and empty sleep, having swallowed three sleeping pills from my hospital hoard. I woke, or rather I was alerted out of sweet oblivion by a sense of something or someone in the room. I could see nothing, but slowly became aware of a presence that moved at the foot of my bed. Suddenly the room was flooded by a blue-white light from the television screen across the room...the intruder sat in an easy chair. He sat across the room, one leg over the other; and one side of his face was illumined by the cold glare of the TV. It came to me that I was not afraid of him, and this in itself frightened me.... He held a finger to his lips, and another was pointing to a connecting door through which he must have come. I nodded that I understood. At that exact moment we had our first intimation of total confidence in the silence between us. I see him yet, his head to one side, listening.... By now I was wide awake, alert not to danger, but to possible adventure.... I saw he was about to speak, and, most likely, to leave. This time I put a finger to my lips and made room for him on the bed....
>
> In the midst of it all, just as I was concluding that I would know this man's face, this body, from now on, anywhere, with or without clothes, I felt my own body obliterating every thought. I didn't want to leave him for an instant: but my body made the choice: it abandoned him. Coming back, unbelieving, I saw, even in that ghastly TV light, his face still above me, radiant and smiling. Then I turned off the television (99-101).

Shirley/Lola's recall of this first encounter with her lover epitomizes the nature of their relationship: a feeling of adventure, trust based on silence, physical connection at the expense of cognitive thought. Shirley/Lola has chosen Coenraad as a phantom lover before he has even spoken. His physical presence is all that is required to maintain the relationship. Between these meetings, she waits. Back in Toronto, Shirley contemplates her existence without Coenraad,

considering what she will give up "...what will I exchange for my nights with him? Perhaps I will exchange a half-life of waiting for a life I have not tried yet" (101). Following this train of thought, Shirley/Lola analyzes the relationship:

> Now think, I told myself, try and remember, did Coenraad ever say in so many or so few words that he wanted to see you again? Did he, after consulting his little black book which he always did in the lull between loving and eating – did he ever say, Darling, my next assignment is London, I wish you could meet me there? Admit it: between the first wild clutch and the last turning away nothing was ever said to indicate that he wanted to see you again. Admit, too, that you learned to time your entreaties so that you extracted promises from him in those exquisite moments before love-making. You had discovered that afterwards his lassitude persisted until it became indifference. Then you became frightened. You see that now, don't you, I asked myself: the only thing that keeps you from panic is the knowledge of the next meeting.... The rest is born of your desires (101-102).

The adventure of their first meeting has decayed to a pattern of love-making. Her communications to him have also fallen into a predictable format; she knows how to time her requests in order to maximize his response. In this interior monologue, Shirley admits to herself that Coenraad knew that he might never see her again, and this thought fills her with panic. She sees now the truth about their relationship, and the role of her imagination in maintaining it. As she recalls this first event of sexual intercourse, Shirley recognizes that perhaps the only basis was physical desire; perhaps she only imagined the rest because this is how she wanted her lover to be.

This admission of the collapse of their relationship is contrasted with the beginning of the relationship with Andy. In this serial repetition, the sexual act is considered as an inversion of all of the others. On Saturday, Shirley has a sexual encounter with Andy, the botanist, in his flower-filled room. Weinzweig combines an intertextual story of the pseudo-copulation of the bee with a musical interlude to present this sexual act. At times this is somewhat humorous:

> Was it his idea of foreplay? I couldn't be sure. He proceeded to show me, scientifically, what happens to the wasp when he enters the brownringed, purple centre of the *Ophrys Speculum*....Whether sex or science, the images were funny and I smiled with him. Andy began to bustle happily: more wine? Relax, do you like Hungarian dances?....Still in my thoughts, I drank wine and tried to comprehend the contradictions inherent in the pseudo-real. Phrases like *reality of appearance* and the *illusion of reality* were going through my head: but the music kept distracting me.... In the course of time, when we make love, Andy takes as his own the rhythms of Liszt's dance. [Rhythmic details, etc.] ...and getting ready for the finale, the music races, chords, trills, arpeggios, the dancers whirl, faster and faster, until, in a joyous crescendo, in time with the crashing chords, they stamp their right heels and shout Ha!
>
> One day, too, after lovemaking, I say, Music is not the only perfect art (109-110).

This sexual encounter provides a sharp contrast to Shirley/Lola's previous memory of sexual intercourse. Music, colour, humour and conversation create a light, bright atmosphere. Andy's description of the orchid's seduction of the bee (pseudo-copulation), and the Liszt dance music create the pattern and rhythm for this encounter. She is a participant in the sex act, and afterwards, he acknowledges her presence as he makes notes about his orchids: "He had a way of abruptly looking up from his work and staring at me until I met his eyes, and I, unbelieving wanted to ask, who, me?...He was at my side, murmuring pleasant adjectives, some of which had never been addressed to me before" (111). He recognizes her choice to stay or go, acknowledging her freedom to continue the relationship. However, Andy also believes that " we do things out of some mysterious necessity ...Nuance is everything" (109). Biological destiny and details govern the outcome of life, in Andy's view.

