

Carpenter, Victoria ORCID logoORCID:  
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Tomorrow? Manipulation of Time and Memory in the Works of  
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is no discernible pattern of dominance of any version, although the force behind the variations is clearly in control of these changes.

Another example of narrative variations within a single text is José Agustín's story 'La Tumba' (1964). This is a story of a teenage boy Gabriel, who experiences all the strife of coming of age, from sexual experimentation to an attempted suicide. The story is a first-person narrative divided into four untitled 'chapters', two of which end with a standalone paragraph; the significance of these is discussed later in this essay. The interaction between the editor and multiple narrators is best seen in several text membranes which represent a number of unfinished novels written by Gabriel (the narrator and protagonist of the story), although character manipulation and multiple transcultural influences also affect the storyline.<sup>23</sup> The clash between the two 'novels' is examined as an example of non-linear narrative.

At the end of the first 'chapter', when Gabriel finds out that Dora (his first girlfriend) has left the country to study in Germany, he considers writing a novel: 'Tras de releer mi último cuento, decidí escribir una novela.'<sup>24</sup> It is therefore reasonable to assume that what follows this statement is the first draft of this novel. At this point, Gabriel's character is split into two: before the statement Gabriel is the narrator of the text, and after the statement – as the novel starts – Gabriel becomes its protagonist, while retaining his role as a narrator. However, he is now a secondary narrator: he narrates a story written by someone else. By the end of 'chapter' 2, after the death of one of his girlfriends, Laura, Gabriel restates his intention to write a novel: 'Desde la muerte de Laura, decidí trabajar literariamente. Escribir una novela. [...] Tengo que hacer algo.'<sup>25</sup> It may seem surprising that Gabriel has forgotten starting the novel earlier in the story. However, this time he phrases his intention rather differently, indicating that he has not yet started writing. So, there are three novels in the story. The first one

<sup>23</sup> For a detailed analysis of the intratextual conflicts and character manipulation in 'La Tumba' see Carpenter 2007.

<sup>24</sup> 'Having re-read my last story, I decided to write a novel' (Agustín 1974: 32).

<sup>25</sup> 'After Laura's death I decided to do some literary work. Write a novel. [...] I have to do something' (Agustín, 57–8).

starts from the beginning of the story and is narrated by Gabriel the narrator, who then embarks upon writing another novel after Dora leaves. The second one was started after Dora's departure; this novel is delivered by Gabriel the protagonist, who assumes the narrator's role. The third novel is the text is conceived after Laura's death; the storyline comprising this novel is Gabriel's relationships with Germaine and Elsa. All three narratives are terminated when Gabriel apparently commits suicide at the end of the story. To make the analysis easier to follow these novels will be treated as separate texts and marked as follows: the first novel will be called primary text (with the view that its narrator is Gabriel the narrator); the second novel will be called secondary text (narrated by Gabriel the protagonist of the primary text); and the third novel is tertiary text (narrated by Gabriel the protagonist of the secondary text).

The tertiary text starts after Laura's death. It narrates the course and breakup of two relationships. First, Gabriel and Germaine's relationship ends after Gabriel forces Germaine into a sexual intercourse. The encounter with Germaine is the first instance of the change of his emotional character as a result of sexual experiences.

The distancing of Gabriel the narrator from Gabriel the character has become pronounced, as the narrator interferes with the narrative to offer his comments as the editor of the text. Later in this section, there is the editor's comment 'sí, exacto',<sup>26</sup> which analyses the appropriateness of the vocabulary used to create the mood of the scene.

Secondly, Gabriel and Elsa's relationship mutates from ordinary dating to a sadomasochistic experience replete with sordid clichés, such as an illegal abortion and an attempted murder during a sexual act. Once Gabriel realises that he loves Elsa, his passion becomes mundane and savage. He lists intercourses in a detached emotionless manner, finishing the scene with an allusion to physical violence – 'mi grotesca mano larga sobre su cuello cuando se durmió.'<sup>27</sup> The next sexual encounter with Elsa ends in frustration mixed with disappointment and physical discomfort: 'viendo

<sup>26</sup> 'Yes, exactly' (Agustín, 60).

<sup>27</sup> 'My grotesquely long hand on her throat as she slept' (Agustín, 61).