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Presuppositions in Reading Literary Writing

A Pro Gradu Thesis
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Tutkielman tarkoituksena on tarkastella presuppositio-käsitteen
soveltumista kirjallisen aineiston tulkitsemiseen. Teorian kehittelyn li-
säksi aineisto koostuu sovellutusosiosta, jossa Maxine Hong Kingstonin
omaelämäkerrallista teosta The Woman Warrior (1976) tulkitaan
presupposition näkökulmasta. Tutkielmassa presuppositiota tarkastel-
laan sekä lingvistisenä käsitteenä että laajemmassa kulttuurisessa mer-
kityksessä.
Teoriaosiossa käydään läpi lingvistisen presupposition käsitteitä ja esi-
tellään ja kehitetään kirjallisuuden tulkintaa varten teoriaa
presuppositiopooleista. Uudelleenkehittelyn keskeiseksi teemaksi nou-
see kontekstin merkitys lukijan ja tekstin välisessä suhteessa.
Teoriaosiossa lausetason lingvistisistä presuppositioista edetään laa-
jemman tason ideologisiin ja kulttuurisiin presuppositioihin ja niiden
merkitykseen tekstin hypoteettisessa optimaalisessa tulkinnassa.
Analyysiosio koostuu kahdesta vaiheesta. Ensimmäisessä osiossa teok-
sen toisen luvun ensimmäiseen kappaleeseen sovelletaan lausetason
lingvistisiä presuppositioita havainnoimaan temaattisesti merkittäviä
ideologisia ja kulttuurisia käsitteitä. Analyysiosion toisessa vaiheessa
keskitytään koko teoksen temaattisesti merkittäviin intertekstuaalisiin
ja ideologis-kulttuurisiin kysymyksiin.
Tutkielmassa ilmenee, että presuppositiota voidaan käyttää sekä
suppeammassa lingvistisessä merkityksessä että laajemmassa ideolo-
gisia ja kulttuurisia käsitteitä tarkoittavassa merkityksessä kirjallisen
tekstin tulkitsemiseen, joskin muutamia soveltamisongelmia myös il-
menee. Lingvistisen presupposition ongelmana on rakenteiden teoreet-
tinen epäselvyys. Koska lingvistisen presupposition käsitteeseen sisäl-
tyy monenlaisia toisistaan poikkeavia lauserakenteita ja kieliopillisia
muotoja, joita ei voi yhtenäisesti määritellä, on niiden käyttö teksti-
tulkinnassa vaativaa. Tutkielmassa käyttö onnistui, koska etsittiin lause-
rakenteita ja muotoja, jotka kytkeytyivät teoksen teemaan. Ideologis-
ten ja kulttuuristen kysymysten luokittelu asettaa presupposition käy-
tölle omat määrittelyvaikeutensa.

Asiasanat: presupposition pools, cultural presuppositions, genre, text
analysis, discourse analysis

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

Discourse is a communicative event that involves language use in context. Presupposition, on the other hand, has been conventionally regarded as occurring in sentences and propositions. In the field of logic, presupposition has been explained in terms of valid inferences and truth values, and in semantics in terms of relations between sentences. A variety of sentence structure phenomena has been isolated by linguists and philosophers and explained in terms of logical and semantic relations and truth values.

During the 60s and 70s the notion of presupposition was of interest in many linguistic and philosophical studies, and subject to various definitions. The concept of presupposition was combined with certain syntactic forms and processes, and there were a lot of studies identifying linguistic elements that give rise to presuppositions. Most definitions of presupposition were based on the idea from logic that presuppositions must be true for the sentence in question to have a truth value. Even if pragmatic issues, such as the context and speakers were connected with presupposition, the basis was mainly sentences in isolation. Attempts have also been made to explain linguistic presupposition in terms of speech acts and implicature but neither notion seems flexible enough to explain the multitude of different phenomena of linguistic presupposition and their use in practice.

Linguistic presupposition has been completely rejected in many discourse studies as an otiose notion, perhaps because of the problems of sentence isolation. During the 80s there were some attempts to combine presupposition and discourse treatments, but somewhat unsuccessfully. The sentence isolation heritage has been very strong. Most of the theoretical problems of presupposition have concerned

presuppositional behaviour in complex sentences, and various solutions to this problem of presupposition projection have been offered. The differences between the managements of presupposition-assertion, given-new, topic-comment, and background-foreground have also been discussed, unfortunately most from a sentential viewpoint. Those who have noticed the problems of sentence isolation have totally rejected the theoretical notion of linguistic presupposition (e.g. Werth, 1989).

However, presupposition has also been used in the fields of linguistic pragmatics, semiotics, and intercultural studies in connection with language users' knowledge of the world. It has been a cover term to explain certain implicit elements in speech and writing. The scope of presupposition has broadened from grammatical constructions in sentences to almost any implicit element in discourse that is assumed to be true or shared by the conversation participants. In linguistic pragmatics, presupposition has been defined in terms of background knowledge of the speaker and hearer (Soames 1982), and in semiotics in terms of world knowledge structures the writer should share with the possible reader for the text to be understandable (Eco 1984). Presupposition has also been used to describe cultural differences in communication. Cultural presuppositions are general assumptions about the world shared by language users who share a cultural surrounding.(Strevens 1987, Gonzales 1987).

The following is an attempt to combine the different uses of the concept of presupposition in analysing literary discourse. Maxine Hong Kingston's autobiographic *The Woman Warrior; A Girlhood Among Ghosts* (1976) is interpreted. The main aim is to find out if presupposition, even linguistic presupposition, can assist in identifying a communication bond between the sender and the receiver of this literary message. For this purpose, the notion of presupposition pools (Venneman 1975,

Brown and Yule 1983) is used and redeveloped. A presupposition pool is here redefined as the common ground, the hypothetical shared knowledge, assumption, and precondition level where the text at any point of reading finds its abstract and optimal interpretation and the communication purpose gets fulfilled. A shared presupposition pool contains information from previous parts of the text, and also information from outside the text including world knowledge structures.

Interpretation involves that readers use their presupposition pools which contain the readers' knowledge of the language and knowledge, beliefs, and experience of the world. An interpretation failure can be caused because the reader does not know enough about the language, but misinterpretations and misconceptions are often caused by different circumstances that produce the readers' experience about the world and the expectations and assumptions that the reader has due to these experiences. The communication purpose of a literary writing is not fulfilled because of different social, political, and cultural contexts.

In this thesis it is suggested that a communication bond between a literary text and its reader is established only if the linguistic and intertextual form of the writing is combined with the historical, social, political, and cultural context from which the text rises. It is also suggested that the grammatical constructions and pragmatic conditions called linguistic presuppositions are part of the presupposition pool for the natural reason that they are part of the language use. They can be regarded as the writer's linguistic devices to form the text and stage information in it. Linguistic presuppositions can be connected with implicit information in discourses, and they can be used for the understanding of what is conveyed implicitly.

The theory section uses concepts from linguistics, cognitive psychology, stylistics, semiotics, and intercultural studies to construct

components of the presupposition pool. The discussion on linguistic presupposition presented in section 2.1 concentrates on introducing the syntactic processes and grammatical constructions in question, and some problems of logical, semantic, and pragmatic presupposition are included. Presupposition pools are presented and reformed in section 2.2. The redefinition concerns issues of the context, the topic, the communication event, and background knowledge. Section 2.3 discusses the relationship between text production and interpretation. The focus is on the role of the reader. A theory of the role of the reader in interpretation offered by Eco (1984) is discussed in connection with the genre and ideological assumptions. Section 2.4 presents the theoretical framework of cultural presuppositions suggested by Strevens (1987). Dimensions of cultural differences presented by Gudykunst (1994) are also included. The discussion in chapter 3 consists of problems and definitions relating to the issues discussed in previous parts. Chapter 3 also provides a basic framework for the analysis.

The analysis presented in chapter 4 is an attempt to use the concept of presupposition in practice. The purpose is to find out if presupposition, even linguistic presupposition, can be used as a device to analyse autobiographical writing and to find out a communication bond between the writer and the reader. It is suggested that a communication bond can be identified which is linguistic and intertextual, as well as ideological and cultural. *The Woman Warrior* is interpreted in the light of expressed ideologies and culture, and the information presentation supporting the alleged communicative purposes of the text.

The analysis consists of two phases moving from linguistic items in one passage to broader levels of communication and to the

text as a whole. First, one passage of Th*e Woman Warrior* is analysed to find out how a presupposition pool is constructed in the passage by linguistic means and what ideological and cultural items can be found in the structure of the passage. The second phase discusses the text as a literary form including strategies used in the book to represent an experienced past. A connection is identified between genre and the general ideology in the text and the text is viewed as a political medium producing and assuming ideological and cultural communication. Basic issues regarding the text will be included in the analysis.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 LINGUISTIC PRESUPPOSITION

During the 70s presupposition was a widely discussed phenomenon within linguistic semantics and pragmatics. Yet quite a variety of issues discussed under the notion of presupposition have been unsatisfactory in explaining the nature of presupposition in general, and its nature in discourse in particular. There seems to be no unique theory of presupposition. At times it has been explained in terms of logical and semantic relations, at times in terms of speaker assumptions, but the distinction between different concepts and notions is unclear and even contradictory. For example, there is no unity whether presupposition should be treated as occurring at sentence level; as a semantic phenomenon involving truth and falsity, or as a pragmatic phenomenon involving speakers, hearers, and contexts. The main issue, which has influenced most of the linguistic discus-

sions on the subject, has been whether presupposition should be semantically or pragmatically defined, or, broadly, whether it has to do with language structure or language use.

2.1.1 LOGICAL AND SEMANTIC PRESUPPOSITION

In semantics, presupposition has been defined in terms of word and sentence meaning, and in the field of logic in terms of linguistic reference (denotation) and truth values in language. It is sentences and propositions that logically presuppose. In logic, all sentences, statements, and propositions are assumed to be either true or false (e.g. Russell, 1912 (1967: 71, 72). The notion of logical presupposition is a condition for a sentence to have a truth-value. The test for finding a logical and semantic presupposition is constancy under negation. (Levison 1983: 172, Renkema 1993: 154). The negation test, as shown in the following example has conventionally been regarded as the main method to identify presuppositions on the level of syntax.