Shirley/Lola recognizes the problems of communication and interpretation that they will face. After his description of pseudo-copulation, she thinks, "It was a word, I felt, that would someday spark a misunderstanding between us"(109). She thinks about

> the contradictions inherent in the pseudo-real. Phrases like *reality of appearance* and the *illusion of reality* were going through my head: but the music kept

> distracting me. Music, it is said, is the perfect art. It, too, is an abstraction, at the very least, of vibrations, of wave lengths, of such and such frequencies, of so many overtones, of semi-tones and quarter-tones: yet none of those components, as with fragrance for the wasp, accounted for the rising tension I felt as I listed to Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies... [after lovemaking] I wasn't certain why I was there, but I was happy, deciding that scales are well-tempered and that nature is teeming (110).

The contradictions of language are easily overridden by the dominant patterns of nature and music that provide their own imposed order on life, and Shirley/Lola easily gives in to these urges, reassured by their dominance.

The new relationship with Andy will be different from the ones with Coenraad or Zbigniew. Shirley/Lola will be more actively participating, and more aware of the traps of interpreting the thoughts and desires of another. Andy has a new set of codes by which he governs his life, and Shirley/Lola must familiarize herself with his language and activities. A new uniform is required: the black dress will not fit. She knows she is looking for a new experience, a "discovery" with Andy, but doubts exist: "when I come back [to Andy's bright loft], will I be able to withstand the light? (111)"

She views this new relationship with Andy as an opportunity, a choice:

> The important thing was that behind me now was a door I knew I could open with my own key any time I wanted to and be welcomed. Andy had been explicit about that (111).

His openness to her and his wish to include her in his life reminds Shirley/Lola of a previous exchange with Coenraad in Stockholm:

> Lucky for me [he said] I didn't know you years ago. And I, weak-kneed and seated, replied, Oh, but I wish we had! My life would have been fulfilled! Exactly, he replied, *you* would have been fulfilled, but I would never have amounted to anything (112).

For Coenraad, Shirley/Lola's love is excessive, and must be confined to a small portion of his life. Otherwise, her love will strangle his goals and ambitions. Andy invites Shirley/Lola to become an important part of his life. She will not be interfering with his work. He wants her to experience life with him.

The final act of sexual intercourse occurs on the last day of the narration: Sunday. Here, Shirley's sexual activities are retrograde-inverted. Shirley returns to her Toronto home and has supper with her family and Francesca, the woman who has replaced her there. That evening, she enters the bedroom to participate in the Sunday evening sexual act with her husband, Zbigniew. Francesca and Zbigniew have sex while Shirley fantasizes about the encounter with Andy. The events here are fairly clear, and Shirley recalls Zbigniew's little habits. The act is sterile, like a hospital routine, and Zbigniew is without concern for the pleasure or feelings of his partner. Shirley notes his lack of passion:

> In visualizing them [Zbigniew and Francesca] the (persistent) image of Zbigniew on his mare crowds my mind and an anger rises: why can't (won't) he be as vigorous, maintain the same stamina with Francesca as he does with his mare! (133)

The sex act is presented in a retrograde because Shirley has returned to her family home, but it is also inverted because Shirley's involvement is external. At the conclusion, she thinks, "What is unusual is that this is the first time I have climaxed at the same time as my husband" (133). The concept of pseudo-copulation figures prominently here. Shirley/Lola has pseudo-copulation (masturbation) and this has been more pleasurable than any previous experience with her husband. Reality and fantasy are difficult to separate.

The effect of the five sexual encounters over the five days of the novel is much like the repetition of sounds in a musical composition, or of a shape or colour in a painting. The

reader/observer notes these slight changes and adds it to his/her collective experience of the subject. In the repetitions of the act of sexual intercourse, the main character's changing view of her lover is explored. In Hong Kong, (Prime row presentation) the sexual intercourse between Shirley/Lola and her lover, Coenraad, is routine and slightly boring. She suppresses her longing for further emotional and intellectual commitments in order to allow for his physical satisfaction. In the second presentation (Hamburg), she recalls the night of a quarrel, when Shirley/Lola first realizes that she may have created or imagined her role as shelter and comforter in his life (Retrograde). On the third day of the novel (Retrograde 2), she recalls her first meeting with Coenraad, in Chicago. She portrays him as a "phantom lover", and dwells on the immediate physical attraction she feels for him. She admits that physical attraction is the basis of the relationship. Without the hope of another physical meeting, panic seeps into her mind. On the fourth day of the novel (Inversion), Shirley/Lola acknowledges the breakdown of the relationship with Coenraad, and she attempts a new liaison with the botanist, Andy. This encounter relies on natural rhythms and instinctual urges, and Shirley recognizes her active involvement in the lovemaking. Although she is a more equal partner in making choices and in participating in this relationship, she is not sure if she can adjust to the new parameters of this lover. She is now aware of the differences between reality and fantasy within a relationship. The last act of sexual intercourse (Sunday – Retrograde-Inversion) is the most explicitly written in the novel. The participants are Francesca and Zbigniew; Shirley watches. Although graphically presented, this presentation of the sex act is read within the context of all of the preceding sexual experiences, imagined or real, that have been presented in the book. The reader's overriding sensations of the scene are of the emotional sterility and self-centredness of the man involved. After this encounter, Shirley/Lola knows that even "pseudo-copulation" with a fanaticized lover is better

than loveless, routine sex with her husband. She has returned to her family's home, and observed the reality of her life with Zbigniew, and she knows that she can leave this relationship behind and enter the new one with Andy. Based on her return visit, she chooses to leave Zbigniew for Andy.

