

11. DIALOGICS

SUMMARY

In François Rastier's interpretive semantics, dialogics is the component based on the modalization of semantic units, and includes evaluations of ontological status (real / unreal (or impossible) / possible), veridictory status (true / false), thymic value (positive / negative (or euphoric / dysphoric)), and any other modal evaluation. In this chapter we will cover only the ontological and veridictory aspects of dialogics. In ontological and veridictory dialogics, each semantic unit is assigned a veridictory status and an ontological status (corresponding to a specific world), and is situated in a universe associated with an evaluative focus (a specific character, for example). In the universe of reference, the units are modalized in accordance with the absolute truth of the text; the other universes, which may be contradicted by the universe of reference, are called universes of assumption. Consider the following story: *On Monday, Lucy and Paul buy a lottery ticket. On Tuesday, Lucy finds out that they have won, but Paul – the idiot – doesn't believe it, leaves her on the spot, and dies without giving in.* On Monday, the semantic unit *they win* is marked as 'possible' and 'true' in the universe of assumption of each of the two characters. On Tuesday, it becomes real and true in Lucy's universe, but real and false in Paul's. The universe of reference, which corresponds to the narrator's universe of assumption, is identical to Lucy's universe and different from Paul's. (Paul is wrong – the narrator describes him as an idiot.)

1. THEORY

1.1 DIALOGICS DEFINED

In François Rastier's interpretive semantics, four components make up the semantic plane of texts (the plane of content, or signifieds, as opposed to the plane of expression, or signifiers): (1) thematics (the invested content), (2) dialectics (states and processes and the actors involved in them), (3) tactics (the linear sequencing of content) and (4) dialogics. Dialogics is the semantic component that relates to modalization, which includes evaluations of ontological status (real / unreal (or impossible) / possible), veridictory status (true / false), thymic value (positive / negative (or euphoric / dysphoric)), and other modal evaluations. In this section we will focus on the ontological and veridictory aspects of dialogics¹ (for further analysis, see Rastier, 1994 and 1997; Hébert 2001 and 2003a).

1.2 ELEMENTS OF ONTOLOGICAL AND VERIDICTORY ANALYSIS

In ontological and veridictory dialogics, each belief is analyzed by means of the following elements:

- (1) A semantic unit (modalized unit), formulated as a logical proposition (for instance: *the Earth is round*).
- (2) The proposition is assigned a truth value, that is to say, a veridictory status (true or false) (for example: *the Earth is round*: true). Furthermore, this proposition is situated in one of the three worlds into which a universe may be subdivided: the actual world (what is), the counterfactual world (what is not, or cannot be), or the possible world (what could be).

NOTE: UNDECIDABLE AND UNDECIDED UNITS

A unit is said to be *decidable* with respect to a given modal category (e.g., veridiction) if it is assigned at least one status in that category (such as true); otherwise, it is said to be *undecidable* (notated # or UND). In addition, the concept *undecided* will no doubt be of some use to describe units that have not (yet) been modalized. A unit is said to be undecided (notated as \emptyset) with respect to a given modal category if it is present in a universe and it has not (yet) been evaluated in terms of that particular modal category. For example, the unit *this wine is excellent*, marked as real and true by one enologist, maybe undecided for another enologist who completely withholds judgment as long as he has not personally tasted it (this would exclude the category of possibility). The concepts decidable, undecidable and undecided can be applied, in fact, to any classification, whether modal or not.

¹ In the chapter on thymic analysis, we present a simplified version of Rastier's thymic dialogics, to which we have added some details (Hébert, 2001, pp. 140-166 and 2003a); one could also consider it as a further development of Greimasian axiological analysis (presented in the chapter on figurative, thematic and axiological analysis). To compare thymic analysis with thymic dialogics, the opposition between the evaluator (focus) and the unit being evaluated (the unit) has been replaced with the opposition between subject and object, and the concepts of universe, world, image and replica are avoided. For an example of an analysis using thymic dialogics, refer to the chapter on thymic analysis and replace the terms *subject* and *object* with *focus* (or *evaluating actor*) and *unit being evaluated* (or *actor being evaluated*), respectively.