Example (1)

Susan's tulips are / are not flowers.

Both the positive and the negative sentence have the same presupposition:

Susan has tulips.

Example (1) represents existential presuppositions which can be considered very frequent in English (Allwood et al 1977: 150) and other languages. The origin of existential presuppositions dates back to the philosopher Bertrand Russell's (1905) discussion of definite descriptions. Existential presuppositions can be derived from proper names, or nominal constructions which have a definite article, a possessive pronoun, or some other form of defining. (e.g. Renkema 1992:157, Kempson 1975:47, van der Sandt 1988:9). The first sen-

tence under discussion in connection with existential presuppositions, was the following:

Example (2)

The King of France is/ is not bald.

Presupposes: *There is a King of France.*

The presupposition of the sentence was found logical but false, because France was (is) a republic. Since Russell's discussion the sentence has been used as an example in the variety of discussions of presupposition among philosophers and logicians. As a conclusion of some of the discussions it was found out that in certain historical and fictional contexts where France is a kingdom, the sentence can be considered true. Therefore it was discovered that the context of a sentence is essential, and the truth and falsity of a sentence and its presupposition should be seen relative to the context. (Kempson 1975: 47,48).

Example (3) represents another type of presupposition where the presuppositional behaviour is due to a so-called factive predicate. Factive predicates, such as *regret, fail, be strange that, be glad that, know, etc.* have been said to express the truth of their complement (Levinson 1983: 181, Allwood et al 1977: 150). Yet, again, truth is relative to the context, and also to the speaker. Example (3)

Susan regrets/does not regret buying flowers.

Presupposes: *Susan bought flowers.*

Apart from the definites and factives, other sentence structure phenomena have also been introduced as carrying presuppositions. These include clefts, pseudo clefts, verbs referring to a change of state, implication, or judging, and iteratives, to name the most frequent ones. They all have the common feature that they survive the negation test, as will be seen in the following examples (4) - (9)

(4) Cleft: *It was / wasn't Mark who bought the phone.*

Presupposes *Someone bought the phone.*

(5) Pseudo-cleft: *What Mary lost / didn't lose was her job.* Presupposes *Mary lost something.*

(6) Change of state verbs: *Lisa stopped /didn't stop smoking.* Presupposes *Lisa had smoked before. (*Other such verbs: *start, begin, go on, continue, come, go, arrive,* etc.)

(7) Implicative verbs: *David managed / didn't manage to close the window.* Presupposes *David tried to close the window* (other such verbs *forget, avoid, happen to,* etc.)

(8) Verbs of judging: *Martha accused /didn't accuse Mary for buying the piano.* Presupposes: *Buying the piano was not a good idea according to Martha.* (also e.g. *critisize)*

(9) Iteratives: *My mother didn't come again.* Presupposes: *My mother came before.*(also e.g. *repeat, to come back, some other time,* etc.)

These linguistic phenomena along with temporal clauses, non-restrictive relative clauses, comparisons and contrasts, some questions, counterfactual conditionals and intonation have been identified by linguists to be the sources of presupposition.(e.g. Levinson 1983: 181 - 185, van der Sandt 1988: 9). Though it is not certain that they all belong to the same semantic category, they have the common feature that they embed information which is assumed to be true. They also have the feature that they keep their presuppositions when the sentence in question is negated. These sentential processes together provide a huge amount of frequently used phenomena in the English language.

In semantics, the negation test has been used to distinguish presupposition from entailment, which is another term taken from the field of logic. Entailment is a relation between sentences and defined in terms of truth as well. In an entailment relation, the truth of the second sen-

tence follows from the truth of the first. (Kempson 1975: 48). Entailment relations do not survive negation. In the following examples (10 a and 10 b), 10 b is an entailment of 10 b:

(10 a) *Susan bought tulips.*

(10 b) *Susan bought flowers.*

The entailment relation need not be true if the original claim is denied. If Susan didn't buy tulips she could still have bought flowers. So the distinction between entailment relations and presuppositional relations seems rather clear though there have been other suggestions, too. Semantic presuppositions have also been regarded as entailments, as indeed was Russell's original claim of the relation in definite descriptions. Entailment relations have been used to understand logical consequences between sentences and propositions and they have been defined in terms of valid rules of inferences (Hurford & Heasley 1983:107), and semantic presupposition has been defined in terms of a slightly different kind of inference, as can be seen in the following definitions (11) and (12). (Levinson 1983: 175, 200).

(11) Entailment: a proposition p semantically entails a proposition q if in all situations where p is true, q is also true.

(12) Semantic presupposition: a proposition p semantically presupposes a proposition q if in all situations where p is true, q is also true and in all situations where p is false, q is true.

Neither relation, however, is relevant to be used in explaining what happens in the interpretation of a literary discourse. The concepts can be used to explain logical relations between sentences, statements, and propositions, but it is difficult to use the notions in analysing discourse because they express phenomena which have been isolated from their contexts, and their users. The negation test seems to be inadequate because there is no need to negate sentences and thus iso-

late them from their context in order to establish meaning. Negation also causes an additional test problem in negative environments, as noticed by e.g. Brown and Yule (1984: 30). A further problem concerning propositional analysis is that it is not certain that in discourses propositions need to be the basis of analysis, since it is not certain that human thought is stored in propositions.

Since meaning varies from context to context, it has been difficult to define presupposition based on meaning with truth conditions alone. It is impossible to know the meaning of the use of a sentencial process such as cleft if the sentence is isolated from its original context. Much more implicit information can be connected with a cleft than is included in an isolated presupposition. However, these sentencial processes also seem to have functions in discourses and they can be used to contribute to successful communication, as will be noticed later in this thesis.

At present, there seems to be no theory that combines presupposition and semantics with relevant discourse issues. Perhaps linguistic presupposition could be defined in some complex terms involving some interaction of semantics and pragmatics, as has been proposed by Levinson (1983:225), but for present purposes, for interpreting literary writings, the relevance of truth-functional semantic presupposition is questionable. When we interpret texts we do not necessarily assign truth-values to sentences and propositions. But we use our experience concerning what we as language users and interpreters in a special cultural surrounding assume to be true, or rather assume to take for granted. Such presupposing need not have anything to do with valid inferences and logical relations between statements. Some readers may use the polarized entities of truth and falsity in broader levels in their interpretation, because they assume that there are truths in this world and the rest is false. The seeking of truth, according to Strevens

(1987:175) is a cultural presupposition, i.e. something we take for granted, used in this part of the world and embedded in for instance the English language. Attention will now be turned to pragmatics.

2.1.2 PRAGMATIC PRESUPPOSITION

Whether pragmatics is explained in terms of speaker relations, or more broadly as a social interaction between conversation partners, it is reflected in the definition of pragmatic presupposition. Moreover, some pragmatists, e.g. Levinson (1983:226) consider presupposition an essential part of pragmatics, others, e.g. Leech (1983:90) offer to explain some related matters, e.g. the use of definite descriptions, in terms of conversation principles and cooperation, and do not include the notion of presupposition within the scope of pragmatics. In the field of pragmatics, there is no unity of the notion of presupposition, either.

Very broadly, a pragmatic presupposition means something that is, on the part of the speaker, believed or taken for granted in advance. However, there are several more detailed definitions. A pragmatic presupposition has been defined in terms of the speaker's beliefs about the speech context (Lakoff 1971), in terms of felicity conditions of certain speech acts and their appropriateness in context (Keenan 1971, Fillmore 1971), or in terms of background information shared by speaker and hearer (Jackendorf 1972, Soames 1982). Soames (1982:185) regards matters of common knowledge as presuppositions, too. The notion of presupposition can further be defined in Stalnaker's (1978:321) terms as "taken by the speaker to be the common ground of the participants in the conversation."

The definitions of pragmatic presupposition in terms of speech acts have been most unsatisfactory because of the general problems of

speech act theories. The felicity conditions of speech acts can be seen as closely related to truth-conditions. It is possible to see truth as a kind of felicity condition, so that one of the conditions for a declarative sentence to be felicitous is truth or sincerity. (Fauconnier, 1985: 187, Bates 1975: 22,25). In this respect speech acts cannot relevantly explain presupposition in pragmatics. The problems relating to speech acts and their felicity conditions have been discussed by e.g. Levinson (1983:278) and Brown and Yule (1983:233). The speech acts of isolated sentences can be considered as limited as all other explanations of isolated sentences. Even though speech acts have been connected with units larger than sentences, and it has been noticed that it is possible to perform several acts and functions at the same time, the main problem of describing language on the basis of speech acts remains. This is that the conventional classification into requests, promises, warnings, etc. is very limited, and actually expresses culturally-based assumptions of those making the classification.

Most of the pragmatic definitions take into account the speaker and the context, both of which seem to be essential in producing information to discourses. In contrast with semantic explanations that are based on truth values, pragmatic presupposition counts meaning in relation to the beliefs of the speaker and contextual factors. Levinson (1983:177) describes pragmatic presupposition as a relation between the speaker and the appropriateness of the sentence in a context. But in this respect a pragmatic definition of presupposition is also limited. Though it can explain the use of any of the sentential processes above, a speaker/writer-oriented presupposition that describes the use of sentences in contexts cannot be enough for the interpretation of literary writings. The involvement of the hearer's/reader's presuppositions is essential and this involvement affects both text production and inter-

pretation. In this respect presupposition can be regarded as having something to do with our knowledge on the basis of which we form assumptions and take something for granted.

Presupposition has also been connected with inferencing. Inferencing describes the way we as readers in a certain cultural area derive implicit information in discourses (e.g. Renkema 1993:161). During the process of reading we are assumed to make inferences, and these inferences are influenced by our prior knowledge. Though all such inferences are not necessarily presuppositional, there is a variety of implicit information in discourses that is assumed to be true, or taken for granted, or assumed to be taken for granted by the discourse participants. Such information can be seen presuppositional in the pragmatic sense (e.g. Soames and Stalnaker above).

Levinson (1983:167) and Renkema (1993:158) connect presupposition with another pragmatic inference, namely conversational implicature, but Levinson notices that while conversational implicature is not much bound with the linguistic structure of a sentence, it seems that presuppositions, on the contrary, are connected with syntactic processes such as clefts, pseudo-clefts, and factual predicates in English. According to Levinson (1983:216), some linguistic items that give rise to presuppositions are similar even in languages of different language families, which would seem to suggest a universal language regularity and indicate that presupposition cannot be explained by means of conversational implicature alone.