The overall effect of the repetitions is the self-knowledge that Shirley achieves over the expanse of the five days of the novel. She experiences the sex act as a boring ritual, as a pleasure for someone else, as a fantasy, as an active and willing participant, and as a voyeur. As she recalls or experiences each sexual encounter, she examines her role in the relationship. She also considers the difference between reality and fantasy, both in the physical act of sexual intercourse and in her emotional attachment to her lovers. Weinzweig points out the slim distinction between fantasy and reality, and suggests that sometimes people choose fantasy. The repetitions also stress that interpretation occurs not only in verbal language, but also in physical relationships. Here, implied meanings and deciphered messages must be carefully considered. There are at least six intertextual stories *B.B.*. These appear as short vignettes, anecdotes or interludes throughout the novel, one on each day within the novel, with two stories occurring on Thursday. To understand the relationship of these intertextual stories to the rest of the novel, they must be examined within the serialism of the novel. As the musicologist Elaine Brody describes serialism, listeners cannot assume that the usual relationships or musical patterns exist when they are listening to serial music; traditional "expectations" of the music are "redundant", so the listener must actively listen to the music, and observe relationships as they occur (Sadie 169).

These six intertextual stories are predictable stories of human suffering that evoke an emotional response in the reader or listener. Themes of separation, alienation and betrayal are

fascinating to hear and read; and Shirley/Lola is drawn into them. These clichéd stories have a surreal quality to them within the novel, *B.B.*, because they are so detached from the novel itself, and because they could exist independently. The reader is drawn into the story, and then Shirley/Lola leaves the scene and the story deconstructs. The known pattern of reaction is disrupted by Shirley/Lola's secondary reactions, or by some aspect of her life. Each encapsulated story bears a fine reference point to the novel. Themes of alienation and abandonment resound; there are constant lapses in relationships. Separation, pain and suffering appear to be inevitable. The stories also explore aspects of art and its reliability; Shirley/Lola borrows some of these deceits to accomplish her own quest. Thus, small, pivotal relationships exist and the reader must bridge the gap to make the connection between the novel and the intertextual stories. The stories have alternate meanings when they are considered against the actions of Shirley/Lola and the rest of the novel. In this way, the intertextual stories function much like the elements in serial music.

Bernard Selinger identifies five scenes in *B.B.* that he thinks are important to the development of the novel, and he entitles them as follows: Silk Factory, Bakery, Art Gallery, Elsie's Mother, Bluebeard.

> Each begins with Shirley in a recognizable social context. Then she meets someone, always indoors, and the scene becomes disorienting. Shirley either exchanges roles with a person before a story is told, or she watches that person act out, or tell, a story (Selinger 41).

Selinger refers to the individual occurrences in Shirley/Lola's memories of her past experiences as "memorybanks." Selinger takes a structuralist interpretation of the novel, dwelling on the opposing relationships and movements in the novel as key to its meaning, and noting some of the intertwining stories and plot windings that occur in the novel.

The five stories mentioned by Selinger will be discussed; another story is that of the Nazi's wife (*B.B.* 77). Thus, within the serialistic structure of the novel, there are six intertextual stories. Other short anecdotes occur within the novel, including references to literary figures, stories, legends, and myths. However, these longer intertextual stories will be the focus because they support the serialism of the novel in a prominent way.

The first intertextual story that occurs in the novel is the "Silk Scarf Factory" (32-39). Here, Shirley/Lola mistakes a black-market scarf salesman for her lover, and she, in turn, poses as a buyer in order to seek out Coenraad. She meets the owner of silk scarf factory, and realizes he is not Coenraad. She thinks, "It was apparent I had been taken in, after all, by the man's fine manners. Am I a child, always confusing hopes with facts? I wondered" (35). Shirley/Lola thinks she could fit in with the women at the sewing machines, "But all I managed to do standing there was to convey in dumb show the fact that I was not who he thought I was" (36). Her disguise has rebounded. The owner, in turn, mistakes her as an authority figure, such as a police officer or government official. He thinks she knows his secret, that he must confess to her that he abandoned his wife and sons to the Nazis (37). He identifies Shirley/Lola as an avenging angel, "sent to be with me at the end. It is you who will forgive me" (38). Overcome by his anguish, however, he turns away from her, and begins to recite Yiddish prayers. Shirley/Lola "watched the figure in his communion with the dead. There was nothing for me to say. I had to leave" (39). The initial emotions that Shirley/Lola experiences are despair and sympathy towards this man's guilt. However, this predictable emotion collapses in upon itself as Shirley leaves the scene. Words fail her, and she knows that they cannot obliterate his guilt. Within the context of her own situation, the scarf factory manager and Shirley/Lola are both on their quests to connect with someone, but their searches are incomplete. Both are blind to the reality of their

situations. In the scarf manager's search for forgiveness, redemption is impossible because he alienates himself from everyone else in his grief. Similarly, Shirley/Lola's determined search for Coenraad blinds her to the nature of her relationship with him, and to the possibility that he has abandoned her. She, too, is alienated from others in her transient life of waiting for Coenraad.