(3) To each world there corresponds a specific ontological status, that is, its status relative to ontology, or existence. The status is assigned to a semantic unit situated in that world. Ontological status is assigned as follows: for the actual world: real (or assertoric) (for example: *the Earth is round*: true, real); for the counterfactual world: unreal or impossible (for example: the Earth is flat: true, unreal); for the possible world: possible (for example: *I will win the lottery with my ticket*: possible).

(4) A universe is associated with a specific focus (an evaluating subject), which provides the propositions and modalizes them (for instance, a character or even several characters, if they share exactly the same beliefs, or at least those selected for the analysis). A universe, then, is made up of a set of evaluated units and their respective ontological and veridictory statuses, which are associated with a specific focus, or "point of view" (such as a certain character, the narrator, or an evaluator that is implicit in the lexicon of the language (in pejorative or meliorative words and expressions)).

NOTE: FOCUS AND RELAY FOCUS

There is a distinction to be made between focus and relay focus. A relay focus conveys a unit and an accompanying evaluation that actually originates from another, hierarchically superior focus. For example, the proposition "Women are weak creatures", marked as real and true, which one finds in many texts, especially prior to the 20th century, is a cliché, a common place or *topos*, and because of this, it belongs to a system (a sociolect) that goes beyond the author or the character that conveys it. As a point of methodology, one can choose not to distinguish the focus from the relay focus.

(5) Over time, a proposition may appear in or disappear from a universe, shift to another world and thereby change its ontological status, its veridictory status, or even its formulation (*Mary is beautiful* could become *Mary is very beautiful*). In addition, a single unit can be situated simultaneously in several worlds. There are several kinds of time, and each type can form the basis for a temporal structure in the semiotic act being analyzed: time as represented in the story being told, the narrative time of the story (which can even be the reverse of the story's time), and tactical time (based on the sequencing of elements such as words, sentences and chapters). For further details on temporal segmentation, consult the chapter on the veridictory square.

1.3 THE ORIGIN OF UNITS

Any unit may be an original, an image or a replica. An image is a unit that happens to be duplicated, either within one universe (usually in another world of that universe) or in another, but is modalized in a different manner. Replicas are units that are modalized in the same manner as the units they are "copied" from in another universe. It does not seem to be an essential part of descriptive practice to specify a unit's origin. We should simply point out that any modalized unit relayed by a relay focus (see above) is a replica of the unit from the original focus.

1.4 POSSIBLE WORLDS AND THE VERIDICTORY CATEGORY

We consider semantic units situated in the possible world as having no veridictory status (true or false). (For example: It will rain tomorrow: possible). Obviously, when a proposition is possible, the reverse proposition is also possible; in order to simplify, we use only the proposition that is being emphasized. (For instance, saying that it is possible I will win also implies that it is possible I will not win; so we can simply use the first proposition by itself.) When a possible proposition is validated or invalidated, it then moves to the actual world (and/or the counterfactual world). If on Monday the weather forecaster says that it will rain Tuesday, for instance, this proposition is situated in the possible world on Monday; on Tuesday it moves to the actual world and is assigned a status of either 'true' (if it rained) or 'false' (if it didn't rain).

1.5 THE COUNTERFACTUAL WORLD, LIES AND CONFLICTS OF BELIEF

In descriptive practice, the counterfactual world essentially serves to account for the most common forms of lies and "conflicts of belief" (other kinds do exist, involving the possible world). In a conflict of belief (the reverse being a consensus of belief), the contradictor's semantic unit and its veridictory status are found in the counterfactual world.

The classic change of belief that can often follow a conflict of belief and resolve it is represented by the movement of one semantic unit and its veridictory status from the actual world to the counterfactual world. Conversely, the unit previously situated in the counterfactual world "changes residence" along with its veridictory status to the actual world. For instance, for a Christian who converts to Buddhism, the true proposition *reincarnation does not exist* moves to the counterfactual world, while the true proposition *reincarnation exists* moves to the actual world. A "conversion" may or may not be preceded by doubt, during which the belief and the counter-belief confront each other in the possible world, or by verification, whose purpose is to select one belief according to specific tests and criteria.