Conventional implicature has also been used to define presupposition in pragmatics (Karttunen & Peters 1979). It was proposed that presupposition is tied with certain fixed meanings of expressions, i.e. the linguistic items mentioned above. But conventional implicature cannot explain the variety of phenomena that have been regarded as

presuppositions, because the meanings of presuppositional inferences are not always fixed by convention.

Levinson (1983: 216) points out that presupposition in fact contrasts with conventional implicature in that the meanings of the linguistic items that give rise to presuppositions (the so-called presupposition-triggers), i.e the sentential processes mentioned above are closely related to the corresponding presuppositional inferences. Conventional implicatures, on the other hand, have no such correspondence in the semantic content of the expressions used. According to Levinson (1983: 131), it would also require an extension of the original implicature phenomena to describe presuppositional inferences in terms of conventional implicature.

Though it may well be that linguistic presupposition could be explained in some complex terms of the interaction of semantics and pragmatics, here presupposition will be seen as an essentially pragmatic notion involving language use in context and language users. For the interpretation of literary writings, the scope of presupposition needs to be enlarged from the technical linguistic presupposition of sentences to broader levels of communication involving such discourse issues as the context, background knowledge and implicit assumptions by virtue of background knowledge, speaker/writers and hearers/readers, and further the sociocultural environment of the text and its reader.

2.2 PRESUPPOSITION POOLS

In Brown and Yule (1983:27), the notion of presupposition is, along with reference, implicature, inference, and text coherence used to describe what speakers and hearers do, and not what sentences and propositions do. This is because it is language use in context, and not isolated

sentences and their truth values that is considered central in under-
standing any linguistic message. It is also language use for commu-
nication purposes and the message, the speaker and the hearer, the
situation, and the goals of the communication event should be in-
cluded.

Brown and Yule (1983: 78) also discuss the so-called presupposi-
tion pools; an approach introduced by Venneman (1975). Though there
are many problems in the original theory, as noticed by Brown and
Yule, it will be offered here, because, with some redefinition, it may
assist us in defining the nature of presupposition in discourse, and al-
low presupposition to be used as a practical tool in interpreting liter-
ary writing. Since it seems that presupposition pools are fairly easily
applicable and originally developed to spoken discourses, it is impor-
tant to discuss the special requirements of written discourses. The re-
definition in the following section concerns issues of the context, the
topic, the situation, background knowledge, the role of the reader in
presupposing, and further the text and its interpretation as social and
cultural events.

The notion of presupposition pools takes into account speak-
ers and hearers in the following way. Each discourse participant has
a presupposition pool which gets added to the discourse when the
discourse proceeds, and each participant acts as if there were only
one presupposition pool which is shared by all discourse partici-
pants. Such a presupposition pool contains information from gen-
eral knowledge, the situational context of the discourse, i.e. the im-
mediate discourse situation, and information from the preceding
discourse. A presupposition pool describes what has happened in a
discourse so far. Within the common presupposition pool there is
also a set of discourse subjects which each discourse is about and

which all the discourse participants share. These subjects need not be asserted because they are taken for granted or assumed to be shared by the discourse participants.

The system of presupposition pools assists in explaining a lot of definite entities along with other presuppositional information, anaphoric references, implicit references to time and place of the situation, and further implicit information in conversations. For instance, because some entities are already mentioned in the preceding part of the discourse, or they are general (or common, background, mutual) knowledge, or they belong to the immediate discourse situation, it is relevant to introduce them as definite, or leave them implicit, and not to assert them or explicitly state them each time they are being referred to.

The shared presupposition pool is the common ground, the assumed shared knowledge level of the discourse participants (e.g. Stalnaker above, Graesser and Clark 1985:25, Levinson 1983:190). Speakers assume a certain shared knowledge level with their hearers and can leave a lot of implicit elements in their conversations. They can use linguistic markers such as pronouns and a variety of what have been called linguistic presuppositions, such as definites, clefts, comprarisons and contrasts, and stress and intonation (Levison 1983: 186) because of the assumed shared background knowledge. At the same time each speaker has a private presupposition pool which is added to the conversation. This presupposition pool is constructed via the language user's background knowledge and experience. The discourse subject is responsible for what parts of this knowledge get activates in the conversation. In this respect the discourse subject relates to the topic.

Though it may be possible to use the sentential processes that have been called linguistic presuppositions for a variety of other rea-

sons to stage and segment information in discourses, some of them can also be used as linguistic devices to arrange a common ground of information and to embed such information which is assumed to be shared by the discourse participants. The most visible form of a common ground can be found in the use of definite expressions. Some forms can be used as definite because they are thought to be shared knowledge of the discourse participants. Accordingly, some information is only implied, and it can be taken for granted because of the assumption of shared knowledge.

Just as spoken discourses use a lot of implicit information, so do written discourses, too. Writers can leave a lot of implicit elements in their texts because they expect their readers to understand them by virtue of a common fund of background knowledge, an assumed shared presupposition pool. It must be noticed that literature is communication where relatively little can be known about the physical person that receives the message, yet writers have to rely on certain conventions and world knowledge structures that are shared by most people within a social and cultural context. Such issues can relate to universal knowledge which can be assumed to be shared by most people in the universe, but also to issues that are specific to special social contexts. As will be noticed, written discourses produce a lot of implicit information, and the meaningful implicit part of a discourse can be said to represents a community of shared knowledge.

So it is not just the visible sentence surface types that can be regarded as presuppositions, but a large amount of information in texts that is left without detailed explanations can be regarded as presuppositional in a sense that they are assumed to be true, and assumed to be understood without them being explicitly mentioned each time they are being referred to. Such presuppositional information may

only be implied and it is not necessarily connected with any specific linguistic items, yet for the understanding of any written discourse this information is essential, even crucial. It belongs to the background knowledge of writers and readers, and has a lot to do with the social and cultural surrounding of the text and its interpretation.

For instance, the title of Edith Wharton's The House of Mirth contains implicit information in addition to the explicit words mentioned. The definite entity implicitly tells us about the theme of the story. This information is only understood by those readers who know the biblical reference to the part of Ecclesiastes in which it is said that "...the heart of the fools is in the house of mirth". So in fact there is a reader implied in the title (Leech and Short 1981:259). The writer implicitly asks for a certain cooperation on the part of the reader. A reader who would not know the implied reference, could not contribute to the shared presupposition pool. Such readers would not be appropriately cooperative because they would not know the reference outside the text. The title refers to a context outside the text, and it is the context of any meaningful item that is essential for any interpretation.

2.2.1 THE CONTEXT OF PRESUPPOSITION POOLS

To be used as a relevant notion in text interpretation, there is a need to redefine components of the presupposition pool. The main redefinition in this section concerns issues of the context, which was not specified in the original theory of Venneman. All language items, explicit and implicit, need to be interpreted relative to the context of their use. To the explanation of meaning in discourse at least the following issues of the context need to be understood. We have the

linguistic context, the words, clauses and sentences and the extralinguistic or non-linguistic context and the experiential environment (Nunan 1993:118), where the text occurs in the world. The non-linguistic context includes such items as the type and purpose of the communicative event, the topic, the setting, the discourse participants, background knowledge, and assumptions of the communicative event (Nunan 1993:8) and the social and cultural surrounding of both the text and its reader.

The linguistic context of presuppositions conventionally includes some syntactic processes, and also intonation. Levinson (1983: 168) limits the use of the technical term of presupposition to these pragmatic inferences that are built into the linguistic expressions discussed above. But there is no need for such limitation. There are cases where grammatical constructions may be tied to the idea of presupposing, and can be the source of presupposition at the level of syntax, as in example (13), and there are cases where such constructions do not exist, but information in texts might be regarded as presuppositional in a sense that it is assumed to be part of the common presupposition pool, as in example (14).

In the following example (13) there is a linguistic context which gives rise to presupposed information, and the context of the underlined definite entities refers to situations outside the text. This is the beginning of Ronald Blythe's *The Age of Illusion.*

Example (13):

It has become a custom to say that the old world died when the shots were fired in Sarajevo, but a world doesn't die as easily as all that. Certainly it doesn't collapse and vanish with the neat poignancy of a murdered archduke.

The understanding of the reference of the definite entities *the old world, the shots, Sarajevo* and *the neat poignancy of a murdered archduke*

requires knowledge from outside the text. The text would not make much sense to such readers who do not know the reference to the World War I. *The old world* refers to time before the war and *the shots* to the murder of the archduke. Without knowing at least something about the time that is being referred to, the text would not be properly comprehended. Understanding requires reference to an extralinguistic context. In this particular text, the context can be broadly described as 'World War I'.

In Ronald Blythe's text the definite entities can be used as sources of presupposition at the textual level, but in the following example (14) certain knowledge is presupposed which is not tied with, or given rise to by any of the linguistic presuppositions mentioned. This is an extract from Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body*.

Example (14):

Love demans expression. It will not stay still, stay silent, be good, be modest, be seen and not heard, no. It will break out in tongues of praise, the hight note that smashes the glass and spills the liquid. It is no conservationist love. It is a big game hunter and you are the game. A curse on this game. How can you stick at a game when the rules keep changing? I shall call myself Alice and play croquet with the flamingoes. In Wonderland everyone cheats and love is Wonderland, isn't it? Love makes the world go round. Love is blind. All you need is love. Nobody ever died of a broken heart.

The context this text can be called 'love', and quite a few assumptions, beliefs, and myths about love is needed to understand the references. The text asks for knowing at least the following items from outside the text. The first, second and third sentences use assumptions that refer to religious myths of 'love' and issues in the

Bible. It is also expected that the reader knows Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland,* and popular songs, sayings and folklores, for instance, "money makes the world go round". At least these items are presupposed, i.e. for understanding it is expected that the reader would know the references. Yet, apart from a few definite entities (e.g. *the flamingoes, Wonderland*) which refer to an extralinguistic situation the presupposed information essential for the interpretation is not built in any special linguistic item.