The fallibility of words is presented in Shirley/Lola's second reaction to the owner's story. When she leaves the silk factory, she wishes that she could write (39), but recalls that in the relationship with Coenraad, "words are not necessary". Thus, she is unable to find the appropriate words to relieve the silk factory owner, while in her relationship with her lover, (she says) words are unnecessary. Ironically, the code words that usually lead her to Coenraad have now failed her. Words fail in both relationships. Thus, this intertextual story takes on a new meaning when considered in its juxtaposition to Shirley/Lola's situation, and against her reactions to it.

A second intertextual story is presented when Shirley/Lola visits the bakery in the old neighbourhood. Here, the bakerwoman reads the newspaper story about the woman who escapes from the sex slave ring (50). The woman comments on the sensational nature of the story, telling Shirley/Lola that this is "true story like you wouldn't believe" and then she "read in a tone that suggested shock and wonder" (45). She reads the tale of a woman seduced by a man to accompany him to his house in a far away land where she was enslaved with a group of women to provide sexual acts to men. Eventually, the woman escapes. Here the bakery woman invites Shirley/Lola to finish the story. Shirley/Lola in turn replies that she cannot come back to hear the next installment of the newspaper story: "I have to go where he is, the man I love." The Bakery woman replies, "Just like her, the woman in the story." And Shirley/Lola denies this, "Not at all, I'm free to do what I want." Bakery woman: "You think so?"(50) The reader's

emotional reaction to the story is one of shock. The Bakery woman voices the theme that joins the newspaper story to Shirley/Lola's as she questions Shirley/Lola's motives for joining Coenraad. Both Shirley/Lola and the heroine are trapped by their love and enslaved by the betrayal of men.

The intertextual story presented in the Bonnard painting has been examined previously in this thesis (Chapter 1). In this scene, Shirley/Lola converses with a girl who is trapped in a painting at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Seeking release from her father's house, she begs Shirley/Lola to help her. Shirley/Lola's initial response is one of sympathy. However, the art fails to move her to action, and she forgets to notify the authorities. Shirley/Lola's second reaction is one of deception: she borrows the girl's ruse of playacting an epileptic attack in order to escape the art gallery guards (59). Shirley/Lola says that Coenraad would have been proud of her acting. She identifies the value of deceiving others: "It seems to me that in a confusion of extremes one either lies or tells the truth, whichever works best. Up until now the risk of deceit has, for me, been greater than the risk of truth" (60). This approach to living is similar to the deceptions that artists work in their art. As the young girl in the painting says, "Oh those artists and their tricks! They deal in illusion: everything is a matter of perspective" (56). Thus, the deceit of the artist brings immediate sympathy from Shirley/Lola towards the young girl, yet Shirley/Lola admits that she herself has resorted to deception in order to accomplish her mission. It is, indeed, a matter of perception. Thus, the initial emotions evoked by the intertextual story are offset by Shirley/Lola's own actions. Also, the reliability of art and the intentions of the artists are also questioned through this intertextual story.

The intertextual story presented by the Nazi's wife initially evokes a response of despair and sympathy from Shirley/Lola towards the wife. Her husband, who profited from his

involvement with the Nazis by manufacturing tanks, is soon to be released from prison. The wife is crying because she does not want him to return because it will disrupt the comfortable life she has been living as the result of his conspiracies (77). She cannot bear to be reminded daily of her husband's guilt, and her own profits from it. Shirley/Lola sympathizes with the woman: "You poor dear, it must have been dreadful"(77). She encourages the woman to leave: "Sell your jewels, pack your hankies, go! You have learned to cry amidst strangers; you can live anywhere!" (78) In the next moment, Shirley/Lola recognizes the duplicity between the woman's story and her existence:

> It was beyond my comprehension why I would want to comfort this fat old woman whose very existence was a sign of guilt, a woman who no doubt drank champagne in her private bunker while my family ... gone ... all gone... I am the only one left alive (78).

The significance of the woman's story lies in the thin threads that link it to Shirley/Lola's life. Shirley/Lola thinks first of her lover, and then she remembers her mother: "Thoughts of love [for Coenraad] evaporated. All I could see was weeping women.... A sense of doom turned the room with its silken walls and fine furniture into a ghetto. Now my eagerness for my lover was for another reason: in his presence terrors vanish"(79). Shirley/Lola's sympathy for the woman turns to sorrow as she "weeps(s) for the dead"(78). The life of the Nazi's wife is the inversion of Shirley/Lola's: this woman treasures her boredom; she does not want to trade it for the life of intrigue with her husband, and she is dreading his return. Shirley/Lola treasures the intrigue that her life with Coenraad provides, and she longs to be with him again because he provides a diversion from the sorrows of her life.

The intertextual story is further inverted as Coenraad becomes angry with Shirley/Lola for speaking to the women: "When will you learn not to trust everyone!" and "All I ask is that

you refrain from conversations with wives of condemned Nazis....It is my duty to know these things....You endanger me with your carelessness" (79, 80). Shirley/Lola's efforts to comfort the old woman may have jeopardized the mission, and life of her lover. Alienation results for both women: the Nazi's wife seeks it out, while Shirley/Lola does not.