In the classic lie, the evaluating actor (a character, for instance) presents his counterfactual world as actual and vice-versa. For example, in Molière's *Don Juan*, the true proposition *I want to marry you* is part of Don Juan's counterfactual world, but he presents it as residing in his actual world; the false proposition *I want to marry you* is part of Don Juan's actual world, but he presents it as residing in his counterfactual world.

Let us distinguish the different phases of a consensus or conflict of belief: appearance, maintenance and resolution. The possibility of a conflict of belief arises only when there is a restrictive standard of validity, judged to be erroneous by some other agent. (A relativist will regard as equally valid all of the beliefs set in opposition by an absolutist, who will select a particular belief as *the* right one.)

A conflict of beliefs has an internal and/or external dimension, and it operates in active or passive mode. The external dimension appears only if the conflict involves more than one evaluating actor (which excludes internal conflicts within one actor). The internal dimension is always present. In its internal dimension, the presence of an active conflict is indicated by the appearance of (or emphasis on, considering that the propositions are already implicitly there) opposing propositions and their veridictory status in the counterfactual world of the actor or actors involved.

For each actor involved, a conflict moves toward consensus only if there is a total or partial conversion, which may be unilateral or reciprocal (or ironically, total and reciprocal on occasion) or if there is a movement toward a mutually nonexclusive system. If the conflict is not resolved, this means that it is integral to maintain the beliefs or the exclusive system.

There are different degrees of conflict (a disagreement on modal status or values is often more "serious" than a disagreement on the intensity of those values, if the perspective is incremental), which may be experienced by all of the involved parties, some of them, only one, or none of them. For example, Paul knows that Mary and Andrew (who do not know each other) do not have the same values, or Paul discovers that Mary is wrong, but he does not tell her.

For convenience, the analysis may leave out the counterfactual world and use only the actual and possible worlds. The distinction between these two worlds can even become optional, if we establish a modal triad with equal weight given to the ontological status "possible" and the veridictory statuses "true" and "false"; For instance, the proposition *it is raining Monday* would simply be marked as possible on Sunday, and as true or false come Tuesday. At that point, if the counterfactual world is left out, the distinction between worlds and universes becomes useless.

Up until now, we have only implicitly addressed the relations between dialogic units. We will add some details. Any two units, whether identical, similar or different, can be connected dialogically. For instance, if p is true, then q is false (if $2 + 2 = 4$ is true, then $2 + 2 = 5$ is false); if p is true in the actual world, then it is false if it is located in the counterfactual world (for example: if $2 + 2 = 4$ is true and real, then it is false if it is located in the counterfactual world). The rules of association (presupposition, implication, exclusion, compatibility, etc.) have no *a priori* validity; they depend on the genre and the text being analyzed.

1.6 UNIVERSES OF ASSUMPTION AND UNIVERSES OF REFERENCE

There are two kinds of universes: universes of assumption and universes of reference. A text's universe of reference is the universe containing the units that are accurately modalized according to the text. The universe of reference may or may not be reflected in one or more universes of assumption (the character-narrator's universe, for instance, or the omniscient narrator's). The universe of reference is what allows us to find out the "actual truth" in a text.

To give an example, in simple terms, one can say that the proposition *The Big Bad Wolf wants to devour Little Red Riding Hood* is true and real in the BBW's universe and in the story's universe of reference, from the time he meets RRH to the end of the story. Conversely, it is false and real in RRH's universe (we could also say that it is absent from her universe, since the idea never even occurs to her) until the cruel moment of awakening when the BBW reveals who he really is, a BBW.

NOTE: UNIVERSES AND AGENTS OF COMMUNICATION

It is helpful, and sometimes necessary when there is disagreement between universes, to set up separate universes for each agent of communication (an example is given below). We shall distinguish in textual terms (although most distinctions are valid for other kinds of semiotic acts) between the empirical author (the "real" flesh-and-blood author), the invented or implied author (the impression that the text gives of its author), the narrator, the narratee, the invented or implied reader (a model reader, for instance, supplied by the text), and the empirical reader.