According to Leech and Short (1981: 79), texts can presuppose a social relation between the discourse participants, and they can presuppose that the participants share certain knowledge and assumptions. Such items belong to the situational context, the extralinguistic situation of the communication event. Discourses produce implicit information that need not be visible at the level of syntax, yet such information affects understanding and requires the type of operation conventionally connected with presupposition.

In spoken language, such implicit information includes cases which Bates regards as psychological presuppositions (Bates, 1976:25). Bates notices that, in addition to sentence-based semantic and pragmatic presuppositions, there is some kind of psychological capacity for presupposing which children use from the time they first begin to encode their experiences in speech. This presuppositional capacity is, according to Bates (1976:97), based on the broad non-linguistic operation that is present from the beginning of cognitive development. Such presupposition does not necessarily affect the syntax at all. It is information which can be left implicit, because of shared assumptions of the speaker and hearer.

The implicit part is an important element in written discourses just as it is important in spoken discourses. In spoken discourses

implicit items may be more frequent, since it is possible to communicate by non-verbal means, and a lot of information need not be mentioned because of shared mutual experience and the situation at hand. In written discourses the implicit part is based on the writer's assumption of shared knowledge of the world. The shared presupposition pool has its origin in the writer. Sometimes writers assume that there is no need to mention items every time they are being referred to, because readers are assumed to make the necessary connections in their minds.

Such a presupposition belongs to the implicit part where information can and must be drawn from outside the text. It is extremely common for texts to presuppose some special kind of knowledge and experience. This can relate to issues of intertextuality (Renkema 1993: 198, Eco 1984: 12), i.e. the relationship between the text at hand and some other text. By text we can mean a lot more than other literary writings, as could be seen in example (14). Very often they are myths and beliefs special to some social group or culture. In this respect the social and cultural context of the text and its reader seem important to the construction of the presupposition pool.

Presupposition is not just a phenomenon linked with some syntactic structures and thus the immediate linguistic context, but also functions as an implicit element of communication referring to some extralinguistic situation. As such, presupposition has to do with our knowledge use, maybe even something else. Accordingly, presupposition pools are structured via our previous experiences in life. Therefore, the context for presupposition pools is here defined in terms of both the immediate linguistic context where we may have linguistic markers for the implicit information and also the non-linguistic context, the further implicit part of the discourse, where pre-

supposition affects both text production and text interpretation and can be of a special lexical and contextual nature.

The combination of our linguistic knowledge and world knowledge makes it possible for us as readers and writers to establish coherence, i.e. to interpret and produce discourses. According to Nunan (1993:64), in the process of reading, we use our linguistic knowledge to relate information in a discourse to people, events, objects, and states of things outside the text. The common ground of a discourse, the one shared presupposition pool at a certain moment of reading, is a combination of the linguistic and world knowledge.

In this respect, presupposition pools also contain discourse relations and connections. Semantically, sentences and clauses, noun phrases and other grammatical constructions are in a meaningful relation with each other. The relationships establish coherence at the level of syntax, i.e. they make a text a meaningful whole. For instance, sentences can be in a causal relationship with each other. But such a relation is not always explicitly marked, as can be seen in the following example.

(15) *Mary refused to join us. She does not like fairwells.*

Though there are no explicit markers present, we as readers can understand that the second sentence provides a reason for the information in the first sentence. Pragmatically, the writer has not found it necessary to use any explicit word - such as 'therefore' - to explain the causal relation between the sentences. This is because writers can expect their readers to understand the relation without it being explicitly mentioned. The writer has found it relevant to present information in this particular way.

Apart from reasons, causal relations can be causes, means, consequences, and purposes (e.g. Renkema 1992:70). Literary writings very

often implicitly use these concepts as construction material between clauses, sentences, passages, and they can be the main element of a whole literary style. Detective stories, for instance, are a form of literary writing conventionally based on the idea that we implicitly understand the significance of evidence, conclusions, justifications, solutions, and motivations. These five categories are in Renkema (1992:71) called rhetorical relations.

That we as readers understand the causal relations can be caused by a variety of issues, but it is not within the scope of this paper to contribute to the discussion of the semantics and pragmatics of discourse relations or the rhetorical relations in argumentative discourses. We can say, that the use of certain kind of rationality and logic to understand discourse relations is assumed to be relevant in our part of the world. As will be seen, text interpretation is not just rational inferencing. The use of rationality is a culturally specific issue and its promotion is a culturally specific issue. Promoting rational issues has an ideological grounding, and has to do with the social and ideological powers that underline cultures. These issues will be further discussed later in this paper.

To be understandable, literary writings have to use a lot of conventions that people share in a certain cultural and social context. It is possible to say that the causal relations discussed above are part of the presupposition pool, because they are part of a shared convention and a social and cultural order. Writers can leave causal relations implicit, because they assume their readers to understand them anyway by virtue of a shared system of conventions. We are so used to explaining things and their relations between each other that we take them for granted.

Presupposition pools can also contain further linguistic elements than just the sources of presupposition at the level of syntax. Such linguistic elements can be called text-forming devices, or discourse connections (Nunan 1993:21, Renkema 1993: 71). These devices make it possible for writers to form connections that cross sentences, even passages. These connections can be established by means of cohesion and deixis. Nunan (1993: 33) divides cohesion in English into four main categories. These include referencial cohesion, substitution, conjunction, and lexical cohesion.

Cohesive devices will not be more detailed in this paper, since they are well presented in semantics and discourse studies (e.g. Nunan 1993, Renkema 1993). They are here regarded as part of the presupposition pools, because they enable us to make connections in texts between items that have already been mentioned in some previous part of the discourse and those items that are at hand in interpretation. They can relate to issues outside the text, but also to items within the text world. We can understand references to things and objects even though the items are not fully repeated each time they are being referred to. Once again, the language users' knowledge of the world and the context are essential in understanding. We cannot, for instance understand all synonyms, partial synonyms, superordinates and subordinates, or metaphors unless we understand the linguistic, social, and cultural context of their use. The way texts combine concepts together can tell the readers quite a lot about the surrounding expressed in the text, and the kind of the reader that is hoped for or expected. At times these combinations do not match with the conceptual world which is the basis of the reader's presupposition pools.

2.2.2 THE TOPIC, GIVEN-NEW MANAGEMENT, COMMUNICATION EVENT, AND DISCOURSE SITUATION

Presupposition pools have very much in common with the topic framework, as noticed by Brown and Yule (1983: 79). In Levinson (1983: 225) and Renkema (1993:63), the overlap between presupposition and the topic-comment distinction has also been noticed. Bates (1975:25) defined the notion of psychological presupposition in terms of topic-comment relationship. These speaker-oriented presuppositions, according to Bates, continue as long as the speaker and listener have the same topic-comment relationship between asserted and assumed information, or as long as the speaker believes this relationship to continue.

One restriction of presupposition pools concerns the topic framework, as noticed by Brown and Yule (1983:81), and there is a need for defining topic, or the subject matter for the present purposes. For written texts topic has been defined as a textual operator of structures (Eco 1984: 21). Nunan (1993:125) defines topic as the subject matter of the text, and Renkema (1993:62) in terms of what a discourse, a discourse fragment, or a sentence is about. The topic in written texts is always defined by the text, and by the writer. In the process of reading the textual topic guides the micro structural elements, i.e. the words and sentences to come. The topic is in this respect responsible for a lot of implied elements in discourses.

There seems to be at least some difference between spoken and written discourses in relation to the topic. While in spoken discourses the conversation partners negotiate and agree about the selection and change of the topic, in written discourses the text always produces such changes and selections. Yet, in both spoken and written discourses the

topic is responsible for a lot of implicit references. Some items need not be explicitly stated because they have already been introduced in the topic. Such information may be knowledge from a previous part of the text, or it may also be common, or mutual knowledge.

Just as the context can refer to issues outside the text world, so can also the topic. People include different items under an element that is in a topic position. For instance, the item 'love' in the extract in example (14), can to some readers mean completely different things than the items with which it is connected in the extract. Such readers may find these references irrelevant and incomprehensible, because they expect the item love to be connected with, say, teachings of the Koran, and legends and myths of some other culture. So the topic can also be socially and culturally bound.

It was mentioned above that presupposition has something in common with the given-new management (Renkema 1992: 148, Brown and Yule 1983: 178). 'Given' means something that has already been introduced in the discourse, or that the reader already knows by virtue of previous textual knowledge, or by virtue of general knowledge or unique reference (Nunan 1993: 45). There is no need to explicitly refer to the same item again because it has already been introduced to the discourse. By this definition, then, presuppositions of definite noun phrases and also other such linguistic forms that have been regarded as presuppositions - such as factuals - seem to coincide with givenness. This givenness is defined by the text. The writer assumes that some items can be introduced as given because they have already been introduced in the discourse by virtue of textual or world knowledge.

However, there are also presupposed items in texts that need not be given information. At the level of syntax, some items can be introduced in a presuppositional form, even though these items may be

new information. This is how linguistic presuppositions can be used to stage information in discourses. According to Ellen Prince (1978: 910), for instance, certain clefts can be used to inform the reader instead of repeating given information. She calls this type of clefting informative-presupposition it-clefts, and states that the main function of using these forms could be to present statements as known facts, even if they were not shared knowledge. The point is that the writer may assume that the information so presupposed, is not part of shared knowledge, but is presented in a form that makes it look like known, or given, or pre-supposed. According to Renkema (1993:156), linguistic presuppositions can have influence on how we comprehend discourses. They are meth-ods for building up the shared presupposition pool by guiding the read-er's attention.

Definite entities, factual predicates, counterfactual conditionals and comparisons and contrasts can also be used for purposes of stag-ing. Just like clefts, they are well suited for persuasive discourses, and for discourses where information needs to be embedded, as has been pointed out by Prince (1978: 900). For the purposes of the writer, it has been appropriate to use these forms. There are reasons to stage and segment information in a presupposed form. These reasons are related with the ideological, social, and maybe some other communicative purpose of the text.

In this respect, the communicative purpose of the interaction may be the reason to use the syntactic processes that have generally been regarded as sources of presupposition on the level of syntax. To make texts the kind of communication writers wish them to be, it is neces-sary to use such forms and to leave some items implied. After all, it is always the writer who makes the linguistic choices concerning what is a relevant way to serve the purpose of the text.