The fifth intertextual story is the imagined life that Shirley/Lola creates for the young waitress. In her imagination, Shirley/Lola creates Elsie, the waitress' daughter; they live a life of poverty. The mother seeks a loving relationship, but she fails to give love to her child. Shirley/Lola imagines the young mother escaping through suicide (83). Shirley/Lola delivers a convincing speech to the waitress, urging her to save her daughter from a life of self-blame, and from asking herself "then, and forever, what she did wrong that her mother would want to kill herself" (84). In this story, Shirley/Lola points out that living is an act of love for another person, and that suicide is the betrayal of this love. Suicide notes are "a work of fiction. But Elsie will know the truth: you cannot outwit her with a note" (85). Shirley/Lola indicates to the waitress that she has a choice in determining the outcome of her daughter's life. However, she recalls Coenraad and his insistent belief in "the destiny that arranged for us to meet and fall in love" (85). Thus, Shirley/Lola's tells Elsie's mother that love is a conscious choice, while Coenraad believes that their love is a result of destiny. The meaning of the intertextual story is changed by the reality of Shirley/Lola's own relationship with her lover. Once again, the deceit of written words is emphasized by the discussion about the suicide notes. Weinzweig's themes are thus presented through the contextual relationship between the intertextual story and the life of Shirley/Lola.

The sixth intertextual story occurs when Shirley/Lola interrupts a rehearsal of

Bluebeard, an opera by Bela Bartok (85). Shirley/Lola describes the nature of the opera libretto: they are "the most absurd tales of obsessions with love, terror and death" (91). The actors assume that she is a newspaper critic, and she assumes the role easily. She is indeed impressed by the presentation, and she was "moved ... to stand up and shout 'Bravo!'" (91). However, she continues her deception of being an opera critic, taking their names and pamphlets.

This scene is linked to Shirley/Lola's in two ways. The female character in the play seeks to know more about "the core of [Bluebeard's] soul" (90), and he asks, "Judith, love me and ask no questions" (90). This is similar to Shirley/Lola's relationship with Coenraad. She wants to know more about him but he limits her knowledge of him. Second, two performances occur in this scene: the actors portray Bluebeard and Judith, and Shirley/Lola portrays the art critic. She does this in order to fulfill their expectations, and succeeds in her performance.

In reviewing the novel, *B.B.*, several possible stories exist: the decline of a clandestine love affair(s); the wishful thinking of a bored housewife; or the bizarre wanderings of an insane woman; or a mother's explanatory letter to her children as she leaves them and their father. Events, objects and actions recur in the novel in patterns that are similar to the tone-rows used in twelve-tone music (that is, Prime row, Retrograde, Inversion and Retrograde-Inversion). A detailed examination of the repeated elements reveals a system of organization that is serialistic. Each time an element is repeated, it must be examined within the context of the other elements, its previous appearance, and its location in the novel. Through the repetitions of the basic black dress with pearls, Weinzweig considers the relationship between appearance and reality; however, Shirley/Lola discards her uniform when it becomes redundant, and when she wants to become a more active participant in life. Weinzweig emphasizes the malleable and fallible nature of language through the repetitions of acts of reading and writing. Language is deceptive;

the intention of the writer and the reader's interpretation are barely related; codes of reading are open to interpretation. The repetitions of sexual intercourse reveal the changes in the relationships Shirley/Lola has with her lovers. Here Weinzweig explores the blurring of reality and fantasy. The intertextual stories that occur within the novel appear at first to be unrelated to Weinzweig's themes; however fine links exist as Shirley/Lola reacts to the intertextual stories by relating them to her own experiences or memories. As well, the intertextual stories expand on the themes regarding the unreliability and deceptive nature of language and art. Thus, small thematic links can be made between the elements and the tone-rows.

The intertextual stories are clichéd tales that might be included in any popular magazine, newspaper or television show. The reader/viewer's first reaction is emotional: fascination, sympathy, pity, fear. However, in these intertextual stories, Shirley/Lola's initial emotion is countered by a triggered memory, comparison or suggestion to her own history or relationships. Thus, the meaning of the intertextual story changes through the context of its presentation in BB. Traditional patterns and interpretations of fiction are re-invented by Weinzweig, and the reader must actively consider the relationship of each included story to the novel as a whole. The principal themes that are considered in the intertextual stories are the nature of reading and writing, and the breaks that occur in human relationships.

The overall effect of the fiction has much in common with music that is composed using a serialistic approach. Fundamentally, each note must be considered individually each time it appears in the composition. The meaning and relevance of each repeated element in *B.B.* must be considered each time it recurs: there are few absolute symbols or references. Also, as the lack of a central reference key creates an atonal sound in serialistic music so in Weinzweig's novel, linear patterns of narration and fiction are abandoned.

At the end of the novel, Shirley/Lola abandons the familiar patterns of her life with Coenraad. Although she will continue to encounter all of the elements of their affair, she says, "I won't be trying to recognize my lover"(134) and, "I will not miss being a stranger from whom nothing is wanted and from whom nothing is expected" (135). Like Shirley/Lola, the reader must abandon the traditional codes of meaning and become an active participant in the creation of the narrative.

Conclusion

In her fiction, Weinzweig refreshes the use of language, abandoning conventional structures for those of art and music. Because Weinzweig's "new language" requires the active participation of the reader as co-creator, many meanings are possible.

In "The Means", "Hold That Tiger" and *B.B.* Helen Weinzweig deliberately employs structures and aspects of art and music within the fiction. She abandons linear narrative patterns in favour of the structures and techniques of Impressionistic art, the art of Vincent Van Gogh, jazz music and serialistic music. In other stories not considered in this thesis, Weinzweig also employs modern art techniques ("A View From the Roof"), a musical quadrille ("Quadrille"), the relationship between traditional music harmonies ("Circle of Fifths"), aspects of piano tuning ("Causation"), and twelve-tone music ("What Happened to Ravel's Bolero").