1.7 A SIMPLE ONTOLOGICAL-VERIDICTORY ANALYSIS

Consider the following story:

Mary says that the sun rises in the West. Paul does not believe it. Andy maintains that it's possible. They decide to stay awake that night to wait for the sunrise... The victims of a collective illusion, they observe that... the sun rises in the East.

This is an analytical table describing the above story. (Possibility is included on the same level as true/false):

A simple ontological-veridictory analysis

	TIME	UNIVERSE AND FOCUS	STATUS	SEMANTIC UNIT
1	T1	Mary's U.	true	Proposition 1: The sun rises in the West
2	T1	Paul's U.	false	P1
3	T1	Andy's U.	possible	P1
4	T2	Mary's, Paul's and Andy's U.	false	P1
5	T1-T2	U. of reference	true	P1
6	T1-T2	Reader's (invented and empirical) U.	false	P1

"The victims of a collective illusion" indicates that P1 is true in the universe of reference, which is identical to the narrator's. However, in the reader's reality (implied or empirical), the sun rises in the East.

2. APPLICATIONS

2.1 APPLICATION I: DOES THE EARTH REVOLVE AROUND THE SUN?

Confronted with the inadequacies of Ptolemy's cosmological system, Nicholas Copernicus (1473-1543) initiated the shift from geocentrism to heliocentrism (the recognition of the planets' individual rotation coupled with their movement around the Sun). The proofs that were lacking in Copernicus' system were developed by Kepler (1571-1630) and Galileo (1564-1642). In 1616, Pope Paul V condemned Copernicus' ideas as being contrary to Scripture.

Proposition 1: The Earth is motionless and is located at the center of the universe.

Proposition 2: The Earth rotates and it revolves around the Sun.

A. At Time 1: The Vatican's dialogic universe, before its confrontation with Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo, is as follows:

-Actual world: P1 true, P2 irrelevant (P1 is a given).

B. At Time 2: Galileo's dialogic universe is configured in the following way:

-Actual world: P1 false, P2 true.

-Counterfactual world (which reflects the actual universe of the contradictors, the universe of the popes and the church): P1 true, P2 false.

C. At Time 3: Condemned, Galileo recants his theory. After his retraction, however, he is supposed to have muttered: *"Eppur, si muove!"* ("And yet, it does move!"). In other words, he presented his counterfactual world as actual (one of the "lie" scenarios) to the Inquisition. The structure of his dialogic worlds did not actually change, then, compared with time 2 (see point B).

D. At Times 2 and 3: The official position² of the Vatican – and therefore of the Church – during and after Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo, up until John-Paul II, was as follows:

-Actual world: P1: true, P2 false.

-Counterfactual world (reflects the actual universe of the heliocentric contradictors): P1: false, P2: true.

E. At Time 4: Pope John-Paul II (and his successors, we presume!) officially accepts Copernicus' and Galileo's position. His dialogic universe, and that of the Church, was configured thusly:

² One would hope that there were disagreements about this matter between the "official" universe of several popes and their "unofficial" universe. The process of reversing the two worlds (presenting the actual world as counterfactual and vice versa) entails a false participation in the contradictors' universe, since the falsified universe becomes identical to that of the contradictors, at least with regard to the propositions at issue. The example under discussion allows us to discern other elements for a typology of universes and focuses, since in calling forth a sort of model believer whom the "empirical", "real" believers must imitate, it establishes an opposition between empirical focuses (or evaluators) and model focuses, between empirical universes and model universes.

- Actual world: P1 false, P2 true.
- Counterfactual world: P1 true, P2 false.

There were and are other possible positions, such as:

F. At Time 2: Contemporary thinkers whose views were shaken by Galileo's arguments, but who were not totally convinced or those who were influenced by the skeptics would have a dialogic universe structured in this way:

- Possible world: P2 (or P1 possibly false and P2 possibly true).

Our complete analysis is summarized in the following table.