The type of the communication event can be regarded as the genre (e.g. Nunan 1993: 9, Renkema 1992: 44). The form and shape of the genre can be chosen to fulfil the purposes and goals of the communication event. The type of the communication event reflects on the use of the information structure and grammatical constructions. Each type of the communication event, or each genre, has general characteristics that make it different and deviant from other texts. Texts have different generic structures to serve different purposes.

So the overall information structure, grammatical constructions, and the entire appearance of the text has a close relation to the purposes and goals of the communication event. The form can thus be considered related to the function. In this respect we can see a relation between linguistic presuppositions and the genre. Linguistic presuppositions can be seen as special methods for arranging and segmenting implicit information in certain types of discourses, and they can have influence on discourse comprehension. The use of certain structures can be regarded as purposeful, and thus linked with the genre. Along with other structuring of implicit information linguistic presuppositions can be building blocks of the presupposition pool.

As for the situation, which in spoken discourses provides much of the presupposition pool, it is in written discourses defined by the text. It is up to the interpreter to understand the situation from the text, but the situation is not necessarily a common and present experience to be shared in time and place. The writer makes assumptions concerning the relevant way to present the information at hand, and the writer also makes assumptions concerning the reader's state of knowledge (Nunan 1993: 14). Readers, on the other hand, try to present and build the situation in their minds. For this, readers use their individual presupposition pools. If the writer has made false assumptions concern-

ing the reader's state of knowledge, communication can go wrong. Readers do not understand the meaning fragments involved in the text because they do not share the writer's knowledge, experience and presupposition pools.

To summarise, the presupposition pools are here defined in terms of what people are doing as opposed to what sentences and propositions do. Writers make assumptions concerning the right choice of words and phrases. They presuppose a certain level of shared knowledge with their possible readers and pack their information according to these assumptions. Readers use their knowledge and experience in interpretation. Both the reader and the writer have their presupposition pools which contain their personal history and their knowledge. It is not always that these presupposition pools match, since people have different experiences in life and different knowledge and assumptions. This may be the cause for a variety of different interpretation problems, and also differences in interpretation.

One important part of the context of presupposition pools consists of the language users knowledge of the world. The use of background, or general knowledge in interpretation is regarded as essential in discourse analysis, and in most pragmatic studies of presupposition it has been regarded as essential in defining presupposition, too. In the following section, background knowledge will be discussed in connection with text production and interpretation. Presupposition treatment is widened from speakers/writers to hearers/readers, and the focus of what will be discussed is on the reader's assumptions in the process of reading. The pool of our individual presuppositions will be regarded as the main reason for why we have different interpretations with other people. This pool will

be related to the social and cultural surrounding of the text and its interpretation and the ideological powers that rule our understanding.

Since the focus of what follows will be on readers' presuppositions that are productions of the totality of our experiences in life and that affect our comprehension at broader levels of communication, there will not be much discussion of the notion of linguistic presupposition. The sentential processes called linguistic presuppositions are here regarded as rhetoric devices of the writer to serve the purposes of the text. These sentential processes can be used to build a common ground of the discourse, but the presupposition pool can be contructed by other linguistic means and such means that are not given rise to by any linguistic item, but a combination of a lot of items that cannot be found at the level of syntax. Yet, linguistic presuppositions have an advantage over the kind of reader's implicit assumptions that will be focused on. They provide a fairly easily identifiable method of how additional information can be embedded in texts, and how the reader's attention is guided. Moreover, definite entities, comparisons and contrasts, implicative verbs and iteratives are fairly frequent in texts. Mainly for these reasons linguistic presuppositions will be included in the analysis.

2.2.3 BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Background knowledge in text interpretation is, broadly, the kind of knowledge readers make use of in interpretation (e.g. Nunan 1993: 115). It includes linguistic knowledge, i.e. knowledge about the vocabulary, grammar, and discourse features, and the semantic content of the words and phrases. It also includes extralinguistic knowledge which may be called knowledge of the world. Such knowledge of the world is mainly

subjective, and it includes the reader's cognition, perhaps also metacognition, along with the reader's personal history. It also includes something called general knowledge, or common knowledge, and mutual knowledge of the discourse participants.

Our background knowledge and beliefs and expectations on the basis of our background knowledge help us produce and interpret texts, but it is also responsible for a lot of misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Misunderstandings in interpretation often stem from not knowing enough about the conventions that guide the social context, the particular situation in the text. We may have enough linguistic knowledge to understand the message explicitly stated in the text, but we may not have enough knowledge about the social and cultural context that makes the writer connect certain concepts and use certain items as presupposed.

As noticed, background knowledge has been connected with presupposition in a variety of pragmatic treatments (Jackendorf 1972, Soames 1982, Leech and Short 1992, Levinson 1983, Brown and Yule 1983, just to name a few), as has general knowledge (e.g. Soames 1982). It is also part of the presupposition pool. This background knowledge reflects on the use of some linguistic forms conventionally associated with presupposition, especially on the use of definite descriptions. Some forms can be introduced in discourses as definite, because they are regarded as common knowledge. Similarly, some forms can be used as definite because they are regarded as mutual knowledge of the discourse participants.

Accordingly, some ideas and assumptions can be left implicit because of a shared background knowledge, as discussed in the previous section. We can also understand certain connections between things and concepts by bridging them with other things. We can connect cer-

tain things because we know from before that this is how things always function. We know, for instance, that to be a wife there has to be a husband, to be a widow there has to be a dead spouse, to open a door it has to be closed, to undress you need to wear something, etc. All texts are full of items that are left implicit because our knowledge of the world provides us with a huge amount of information that we can understand without them being explicitly stated and repeated in every occasion.

Inferencing has been regarded as a cover term to refer to the implicit part of the discourse where information can and must be derived (e.g. Renkema 1992: 158). When trying to identify what the writer is trying to convey, readers have been said to go through the process of inferencing (Brown and Yule 1983: 256, Graesser and Clark 1985:39). Leech and Short (1981:127) consider inferencing an important part of text comprehension. We make these inferences to comprehend such parts of the text that are not communicated directly.

Graesser and Clark (1985:30) make a distinction between bridging inferences and projection inferences. Bridging inferences function between explicit statements and fill in missing links or gaps between them. Projection inferences do not fill gaps; they make readers produce expectations on the basis of what has been said before and are in use as long as the reading is completed. Such missing links, also called bridging assumptions in Brown and Yule (1983:257) are regarded as general truths, and some of them are universals.

For instance, if a text mentions a human being we assume that this person has two legs, two hands, two ears, two eyes, etc. unless the text describes otherwise. These items among others we take for granted, and it allows us to use and understand metonyms and partial synonyms, among other connections. But all such items are not universals,

and some of them are specific to their social surroundings. For instance, there is some specified understanding needed to know that *our masterjoints* in example (16) refer to *the rolling of marijuana*. The following extract from Jack Kerouac's *Lonesome Traveller* would probably be a cause of at least some misattributions and comprehension problems, if the reader would not share the reference to special time and place of the social and cultural context in the text:

Example *(16)*:

THE EARTH IS AN INDIAN THING - I squatted on it, rolled thick sticks of marijuana on sod floors of stick huts not far from Mazatlan near the opium center of the world and we sprinkled opium in our masterjoints - we had black heels. We talked about Revolution.

Bridging assumptions can go to smaller and smaller circles, until we have our own private presupposition pool and assumptions of what is relevant to link with something else. These private pools affect our interpretation, but at least to some extent literary writings seem to follow conventions perhaps for reasons of understanding, as has been suggested by Widdowson (1987: 17).

When we read a passage, according to Graesser and Clark (1985: 309), world knowledge structures are responsible for many of our inferences. Apart from these world knowledge structures, there are three other major information sources that affect our interpretation. There is, naturally, explicit information from the text itself, and the knowledge structures that are activated by this explicit information. Furthermore, the comprehender's goals and purposes of comprehending a passage, and the pragmatic and social context of the communication event are used as sources of information.

Theories of background knowledge have been developed mostly during the 1970s and 1980s on the basis of cognitive psychology and

artificial intelligence. The concepts of frames and schema have been used to explain how our background knowledge works in text production and interpretation. Frames and schema have originally been connected with how we arrange propositional information. Eco (1984: 20) uses the concept of common frames to explain some presuppositions in text interpretation. These frames are due to the reader's knowledge of similar situations in life and on the basis of other books they have read. Such frames are stereotyped assumptions about the world which are based on our previous experience in life and stored in our memory.

According to Kintsch and van Dijk (1978: 303), the text itself cannot provide all the information for the interpretation, but comprehenders must draw the understanding from their previous knowledge. We need to consult our long-term memory to construct semantic and pragmatic material from discourse. This knowledge is socioculturally variable, and when sharing a socioculturally built world and those social contexts of which we are members, we can leave a lot of the presupposed knowledge as implicit elements in our discourses. To written discourse this means that when writers write texts, they can leave certain items without detailed explanations, because they expect their readers to share some of the information in advance. In this respect texts can show the kind of reader they expect by using presupposed items.

A schema has been regarded as a set of stereotyped or organised knowledge about some element in the world. (e.g. Renkema 1992: 163) These stereotypes are productions of some specific cultural context. In Kintsch and van Dijk (1978:307), a schema is defined as a knowledge structure which combines information in long-term memory. Most language users in a specific cultural area would have the same set of or-

ganised knowledge. Schemas have slots which are in relation with each other. This relation is organised and prearranged and each slot can accept specific propositional information.

Schemas are structured via our previous experiences in life and we can have expectations and predictions on the basis of such pre-existing schemas. These pre-existing schemas of previous situations in life will enable us to understand new material in discourses. We may, for example, have knowledge schemas about doctors and patients. When we read about a situation in a hospital where a doctor is treating a patient, we can comprehend it because we have the pre-existing knowledge schemas of doctors and patients which get activated from the words and clauses that we read. According to Kintsch and van Dijk (1978:308), the activated schemas will then be added to the information we have in our memory about similar situations in life. So in a way the previous situations that we have stored in our memory work as a model for our understanding.