The conventional cause and effect relationships of fiction are weakened or nonexistent in this new fiction. Therefore, the reader must respond to each word, sentence, or paragraph as it appears in the fiction. Symbolic meanings, description and representative language do not apply, as the reader must continually adjust his/her beliefs about the fiction, as well as fill in the gaps that exist in order to draw possible direction. Although characters, events and objects occur repetitively, the possible meanings available to the reader must be considered each time. In the same way that the audience views art works or responds to a musical presentation, the reader must respond and react to the fiction as it unfolds. Weinzweig's fiction is one of observation and perspective, and her approach corresponds closely with the reader-response theories.

In the short story, "Hold That Tiger", the narrator is chased by the combined paranoia of his suspicions, the angst of his present work and life, and the persistent memories of the past.

Within the theme and variations structure of the story, elaborations on "truth" are presented; many variations on the events of the narrator's life, his motivations and memories are presented. Through the experience of reading the story, the reader can formulate the possibilities of the narrator's life.

In the short story, "The Means", middle-aged Margaret attempts to define and understand the events of her life in terms of the art of Vincent Van Gogh. Through this experience, she discovers the truth about her impossible expectations of her father. In the novel *B.B.*, the main character communicates with a faintly drawn figure in a Bonnard painting. In this Impressionistic rendering, the girl in the picture declares its deception, while at the same time, she begs Shirley/Lola to believe her story of entrapment. Shirley/Lola believes the young girl, although she later forgets to follow through on her promise to help the girl. Fantasy and reality overlap as S/L adopts some of the deceptions of the art in her own life. Weinzweig's uses this Impressionist painting as a structure within the fiction to underline the thin relationship between life and art. This painting exists within the sterile, defined quarters of an art gallery, without the context of real life or natural connection to other art pieces. The intentions of the artist are unknown, and the painting's ideas are isolated. This disconnected existence is similar to the life of S/L, and also to the alienated relationship between writer and reader.

Weinzweig uses a serial method of repeated elements in *Basic Black With Pearls* to explore the changing relationships of the main character, and movement from a passive waiting lover to an active participant in a relationship. The main character eventually acknowledges that she must choose between her phantom lover, Coenraad, her husband Zbigniew, and her new lover, Andy. She says, "Even so, the choice to stay out or go back inside should be mine to make" (*B.B.* 119). However, making these choices takes courage, and Shirley/Lola notes, "There

will be risks" (135). The events in the story appear to be repetitious and wandering, but a serial structure similar to the organization of twelve-tone music can be traced in the novel.

Weinzweig reaffirms the new language of fiction through the novel, *B.B.*. The old codes and meanings are defunct; writing is a deceptive act, and the reader must consider each event as it appears. As one of the characters says, "Nuance is everything"(109). In order to forge new emotional bonds, the main character must depart from the established codes and patterns of language and life; she must start over and try something new. In *B.B.*, Weinzweig warns that fiction and language work in a duplicitous way, and that it is time for the passive reader to become involved in the fiction. Codes, assumptions, and pre-existing roles no longer apply, and individuals must become actively involved if they are to achieve and maintain meaningful connections. In Weinzweig's fiction, meaning is ongoing, and is continually being constructed within the reader. Reading is a performance by the reader, one that renders new meanings and interpretations at each presentation.

Notes

[1] Vincent Van Gogh was born in 1853, the son of a clergyman. As a young man, he apprenticed in art dealing, but later became a teacher. Unsuccessful in this field, he decided to become a minister. Working as an evangelist amongst the miners in the "depressed Borinage district of Belgium", Van Gogh was again unsuccessful. His next career attempt was to become a "peasant painter" like Jules Breton and Jean-Francois Millet. Financially dependent on his brother, Theo, Van Gogh took some instruction but was primarily self-taught. He moved to The Hague, and then to Paris. Here he was introduced to Impressionism, and Japanese prints. He also met two painters who would have a great influence on him: Emile Bernard and Paul Gauguin (Terrasse 858-859). Van Gogh traveled to Arles in the south of France in February 1888. Van Gogh hoped to form an artist's colony in Arles, and he invited Gauguin to join him there. Gauguin visited, but the two disagreed, and Van Gogh lapsed into mental illness (Terrasse 860). Van Gogh entered an asylum in Saint-Remy, where he continued to paint. He moved to Auvers-sur-Oise, north of Paris, and continued to paint the local village and its buildings. At this time, he also received some positive recognition from the art world for his work. However, his mental illness continued, and he shot himself on July 27, 1890, dying two days later. Van Gogh was close to his brother Theo, an art dealer. The two corresponded regularly and Van Gogh sent many of his paintings or copies of them to Theo. Theo also supported Van Gogh and lived with him at various times in his life. Throughout his painting career, Van Gogh became increasingly

interested in colour, even to the point of abandoning aspects of perspective in order to focus on his subject; colours came to have specific emotional correlatives for Van Gogh (Schapiro 93, 96). However, his goal was always the rendering of the true object that he saw in life: "feelings for things were vital to his life" (Shapiro 98).

[2] Weinzweig rarely uses descriptive passages in her work. However, in the story "The Means" intense colours and descriptions are presented.