An ontological-veridictory analysis

	TIME	UNIVERSE AND FOCUS	WORLD	VERIDICTORY STATUS	SEMANTIC UNIT
1	T2-T3	Galileo's U.	actual	true	P2: The Earth rotates and revolves around the Sun.
2				false	P1: The Earth is motionless and is located at the center of the universe
3			counterfactual	false	P2
4				true	P1
5	T3	Galileo's U. (he is lying)	actual	false	P2
6				true	P1
7			counterfactual	true	P2
8				false	P1
9	T1	The popes' U.	actual	true	P1
10					(P2 is absent from this universe)
11	T2-T3	The popes' U.	actual	false	P2
12				true	P1
13			counterfactual	true	P2
14				false	P1
15	T4	U. of John-Paul II	actual	true	P2
16				false	P1
17			counterfactual	false	P2
18				true	P1
19	T2	U. of open-minded people	possible		P2 (or P1 false, P2 true)

The analysis in the table below is a simplified one. It lists only proposition 1 (since the veridictory statuses of the two propositions are always opposite, anyway) and it does not include the distinction between the worlds (it is understood that anything marked as true or false is part of the actual world, and anything marked as possible resides in the possible world). If we want to leave out proposition 2, we are obliged to put a veridictory status (false, in this instance) for the proposition that is in the possible world.

A simplified ontological-veridictory analysis

	TIME	UNIVERSE AND FOCUS	STATUS	SEMANTIC UNIT
1	T2-T3	Galileo's U.	false	P1: The Earth is motionless and is located at the center of the universe
2	T3	Galileo's U. (he is lying)	true	P1
3	T1-T3	The popes' U.	true	P1
4	T4	U. of John-Paul II	false	P1
5	T2	U. of open-minded people	false (possible)	P1

2.2 APPLICATION II: "WHICH IS THE TRUE ONE?" BY CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

* * *

"Which Is the True One?"
Baudelaire, *The Parisian Prowler*

I met a certain Benedicta, who filled the atmosphere with the ideal, and whose eyes spread the desire for grandeur, beauty, fame, and everything which makes us believe in immortality.

But that miraculous girl was too beautiful to live a long time. So she died a few days after I had made her acquaintance, and it is I myself who buried her, one day when spring was shaking its censer even into the cemeteries. It is I who buried her, tightly sealed into a coffin made of aromatic and rot-proof wood like Indian chests.

And since my eyes were fastened on the place where my treasure was buried, all of a sudden I saw a little person who amazingly resembled the deceased, and who, stamping the fresh soil with a hysterical and weird violence, was saying with bursts of laughter, "It is I, the true *Benedicta*! It is I, a first-class ruffian! And to punish your madness and your blindness, you will love me as I am!"

But I was furious, and answered, "No! No! No!" And to emphasize my refusal more, I stamped the ground so violently that my leg sank up to the knee in the recent burial place and so, like a trapped wolf, I remain fettered, perhaps forever, to the grave of the ideal.

* * *

The two dialogic units that we have selected from this prose poem by Baudelaire are the following:

P1: *B1 is Benedicta*;

P2: *B2 is Benedicta*;

If one presumes the text's mimetic mode to be realistic, then there is a relation of mutual exclusion between the two propositions: they cannot both be true or false at the same time³.

NOTE: FORMULATING THE PROPOSITIONS

Our central proposition is formulated in terms of existence rather than in terms of truth. This allows us to keep the same kind of proposition for all of the text's time intervals. A proposition like *B1 is the real Benedicta* actually has no relevance, strictly speaking, before time T6. Until then, it is not part of the characters' universes (although one can include it in hindsight). Even formulated as they are, our propositions are not always completely relevant, except in hindsight, since there is an assumption when we speak of *B1* that we know about the existence of *B2*.

We have four universes that relate to the propositions we have selected:

U I : The universe of *I*;

UN I : The universe of the narrator *I*;

The narrative's past tense is what justifies separating *I* into two characters, each one associated with a universe. As a general rule, narrating in the first person and the past tense allows for dialogic discord between the narrator and the narrator as he presents himself in the past⁴.

U B2: The universe of *B2* (the living *Benedicta*);

UR: The text's universe of reference.

We will make use of two of the three kinds of worlds, and the ontological categories defining them:

AW: The actual world; status: assertoric (real);

CFW: The counterfactual world, status: unreal or impossible.