It must be noticed that the neat organised structures that the theories of frames and scripts have offered may be too organised for the complexity of human language use. For example, they fail to explain how background knowledge provides us with making our own interpretation choices which differ from all other interpretations. Though it is now largely agreed in cognitive psychology that something like a schema does affect our understanding, our background knowledge in interpretation must be something more than an activation of a script, schema, or frame. A problem of the theories of frames and schemas is that there is no explanation why we choose one frame instead of another (Nunan 1993:70). Furthermore, it is by no means certain that human knowledge is stored in propositions.

Widdowson (1987: 19, also 1983) uses frames of reference to explain structures that order propositional information, while the concept of schema is used for the world knowledge structures that are organised in long-term memory by virtue of previous experience. In interpretation, according to Widdowson, we combine linguistic knowledge (signs as symbols) and knowledge of the world (schemas) for the signs to become indexes in the particular literary writing. When we read a text we use our linguistic knowledge (language as a system) and our knowledge of the world (schemas) to make out what is going on in the discourse.

This means that comprehension requires that we actually interpret what we read. This interpretation is a production in its own right, and instead of just making out the meaning of what the writer is conveying, we actually produce a unique interpretation which is a combination of our linguistic and prior knowledge, but also a variety of other issues of our previous history. In this respect, all interpretations are different from each other, since people are different and we have different experiences in life. On the basis of what we know, we as readers make assumptions concerning the text as a whole and information in the text. Some of these assumptions we take for granted. They have their origin in our personal history and our social and cultural surrounding and they are affected by the goals and purposes that we may have concerning the reading experience.

All in all, background knowledge plays an important role in text interpretation, and it also plays an important role in text production. Though there are differences in theories that explain world knowledge schemata, the essentiality of background knowledge in interpretation is agreed on. Certain information can only be under-

stood if the text and its reader share the background of the same sociocultural environment. The information given in a text may not be enough for those who are not part of the sociocultural environment, and who do not know the meaning fragments of the expressions in the language, or the implicit elements that are based on shared experiences. Language users must share the regularities and meanings of linguistic items and also the meanings of implicit items related to the social, cultural, or maybe also some other experiential surrounding to understand each other.

One problem with the theories of background knowledge is that they rely too much on the use of knowledge in all forms of reading and writing. Knowledge has become a highly appreciated concept, maybe at the expense of such concepts as beliefs, intuition, and the set of presuppositions offered by Leech and Short (1992:259): "sympathies and standards of what is pleasant and unpleasant, good and bad, right and wrong." Though Leech and Short use polarized concept pairs, the importance of ethic and moral issues and our personal standards is pointed out.

According to Gudykunst (1994:11), the main sources of our communication behaviour and our assumptions and expectations in communication are caused by our habits, emotions, and intentions. Our habits form a symbolic system for our future behaviour. This symbolic system is not shared with any other person but it is very private and personal. We are not necessarily aware of our habits. When we are engaged in a new situation in a text, we compare our habits with those expressed in the text. This comparison is not always conscious, yet we can make value judgements because our private habitual engaging in an activity is not similar to that expressed in the text. We interpret the messages that are the basis of the symbolic system. Many of our habits,

however, are shared with other people who share the same social group and cultural surrounding.

We can also have an emotional reaction towards some information expressed in a text. We form likes and dislikes for objects and events and we can make value judgements because of the likes and dislikes we may have. Emotions can also change due to our coping with difficult experiences and because of the involvement of new information. Literary writings fairly often cause affective responses in readers. The information in the text may, for instance, cause a reaction of anxiety when we feel that our views and our ideologies are attacked. Emotions are responsible for a lot of differences in interpretation, because people's emotional responses are not the same all over.

Intentions, according to Gudykunst (1994:12), are cognitive structures that are operated by our background knowledge, motivations, and skills. We form intentions to give instructions to ourselves, yet, we are not necessarily aware of this. Intentions may belong to the unconscious part of our thinking, and to find their origin we would need a fairly well-developed metaknowledge. We produce intentions when we use our background knowledge, our motivation and our skills to think what we wish to do in a situation.

Our background knowledge, motivation, and our skills are responsible for how we operate and accomplish our intentions. For instance, we may want to read a book because our friend has told us that the book is worth reading. We have a motivation to read. However, we do not accomplish the intention caused by the motivation because the title of the book, or some information in the book makes us want to forget all about it. In this respect our knowledge provides a new intention. Through our intentions we understand other people's intentions,

too. They make us interpret situations and people's reactions based on motivations in texts. People's actions based on intentions do not equate across cultures and they can be the cause of a variety of misattributions and misinterpretations.

There are many issues that construct our private presupposition pools. All of those discussed and maybe yet some others can make us as readers take certain things for granted, and maybe falsely make us take some issues as truths that all other people share as well. Readers bring their presupposition pools to the point of reading at hand, and thus the interpretation is the reader's contribution to construct the common ground.

2.3 FROM THE WRITER TO THE READER

To make texts communicative, authors have to assume that the linguistic expressions they use are understood by their possible readers. According to Eco (1984:7), the decoding of texts in interpretation requires the reader's knowledge about words, phrases and sentence structures used, and the meanings of the linguistic expressions. But it is not just the decoding of the linguistic message that is dealt with in interpretation, as noticed above. All interpretations are productions in their own right and involve the reader. No two interpretations are similar, since no two people that read have the same experiences in life. The reader's knowledge, experience, and expectations by virtue of knowledge about the world are involved in the interpretation (e.g. Kachru, Yamuna 1987: 87, Brown and Yule 1983: 221). Accordingly, readers' emotions, beliefs and values, and their personal history have a lot to do with the interpretation (Kachru, Yamuna 1987:87, Gonzales 1987: 143, Smith 1987:3).

Eco (1976:142 and 1984:6) introduces a model for how we use presuppositions in text production and interpretation. These presuppositions are assumptions about the linguistic and world knowledge that the writer should share with the possible reader for the communication purpose to be fulfilled. An interpretative failure can be caused if the reader's knowledge is not shared by the writer's, i.e. the reader does not know the meaning fragments involved in the words and expressions. There may be a lack of linguistic competence, but understanding problems can also be caused by the lack of shared knowledge about the world. In this respect, Eco's treatment seems to coincide with the basic idea of the presupposition pools.

Writers have to establish some kind of a shared knowledge level with their possible readers. Such shared knowledge level requires the writer's selection of topics, words and syntactic constructions (Graesser and Clark 1985: 28). In Eco (1984:7), such shared knowledge is said to presuppose a certain encyclopaedic competence on the reader's behalf. When writers use certain forms, or when they leave implicit elements in their writings, they also ask for certain cooperation on the part of their readers. There is a reader implied in texts (Leech and Short 1981:259).

To Eco (1984:7), the reader as an interpreter is part of the process of text production. Eco points out that the use of any anaphoric expression in the process of writing invokes a possible reader. According to Eco (1984: 9), the role of the reader in the process of writing is inevitable, and that no text can avoid the influence of the model reader that the writer may have had in mind during the process of writing. Eco regards model readers as components of the author's text-forming strategy. Such model readers would share a common fund of knowledge and experience with the writer. Eco (1984: 8) suggests that some au-

thors seem to have an average reader in mind. This average reader is being referred to by the given social context.

Leech and Short (1981: 259) use the concept of implied reader, or "mock reader". They point out that since writers are in many respects distant from their possible readers, the addressee of a literary communication is not necessarily any particular reader, but rather a hypothetical non-person. This implied reader would share the background knowledge of the writer, and, according to Leech and Short (above), also "a set of presuppositions, sympathies and standards of ...good and bad, right and wrong." This means that readers should not only share a common fund of knowledge with the author, but they must also understand a variety of moral, and social references, as was discussed above.

However, Eco (1984: 8) points out himself that the presupposed model reader is abstract and also rather optimal. The discourse situation of a literary work is not like an average everyday conversation, since we as readers are not part of the immediate situation of the writing, and neither is the author part of the immediate situation of the reading.

On the other hand, literary discourses are communication. They are messages from the writer to the reader written in a specific time and place. Texts are fairly static and they do not change according to all the requirements of the reader even though we as readers are free to make the interpretative choices we wish. The communicative purpose of the interaction can only be understood when the text is interpreted against its social, political, historical and cultural context. This context is constructed into the linguistic expressions, choices and combinations of topics, and the entire presentation of information including the roles of the genre and intertextuality.

Leech and Short (1981: 260) point out that readers must make a variety of linguistic, moral and social allowances when they read. This means that words, expressions, and conceptual connections change in time and so do moral and social values. If we make judgements and evaluations of texts we have to understand that texts are productions of the social and cultural settings from which they rise. But this does not mean that we should not be critical and only make allowances, on the contrary, it means that when meanings of words and value standards change, we should be aware of the changes and understand that the kind of presuppositions we as readers of a particular time and space take for granted are not necessarily the same as those of the time of the text production.

It is often the case that texts are interpreted against a background completely different from that expressed in the text. Eco (1984: 5) points out that different sociocultural circumstances produce a variety of codes and subcodes and that it is often that the codes of the reader are totally different from those of the text. The process of reading can cause aberrant presuppositions because of the different circumstances that may deviate the presuppositions. An interpretative failure can be caused by the differences in the reader's sociocultural surrounding, and also by the private codes and ideological biases of the addressee (Eco 1984:6).

Texts can implicitly and explicitly ask for the kind of reader that would make the most of the reading. All texts select their readers by using specific linguistic codes, literary styles, and specialized indices. Effective communication requires that there is a minimum amount of possibilities for misunderstanding. Some texts make their readers by implicitly asking for certain encyclopaedic competence, such as intertextual knowledge, and other texts are more explicit in presupposing this competence. For instance, fairy tales, and technical and aca-

demic writings require different kinds of specialised competences. But, according to Eco (1984:7), texts also create the competence of their readers by using certain codes that can be followed throughout the text.

The interpretation of a literary text is always a production in its own right and any interpretation is at least slightly different from that intended by the writer just like any interpretation is at least slightly different from any other person's interpretation. Since readers are, in most cases, in the dark about the writer's intentions, the interpretation choices we make are fairly personal. At the same time the reader cannot avoid the involvement of the social and cultural context of which we are members and which underlines and guides the interpretation even if we are not aware of the guiding.