[3] The main character's name is Shirley Kasenbowski, but she assumes the name "Lola Montez" in her travels (BB 12-13). Lola Montez was a showgirl/fortune seeker who was born Maria Dolores Eliza Rosanna Gilbert (Limerick, Ireland, 1818); she lived in India with her parents until her father died of cholera (Darling 12). Her mother was "indifferent" to her daughter, and when "Betty" was twelve, she was sent to live in England with the Nicolls family. There she grew up and entered society. Claiming Spanish origins, she renamed herself Lola (Darling 17). She became a romantically insatiable adventurer and opportunist. She had four (unsuccessful) marriages and several liaisons with well-known men, including Franz Liszt, and King Ludwig of Bavaria (Darling 225). Her occupations included streetwalker, dancer, actress, and guest lecturer; during her life, her travels included Great Britain, Europe, California, and Australia. She revised her autobiography three times, each time exaggerating the numbers of her suitors, and their devotions (Darling 229). A glamorous woman, Lola dramatically assumed whatever role was required to achieve her goals (Darling 224). All the while, she maintained the premise of her Spanish origins, even speaking with a Spanish accent (Darling 226). Despite her beauty, she had little acting or dancing ability (Darling 226). She died in 1861, a Christian convert.

Legends of Lola's notoriety and the extremes of her life are suggested in many sources, but much of this is exaggeration that Lola herself encouraged. There is little evidence of many of the charges against her. Many of her friends, lovers and acquaintances have refused to comment on their relationships with her.

[4] Considered one of the last Impressionist painters, Bonnard sought to capture the first mental image of his subject. Light and colour were the focal points of Bonnard's paintings; he considered painting as "an end in itself, with a life of its own independent of imposed subjects ..." (Phillips 563). While his landscapes presented reality, his still lifes and interiors were more like fantasy (Phillips 561). Born in 1867 in France, Pierre Bonnard studied law but eventually became a painter. In the 1890's, Bonnard was greatly influenced by the colours and lines of Japanese prints, and painted many Parisian street scenes and interiors, as well as family and neighbourhood scenes. Bonnard was close to the painter Vuillard (Terrasse 325). Bonnard was a photographer and a printmaker as well (Terrasse 326). In his later work, he often used frameworks such as "walls, doors, windows or pieces of furniture" to provide strong lines within the organization of his paintings (Terrasse 326). From 1912 to 1937 Bonnard visited Paris occasionally, and lived on the Seine and the Midi. He died in 1947.

[5] The story of the young girl's imprisonment by her father, his distrust of her, and his ransoming of her either to her mother or to a possible husband is a repeated story that also appears in the short story, "The Means"(*View* 41).

[6] Musicologist Eric Salzman characterizes jazz as a "complex performance art with a wide harmonic and melodic range and special emphasis on instrumental virtuosity" (174). Jazz is rooted in American popular music: strong rhythmic patterns from popular songs, dances and

marches were incorporated with improvisations that showed the virtuosities of the players and their instruments (Salzman 223-225). Musicologist Frank Tirro points out that "jazz is, first of all, a dance music. Further, it is not defined by what is played, but by how it is played. In other words, jazz is a way of performing that can be applied to many types of music. Third, a good jazz performance maintains the integrity of both the sound-concept of the leader of the group and the basic characteristics of the composition being played. Lastly, harmony, in jazz, is a guide rather than a goal"(149). Tirro's first two statements refer to the importance of rhythm and swing within jazz music, and to the performance aspect of jazz, especially with regards to improvisation. While free to improvise and create their own interpretation of the music, the musicians are bound to the harmonic structure and melodic renderings of the bandleader and composer. Some freedoms are admissible; however, basic jazz harmonic structures are set out by the composer, and also by the nature of jazz itself.

Rhythm is an important feature of jazz music, especially in its early form of ragtime music. Here the "ragged" or syncopated beat is characteristic (Dankworth 32): the beats are sub-divided into two, three or four sub-groups, and then particular sub-beats are accented while others are subdued. This results in stresses occurring on notes that would not normally be stressed (Dankworth 34). Off-beat accents, pickup phrases and anticipations are often used rhythmic divisions. Rhythmic patterns can change within a piece of music: one section may be slower, followed by a quicker, syncopated section. Occasionally a "break" occurs, and the soloist "moves freely in recitative style with no fixed rhythm, and the other musicians follow" (Dankworth 33).

[7] **Outline of "Tiger Rag":**

As played by Decosta, et al, Preservation Hall Jazz Band recording, and outlined by Lytellton (21).

1. Bugle call (B flat Major)
Based on old quadrille tune.
"Hold that tiger" or "Get your partners" and "Tiger Rag" themes.

2. Clarinet Response (E flat Major)
Bridge section featuring clarinet solo: breaks, flights and calls. Trumpet featured in accompanying bass.

3. Theme and Variations:

a. ensemble statement: "Hold That Tiger"
b. variation: trombone, including tailgate style and "tiger roar" slides
c. variation: vocal chorus, including "Hold that tiger – don't let him get away" and tiger roars.
d. trumpet variation
e. banjo variation, with tuba in bass
f. piano variation, with syncopated pattern in piano bass
g. Ensemble re-statement of theme, including trumpet, drums, etc.