We have identified eight textual time intervals:

T1 = *I* has not yet met *Benedicta* 1;

T2 = *I* meets *Benedicta* 1;

T3 = *I* keeps company briefly with *Benedicta* 1;

T4 = *Benedicta* 1 dies;

T5 = *I* buries *Benedicta* 1;

T6 = *Benedicta* 2 accosts *I* and states her propositions;

T7 = *I* replies and is caught in the grave;

T8 = *I* "remains" (changing to the present indicative) in that state, "perhaps forever".

³ In fact, the presence of an isotopy, "miraculous", discloses a mimetic mode that is not realistic. So the opposing propositions are not mutually exclusive: the two people can both be *Benedicta*. The second *Benedicta* could also be some form in which the first survived: Did they not resemble each other "*singulièrement*" [amazingly]? – a word full of associations, occurring as it does in a text on duality. The character seems to be pre-designed to elude death: This "miraculous" girl who created the desire for "everything which makes us believe in immortality" is buried in a coffin of "rot-proof" wood, which no doubt "explains" why the narrator is trapped, "perhaps forever".

⁴ In the main interpretation that we have worked out, *B2* exists before her encounter with *I*, and her universe contains the proposition *B2 is Benedicta*, which is uncontested at that point. In the "miraculous" interpretation that we touch upon, as the continuance of *B1*, *B2* cannot inhabit a temporal space prior to the death or burial of *B1*.

At the beginning of the text, *I* believes that *B1 is Benedicta* is true. The absence of a conflict of belief is signalled by the absence of opposing propositions in his counterfactual world; or at least they are not salient. The irruption of the second *Benedicta* tests the firmness of his belief. The counterfactual propositions and their veridictory statuses correspond to the propositions located in the actual world of the other character. Thus, we have two conflicting hypotheses: *B1 is Benedicta* is evaluated as a true hypothesis by *I*, and *B2 is Benedicta* is submitted and held as a true proposition by *B2* (and there is nothing to indicate that she is employing deception to present her counterfactual world as actual).

Who is right? Is someone right or wrong? In other words, what does the universe of reference contain? Two likely answers are directly opposed: the first leans toward the undecidable; the other posits the second *Benedicta* as the real one, and sets us in pursuit of another question: Does *I* change his mind, and if so, to undecidability or to the opposing hypothesis? The second solution, which requires a more demanding interpretive trajectory, is of particular interest, and we will attempt to substantiate it⁵.

In order to demonstrate the plausibility of the second hypothesis, it may help to review some of the elements of Baudelaire's idiolect⁶. We know that one of the features of Baudelarian aesthetics is to *pervert* the Platonic triad of truth, goodness and beauty by elevating falseness, evil, and sometimes ugliness (in the ordinary meaning of the word: for instance, a carcass) by correlating them, or by subjugating the first two to the primacy of beauty (in the highest meaning of the word). In this version of Pancalism, beauty generally originates from falseness and evil; it is the main escape route from *spleen* and somehow leads to a higher truth. In the text we are analyzing, the narrator, confronted with two apparently identical women, wonders which one is the real one: the ideal one, who is dead, or the one who is still alive and full of faults? Baudelaire's habit of glorifying falseness and his disparagement of the real woman, the natural one, support the second hypothesis. The false one is the perfect woman, the ephemeral, dazzling one, who is dead precisely because, like the poet (the albatross in Baudelaire's poem), she was a misfit in this too-real, prosaic, pernicious world (a Christian, and no doubt symbolist, *topos*). Although it is always possible to find tokens that contradict Baudelaire's type, and although some features of his idiolect point in a different direction ("Baudelarian doubt", for instance), we must conclude that the idiolect supports the second hypothesis.