The role of our culture in both text production and interpretation is significant. Cultures produce and maintain conventions. These conventions produce expectations. Expectations can concern communication rules, social norms for people's interactions, and a number of other issues that affect our everyday life. When literary writing is concerned, one main convention relates to issues of the genre and intertextuality.

2.3.1 THE GENRE

Texts have been said to presuppose other texts (de Beaugrande 1980:14). This means that no text is a sole artefact serving just the assumption of artistic originality and uniqueness. All texts express information that is leased and borrowed and presuppose that readers have read other texts before. It is also through this intertextuality that texts often get evaluated and validated. We readers do not read texts as independent of our experience of other texts (e.g. Eco 1984:

21), and this experience is responsible for a lot of assumptions we make about a text as a whole and about the information structure in a text.

According to Eco (1984: 21), the reader may have expectations through intertextual knowledge, i.e. presuppositions that are based on the reader's experience about other texts. Such presuppositions may be caused by assumptions based on textual conventions and certain genre rules and norms, but they may also come from the reader's personal reading experiences. Presuppositions that are based on textual conventions or genre rules Eco calls public codes. Presuppositions that relate to the reader's personal experience he calls private codes. The codes can also be called private and public assumptions.

The division into private and public has been one of the traditions in literary criticism and the basis for evaluations concerning the genre. It must be noticed that the division is not very valid because it tends to put the private into the background and give more prominence to the public. Eco, for instance, does not discuss the private codes much further, but the public codes are fairly well presented. The division into public and private assumptions can be regarded as inappropriate in identifying presuppositions that readers may have concerning the genre, as has been suggested by Hutcheon (1989:161).

Because literary writings are public and accessible, they have also been a cause of a variety of public assumptions and value judgements. These public assumptions can be interrelated with the social and political powers of the society and they affect text production just as they affect text interpretation. At the same time literary writings are productions and interpretations of people who are mem-

bers of social groups and a cultural surrounding. Writers use their voice in public and address other people through a public medium.

A specific literary style can be seen as a deviation from the expectations of the reader. Readers develop expectations on the basis of how a specific content is in relation to its form. When readers make judgements about some given form, it is often because the form deviates from what they are used to (Renkema 1992: 99). We can regard this as a habitual reason and many of the assumptions we have about new reading experiences can be based on our previous reading habits. Apart from habits, our intentions and emotions can be responsible for the assumptions we make about literary styles.

We can react to a specific literary style on a purely emotional basis. An example can be taken from poetry to clarify how habits, intentions, and emotions affect our evaluations concerning the communication event at hand. We can for instance, assume that we like poems with rhymes, because we have always liked rhymes. When we read a poem with no rhymes in it, we may not understand it, or we may instantly reject it because we have the habit of linking poems with rhymes. We can also have an intentional reason to prefer some literary style to some other. We may like rhymes because we have a motive for liking rhymes. We may, for instance, think that it is fashionable, acceptable, or intelligent to like rhymes, because we like to consider ourselves fashionable, accepted, or intelligent. We can also have a special affection for or dislike of certain kinds of literary styles, because some previous reading experience has caused an emotional response.

Intertextual knowledge, according to Eco (1984:21), establishes intertextual assumptions which can also be based on certain genre rules or literary conventions. Sometimes these conventions can assist in making readers understand the purpose of the text. But literary conven-

tions are also restrictive. Eco regards intertextual knowledge as a special case of textual overcoding on the part of the reader. Reader's expectations can overcode the reading experience even to the extent that the interpretation suffers.

Literature has a long heritage of being evaluated and validated on the basis of certain literary norms. These norms have been taken for granted and they have governed writing and reading. Norms and rules make us accept certain writing styles unchallenged, and make us reject others. They also make us form judgements of new standards because of existing standards. These conventions and rules for literary form cannot escape dependence on the ideological and social powers of the society. In fact, literary forms and conventions arise from these powers. But the needs for changes in the power and value systems are also sources for deviations from conventions.

For instance, it has been noticed by Eagleton (1986:89) that women writers have tended to subvert the male-dominated forms of writing. One literary form which has been clhallenged by women writers from Gothic times is the linear, realist narrative. Eagleton (1986:90) points out that non-realist writing forms assist women writers in disturbing what is taken for granted by the dominating writing norms. By using circular and fragmentary forms women writers have succeeded in building up different conventions that deviate from the ruling norms.

Hutcheon (1988: 11) suggests that both feminist and and postmodern writing forms reflect the need for change in social and political order. While conventional writing has been seeking for the factual, real and natural, women and postmodern writers have challenged the factual grounding of historical writing by combining different forms of writing together. According to Hutcheon (1989: 22), there is no more such thing as factual and real and the common-sense pre-

suppositions of real depend on how the real is described in a discourse and how it is interpreted.

There is a strong relationship between the reader's private assumptions and literary conventions and norms. We as readers are not necessarily aware of how our personal reading experience is influenced by the ideological and social powers of the society. Literary styles and assumptions and expectations about literary styles change when the societies change. The social powers in the society are reflected in the genre, but also in the ideological assumptions that may be hidden in texts.

2.3.2 IDEOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Hidden ideological structures can be presupposed by any text. According to Hutcheon (1989:3), literature - along with all other forms of art - is always ideologically grounded. These ideologies include assumptions of class, race, nationality, and gender, and the economic and social structures that engender them (Hutcheon 1989:7). Ideological presuppositions can be assumptions belonging to some specific category of political practice, but they can also be general ideologies that rule thinking and also writing and reading. Ideological assumptions are based on the social and political environment of the communication event, and they affect text interpretation just as they affect text production.

Information in a text can be presented from a clear ideological perspective when the system of norms and social values is explicitly stated in the text. But ideological structures can also be hidden in deeper levels of communication and it may be difficult to identify them. Similarly, the ideology and politics that readers as interpreters take for

granted may not be so straightforward and clear. Ideologies can be unconscious and we can be conscious of our ideologies. All readers do not necessarily have a clear political commitment, yet their ideological assumptions may affect their interpretation even though they would not be conscious of their ideologies.

Such ideologies belong to the unconscious ruling of ethics and morals, rights and wrongs of life and, apart from our personal experiences, they are ruled by the culture around us. Our ideological attitudes and our prejudices and stereotypes create expectations on the basis of expressed ideologies in the text. The information in a text is constantly tested against the ideology of the reader. Sometimes there may be an ideological conflict between the text and its reader. This conflict may cause misinterpretations and misunderstandings in the process of reading.

When identifying hidden ideological assumptions, the role of the reader is not just to open the ideological structures expressed in the text, but interpretation is influenced by the ideological assumptions of the reader. Readers approach texts from their personal ideological perspectives which, however, are always either directly or conversely influenced by the ideological grounding of the society. It is common for a text to be interpreted against an ideological background totally different from that intended by the writer. The reader's personal beliefs leads the interpretation. This is what Eco (1984:22) calls ideological overcoding on the part of the reader, and what is close to Strevens's (1987:174) cultural loading, or cultural overloading. The reader's ideological perspective may influence text interpretation even to the extent that the interpretation may be completely opposite to what is said in the text.

According to Eco (1984:22), an ideological bias between the reader and the text can make a given text say more than it really says, i.e. the

reader finds out ideologically presupposed hidden elements when there seemingly are none. It also seems obvious that such presuppositions can be found even when there is no ideological bias. Certain non-existent hidden elements can be assumed to exist which support the general ideology of both the text and its reader. So the existing presuppositions of the reader are supported by the interpretation of the text and the text asks for such cooperation.

Just as the ideological background of the reader can help discover ideological structures in the text, it can also make the reader ignore such structures. This can happen on occasions where explicit ideological judgements in the text confirm the reader's preconception so that the more abstract level with its hidden ideologies is ignored (Eco, 1984:22). Naturally, the purposes and goals of the reader affect the interpretation, as has been suggested by e.g. Graesser and Clark (1985:39).

Although Eco's observations of ideological overcoding seem to propose relevant issues for text interpretation, there is some need for conceptual clarification for present purposes, and there are also some important parts missing. One issue is ideology. The second issue is the role of the sociocultural surrounding. Eco correctly points out the importance of the possible ideological biases between the text and its reader, but he does not define what he means by ideology. It seems that the ideological structures that Eco mentions mainly belong to some identifiable political practice. Eco (1984: 126) uses Marxism as a sole example for revealing the correspondence of ideological and rhetorical aspects of a literary work. While Eco (1984: 23) points out that texts can refuse ideological commitment and that this refusal in itself is an ideological message, it means that ideologies are only some sort of identifiable commitments of some known political context.

However, all writing is ideologically grounded, and these ideologies need not be an example of some known political practice, or the lack of one. There are ideologically grounded issues in texts that do not openly express a unified and organised ideology. Ideological assumptions can be found in the way writers use concepts and values to explain things and connect events and place objects in their contexts, and in the way writers construct patterns, relationships, and causes. Ideologies can be assumptions concerning class, race, gender and nationality, but also such concepts as, for instance, age, sexual behaviour, and physical appearance may be the cause of ideological assumptions that can be identified in texts. Against for instance such ideological assumptions the reader's ideology gets constantly tested.

The following examples from literature (17) contain ideological assumptions about race and nationality that are fairly identifiable. Since they are taken from their original contexts just to exemplify the kind of ideological assumptions that can be found hidden between the lines, they do not necessarily reflect the general thematic ideology of the story, and the theme of the text may in fact be opposite the ideology expressed in the extract. Yet, through the following examples it is possible to show that even small pieces of information in texts can be ideologically bound.

Example (17):

"No one ever made him feel he was a Jew, and hence any different from anybody else, until he went to Princeton." (Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*)

"You seem quite intelligent for an American" "Most of the American's I've seen act like animals." (J. D. Salinger's *For Esm -With Love and Squalor*)

"He was of Lebanese extraction, the son of a Brooklyn rug merchant. He was five feet and three inches tall. He had an enormous ass, which was luminous when bare. He was the youngest, the shortest, and by all odds the least

Anglo-Saxon male employee in the firm."(Kurt Vonnegut's *God Bless You Mr. Rosewater)*

These ideological assumptions are fairly open and identifiable through linguistic structures, but ideologies can be hidden in deeper levels of communication, too. Ideological assumptions based on national, racial, and ethnic identity are common phenomena in literature. There are a variety of stereotyped issues in texts that rely on some common assumptions and stereotypes of racial and ethnic features and behaviour. Racist attitudes can be expressed openly, but they may also be embedded under the information which is focused on. The extract from Vonnecut, for instance, relies on the readers' stereotypes about Anglo-Saxon males which are contrasted with the image given in the text about the person of Lebanese origin.