[8] Using the given composition as a starting point, the instrumentalist is free to express him/herself rhythmically, melodically and harmonically. Other musicians may join in this spontaneous event, adding creative support to the lead instrument's improvisation. However, the improvising players are still bound to a harmonic structure set out by the composer in the original musical composition (Dankworth 16).

[9] Theme and variations is a common approach to musical composition. The composer introduced a musical idea, and then takes a portion of this idea and repeats it in the following movements. The composer can change the fragment in a variety of ways, as long as it bears some semblance to the original theme. Avril Dankworth, author of *Jazz, An Introduction to its Musical Basis*, explains: "A tune in simple two- or three-part form is played and then repeated

many times, each time with a variation which gives the original theme new interest"(16). The variation may include part of the initial theme: part of the melody, a repeated set of chords, or even just a repeated rhythm pattern. In some way, this theme is changed: perhaps other instruments may play it, or it may be played in a different key, or with a different accompaniment. In the variation, some new material may be added to the original theme; a new melody may even be introduced. Dankworth describes the concluding variation and its purpose thus: "The final variation... either captures he clear-cut spirit of the opening as a final reminder of the original, or works up to an exciting coda or summing-up of all that has gone before" (Dankworth 1). The overall effect of the theme and variations is to suggest new ideas about the initial theme and to develop its possibilities, without totally abandoning the initial idea. To the listener, the variations may be interesting, surprising and entertaining.

[10] According to a Cretan myth, Ariadne's half-brother was known as the Minotaur, a half-man, half-bull who was kept in a labyrinth. Young men were sacrificed to the Minotaur to satisfy his hunger. Prince Theseus was brought from Athens for this purpose, but Princess Ariadne fell in love with him. She agreed to lend him her lamp, sword and a ball of thread to kill the Minotaur and then escape from the maze if he would, in turn, marry her. Their plans worked, and the Minotaur was killed. The couple then led a revolt against King Minos, Ariadne's father. They escaped to Naxos, the island of Dionysus. There Theseus abandoned Ariadne, and Dionysus took pity on her and married her. From here the myth varies: "No goddess dies in as many ways as Ariadne – either by hanging, or in childbirth, or murdered by Artemis, or in maenadic trance, or by suicide ..." (Nichols 13).

[11] Because the breaks consist of N.'s thoughts and actions towards the female co-worker,

rather than the predominantly written responses of the answers, the breaks will be discussed later.

[12] Serialism is the repetition of a series or set of notes throughout a musical composition (Griffiths 163-166). The composer can then choose to repeat this series of notes in a different key or register, or to turn it around or upside down, or even "mirror" it. This gives the composer a large number of ways to present the original series, changing it slightly every time. There is not one tonal centre, but 11 relationships occurring throughout the twelve-tone series. These permutations will sound different to the listener every time, while the relationships between the initial elements (or tone-row) will remain.

In the earliest musical compositions based on serialistic procedures, the composer Arnold Schoenberg selected twelve pitches or tones and arranged these into a "tone-row" or set, without repeating any one tone. This grouping of notes was then inverted, retrograded or retrograde inverted to create more tone-rows. Four basic shapes result. Schoenberg employs these shapes of tone-rows in his musical compositions:

Prime Row – melody of twelve notes in a selected order (no notes occur more than once)

Retrograde – the prime row written backwards

Inversion – the prime row inverted or written exactly opposite in direction

Retrograde Inversion – the inversion in reverse order (the prime row written backwards and upside down)

Any of these rows may be "transposed", that is moved up or down, but maintain the same shape of the P, R, I, or RI. These are referred to as P1, R1, I1, RI1, etc. (Kostka 206-207). The prime tone-row with its three variants could thus be presented in any of the twelve registers or keys known in the tempered scale, giving rise to a total of 48 combinations of the original tone-

row. Once the notes for the prime tone-row have been selected, the composer can then vary the length and volume, expression, attack and approach to each note. Rows can overlap in the music, so that the listener may be hearing the prime and inverted rows at the same time. Analysis of twelve-tone music can be complicated, and some composers and musicologists question the value of this exercise altogether. Schoenberg's followers, Berg, Webern, and Babbitt experimented with these kinds of sequences or sets. They incorporated other aspects of music, such as rhythm, expression, and timbre into their serialism (Griffiths 167). In its later development, serial music is not necessarily twelve-tone; sometimes a series of six, ten, or any number of tones or aspects may be repeated in the row or sets (Griffiths 166). Canadian composer John Weinzweig experimented initially with twelve-tone sets; he later included aspects of baroque music, jazz and swing into his works (John Weinzweig, lecture).

[13] In his later compositions, Schoenberg experimented with the repetitions from the initial set (Sadie 164): instead of repeating the entire prime row, he also used groups of the notes to sound at the same time (i.e., note clusters). He also divided the prime tone-row into smaller segments, and then repeated these segments. Thus the composer has some liberty in choosing sounds that will produce a desired effect. The strict adherence to the initial tone-row can be varied.

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Acknowledgements: Thanks to Dr. S.R. MacGillivray for his professional advice, his patience, and support; and to Dr. Kim Fedderson for his guidance and interest. Thanks to my family, Simone and Ed, Mercedes and Frank, Michelle and Rick for their continued belief in my work. Kelly Saxberg and Ronald Harpelle provided moral support and momentum, as well as café lattes. Special thanks to Andy, Alexandra and Christopher.