We will now address the corollary issue. There are a few elements pointing to the plausibility of *I*'s conversion to the second hypothesis. First, the veridictory status of the first hypothesis in *I*'s universe is of low intensity⁷. *I* has only a limited acquaintance with *Benedicta*, whom he knew for just a few days. He speaks about a *certain* *Benedicta* – a way of speaking doubtfully, but by using a term that also is a marker for certainty. Then, at the end of the text, the narrator manifests values of the Baudelairian idiolect by taking them on, supporting the second interpretation, as we have just described: *I remain fettered, perhaps forever, to the grave of the ideal [la fosse de l'idéal]*. Moreover, a homonymic relation seemingly delivers a reply: *Benedicta 1 is the fausse de l'idéal [the false of the ideal]*⁸. If this is actually the case, does the conversion occur before the character *I* "merges" with the narrator *I* (time 8); in other words, does it apply just to the narrator *I*? In our opinion, the conversion involves both *I*'s, meaning that it occurs before the narrative fusion, probably during *I*'s fit of rage. His anger, in this case, would indicate not so much his certainty about being right as his vexation over beliefs that are not so. However, there is nothing to indicate that *B2* notices *I*'s conversion. In conclusion, *I* moves from error to truth, relative to the (final) reference universe. The effect of this conversion is to exchange propositions between the actual world and the counterfactual world (or to exchange veridictory statuses, if you prefer). Other than the origin of the

⁵ An interpretation that incorporates undecidability poses more difficulties than one would think: If, for instance, the universe of reference is concerned with undecidability, then does the same apply to the assumptive universes of the actor *I* and the narrator *I*?

⁶ An idiolect may be identified by doing a comparative analysis of other works by the same author and the sociolects from which the idiolect separated (see the chapter on semic analysis). We can only briefly sketch out a comparative analysis of the author's works. Another prose poem by Baudelaire deals with the same theme: "The Counterfeit Coin". The narrator tells how his friend, after carefully sorting through his change, gives a counterfeit coin to a beggar in an appearance of generosity. After his friend sets him straight, the narrator begins to imagine the extraordinary possibilities opened up by this gesture: the beggar could receive real coins in exchange for the counterfeit one, or end up in jail... The narrator would have forgiven his friend for wanting to add some spice to the beggar's life, but he finally realizes that his small-minded friend was trying to scrimp on a good deed. Veridiction is strongly thematized in both of these texts through their emphasis on falseness, and in both cases the narrator believes in an object valued as euphoric, which is then revealed to be false. But the title of the first poem is a question and its veridictory status is disputable; the title of the second one is affirmative, and its veridictory status is clear. In the first case the valued object is false; in the second it is valued because it is false. In the prose poem "Windows", the veridictory status is considered to be negligible, but notice that the exhilarating "legend" constructed by the narrator is very likely false: "Perhaps you will ask, "Are you sure that legend is the true one?" Does it matter what the reality located outside of me might be, if it has helped me to live, to feel that I am and *what I am*?" Some other elements in the same collection of poems deserve closer attention than space allows: the title "The Double Room", the cortège of men, each carrying a Chimera ("To Each His Chimera"), the "little savage [...] so perfectly resembling the first that you could take him for his twin brother" (in "The Cake"), "the false goddess" (in "The Temptations"), the reflections on illusion in "The Rope", and others still.

⁷ We could incorporate the attenuation of veridictory status in our analysis by assigning an incremental veridictory status ($\pm T$) to the proposition *B1 is Benedicta*, or a more far-reaching approach would be to mark it as very true in a possible world, or even as slightly undecidable in the actual world. The attenuation of veridictory status does not necessarily come from *I*; we could also consider it as a part of the universe of narration: The narrator lets a hint of suspicion creep through in hindsight, and in keeping with the standards for plausibility, the time intervals prior to the conversion are peppered with indices (for example, the expression "a certain *Benedicta*").

⁸ In placing the homonymic wordplay in final position tactically, the poem follows a general standard: a text usually delivers the answer to the question under debate (which in this case appears in the title) somewhere near the end. In the first edition of the text (*Le Boulevard*, June 14, 1863), "fosse" was replaced with "folie" ["madness"], but Pichois (Baudelaire, 1975, p. 1344) wonders if this was a typographical error.

units, then, the universe of reference is identical to the assumptive universes of B2, the narrator *I*, and the actor *I* after his conversion.

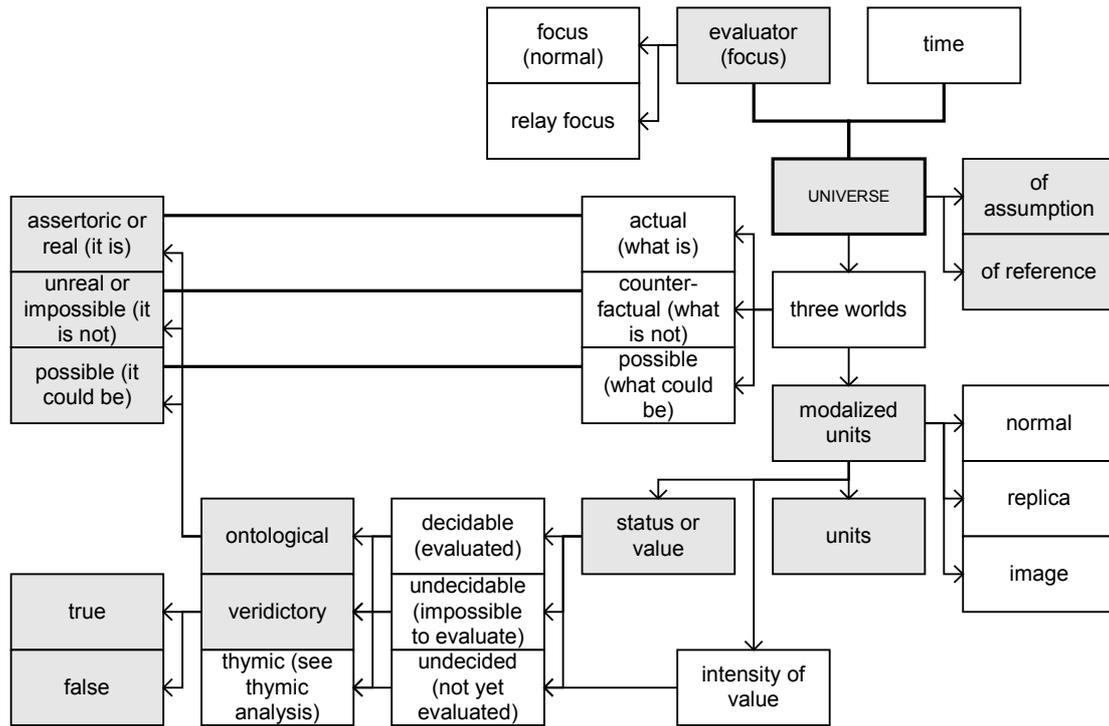
The following table illustrates the (simplified) dialogic configuration of the two propositions in "Which Is the True One?". In it, we show only the interpretation that we have analyzed (*B2 is the true one*; both *I*'s are in agreement). And even for this interpretation, we have not indexed every occurrence of each proposition or the potential propositions in the possible worlds.

Two propositions in "Which Is the True One?"

	TIME	UNIVERSE	WORLD	VERIDICTORY STATUS	PROPOSITION
1	T2-T5	U <i>I</i>	AW	T	B1 is Benedicta
2	T6-T8	U <i>I</i>	AW	T	B2 is Benedicta
3	T6-T8	U <i>I</i>	AW	F	B1 is Benedicta
4	T6-T8	U <i>I</i>	CFW	T	B1 is Benedicta
5	T6-T8	U <i>I</i>	CFW	F	B2 is Benedicta
6	T6-T8	U B2	AW	T	B2 is Benedicta
7	T6-T8	U B2	AW	F	B1 is Benedicta
8	T6-T8	U B2	CFW	T	B1 is Benedicta
9	T6-T8	U B2	CFW	F	B2 is Benedicta
10		UR	AW	T	B2 is Benedicta
11		UR	AW	F	B1 is Benedicta
12		UR	CFW	T	B1 is Benedicta
13		UR	CFW	F	B2 is Benedicta

3. SUMMARY DIAGRAM

Summary diagram of ontology and veridiction in dialogics and thymic dialogics



LEGEND

1. Vertical arrows: components (for ex., a universe is broken down into (three) worlds)
2. Horizontal arrows: classification (for ex., a world is classified as a factual, counterfactual or possible world)
3. Bold-face link with no arrow: other relation

The results of the analysis depend on the time and the observer whose point of view is being reported.