A reader may have similar attitudes about other races as expressed in a text. These attitudes can become confirmed, and in this respect literary writings can keep up racism. However, it should be remembered that literary texts are temporally and contextually bound and we cannot make observations about racist issues in texts without taking into account the general political, historical, and cultural surroundings from which such issues rise. Texts reflect the conventions of a particular historical time, and they can tell us quite a lot about general attitudes of that time.

One of the main ideologically grounded elements that affects text production and interpretation and rules communication in general is our gender and how we define our gender role. Assumptions based on gender roles underline all literary writings and they affect our reading, sometimes explicitly, sometimes more indirectly. There are differences in the way men and women identify their social identities and understand relationships between people. There are also

differences in the way women and men communicate (e.g. Gudykunst 1994: 63). It also seems possible that women and men create different assumptions and expectations in both text production and interpretation.

A noticeable issue that relates to gender roles is sexism (Cameron 1985: 72, 73). In identifying ideological presuppositions in texts, sexism occurs when people are assigned value judgements and characteristics by their sex (e.g. Gudykunst 1994: 86). In the following example (18) there is a value judgement by gender:

Example (18):

"He was ready to laugh and equally ready to cry, like a woman, which lowered his reputation a little in the eyes of dour peasants. "(from Guy de Maupassant's *Looking Back)*

Sexism can be found to be expressed rather openly but it may also be practised unconsciously. There are many writers who use the authority of public literary forum to condone false images of, for instance, women (Hutcheon, 1989: 8) and stereotypes of sexual minority groups, as in the following example:

Example (19):

"...a tall homosexual...named Bunny Weeks...He had eyes that were standard equipment for rich American fairies -junk jewelry eyes, synthetic star sapphires with winking Christmas-tree lights behind them. " (Kurt Vonnegut's *God Bless You Mr. Rosewater.* Emphasis added*)*

Sexist attitudes can sometimes be unconscious, because the language itself can provide a forum to use ideologically bound items in writing. In this respect the language reflects the culture and the values in the culture. According to Gudykunst (1994: 86), sexist language against women can express itself in at least three different ways. First, women can be completely ignored, second, women can

be defined as genetically inferior by, for instance, calling them by their first names, and third, women can be negatively stereotyped as, for instance, sexual objects. Rather clear instances of ignoring women are the uses of the personal pronoun he for generic reference and the word man to refer to both men and women in such words as mankind and chairman. It must be noticed that there has been some change in the English language during the last few decades concerning sexist language. It may be relevant to say that the use of, for instance, *man* to refer to both women and men in a public media can today be regarded as an expression of a conscious sexist opinion.

Maybe the most common form of ideology expressed in texts during the 20th century relates to the issues of class. There are texts of class struggles and political issues related to social classes. We all belong to some social class in our society. In recent years the main class identified in western cultures by sociologists is the middle class, but writings of past times often reflect various systems of class.

The criteria for dividing people into classes today concern occupation, income, education, life style, and family. People can also be stereotypically divided into classes by judging them on the basis of their home town, houses, yards and clothes and cars and mobile phones. All these items can be used in texts to construct social surroundings for events and characters and forming certain attitudes towards people in different social classes. Texts often presuppose certain assumptions and shared images of the habits and life-styles of people in a certain environment. (Fussell 1983: 2, 47, Eder 1993: 164).

Britain, for instance, has traditionally been a fairly class-conscious nation. In the following example, there are some ideological

assumptions connected with the post-war (World War I) class-system of Britain:

Example (20):

"He saw himself as the watchdog of the sceptred isle and anyone he didn't care for he dubbed Bolshevist and shipped back home. All this seemed irrelevant to the ordinary working-class Englishman in the dole-queue, and tasteless to the ordinary middle-class Englishman with his war-widened horizon. " (Ronald Blythe *The Age of Illusion*)

Age is a further cause of prejudiced attitudes and assumptions. According to Gudykunst (1994: 88), ageism occurs when we assign negative values to people who are older than we are. Gudykunst points out, that even though the word 'old' has positive connotations referring to wisdom and experience, general attitudes towards ageing seem to be negative in the western world. Furthermore, Gudykunst (1994:89) mentions that the attitudes towards women's ageing are more negative than towards the ageing of men. There are various examples in literature about ageist attitudes. Such attitudes can be hidden in deeper levels of literary works and they can even be thematic and the basis of the whole information structure. Ageist attitudes are not always as open as in the following examples:

Example (21):

"He was put to work under the most senile partner, Thurmond McAllister, a sweet old poop who was seventy-six." (Kurt Vonnegut's *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*)

"My niece is young and needs pretty things...She's got young men after her maybe will want to marry her... You're a grown woman, you've had your chance." (Katherine Anne Porter's *Theft.*)

Ideological assumptions and presuppositions that are based on ideologies can naturally be productions based on some known politi-

cal and also religious practice. Texts are often used as political medi-
ums. The ideological assumptions discussed above are only a fragment
of the variety of ideologically based issues against which the reader's
own ideology gets tested in interpretation.

Apart from political and ideological assumptions, one major
source of communication difficulties and misunderstandings in inter-
pretation is caused by the difference between the cultural presupposi-
tions expressed in the text and those of the reader. It is worth noticing
that there is a close relationship between idelogies and cultures.

2.4 CULTURAL PRESUPPOSITIONS

It was noticed above that misinterpretations between the text and its
reader may be caused by ideological or cultural differences. Ideologi-
cal structures rise from social and cultural surroundings and some of
the issues discussed here can overlap with ideological assumptions. It
has been observed by psychologists, anthropologists, and sociolinguists
that in addition to grammatical constructions or pragmatic conditions,
it is possible to find presuppositions that are, very broadly,
socioculturally bound. Though such presuppositions are not necessar-
ily found at the level of syntax, they can guide both text production
and interpretation at a broader level of communication and may cause
misinterpretations and misunderstandings due to such cultural load-
ing (Strevens 1987:174, Smith 1987:1). Nunan (1993:95) points out that
comprehension difficulties in written texts are often caused by various
aspects of cultures foreign to readers.

Gudykunst (1994: 127) suggests that in cultural interaction,
misattributions are likely to occur, because peoples' explanations for
proper information are based on their cultural presuppositions. Cul-

tural presuppositions may be responsible for a variety of assumptions that are made in writing and reading and that consequently cause problems of understanding. No text can escape the social and cultural surrounding from which it rises and, accordingly, all interpretations are productions of their cultural surroundings.

Our ability to communicate with people from different cultures requires linguistic knowledge, but also knowledge about habits and customs of other cultures, and about what is the proper way to structure information. Our culture provides us with knowledge of how to communicate with other people and how to interpret other people's communication. All cultures provide a communication system, but these systems are not interchangeable. Cultures produce presuppositions that are not the same across cultural borders. Communication problems can be caused by different socially and culturally bound presuppositions even if there is a proper command of linguistic competence (Smith 1987:1).

Cultural presuppositions are general assumptions about the world shared by speakers and listeners who share a cultural, social, and also historical surroundings (Smith 1987: 1, Gonzales 1987:143). Because of these culturally-bound assumptions people understand each other and can leave implicit elements in speech and writing. The implicit part of a discourse represents a community of shared knowledge. Some things need not be mentioned explicitly because they are taken for granted, or presupposed. Certain implicit information can be regarded as culturally specific.

Culturally specific items can overload a text and there is a need for cultural cooperation in interpretation. People from different cultures have very different types of background experiences and very different discourse strategies. This difference can impede communica-

tion even people have enough linguistic knowledge. Cultural presuppositions mainly belong to the extralinguistic situations, to the way we view the world.

There are many examples where communication can go wrong because of different assumptions about what is regarded as appropriate language behaviour. In cross-cultural communication (Smith 1987:5) and in cultural transfer situations (Gonzales 1987:142) where a second language is used, communication problems are often caused because people use the discourse strategies of their mother tongue and regard them as the only possibility. This can lead to the assumption that words, sentences and information structures in texts have the same meaning in all cultures.

Since English is such a wide-spread and common language, it is used as a native language by people from various cultural backgrounds, and there are various beliefs about the proper way to structure information and about which discourse strategies are relevant. It is not only when English is used as a second language that culturally specific items can overload a text. Native English speakers from different cultural surroundings can also have such cultural presuppositions that cause communication problems, as has been noticed by Smith (1987:4).

Socioculturally determined associations that rule both text production and interpretation have been mentioned in quite a number of recent linguistic and literal studies, but they are not always called presuppositions. In linguistically-oriented studies such inferences that are understandable via social conventions have been called connotation (Renkema 1993:160), and implicature (de Beaugrande 1980:246), as discussed earlier in this paper.

In literary studies, culturally bound information has been understood as belonging to the referential code of language (Strevens and

Stewart 1987:37). This code concerns certain allusions to cultural val-
ues and to people's background, and includes such items as proverbs,
stereotyped knowledge, and scientific facts. In Eco (1984: 5) the multi-
tude of sociocultural circumstances where the code of the sender is not
necessarily the same as the code of the receiver is also noticed. But as
discussed, Eco does not specify cultural presuppositions in his theory.

Connotation may be too weak a concept to explain all the phe-
nomena that can be regarded as culturally specific in both text produc-
tion and understanding. It may, however, help to identify some con-
straints of understanding in cross-cultural interaction, as noticed by
Renkema (1993:160). The referential code of language, as defined above,
only includes some of the cases where, in literature, language is used
to refer to certain culturally determined associations. There are a lot
more instances than the ones mentioned above.

But conversational implicature can explain most of such infer-
ences that are socially bound, especially because of the flexibility of the
concept for each particular context. There is also the possibility of ex-
plaining some phenomena with conventional implicature. But the con-
cept of presupposition makes it possible to refer to the role of expecta-
tions, assumptions, and pre-existing attitudes towards both the struc-
tural and the functional level of communication. The term cultural pre-
supposition is used at a much broader level of communication which
is not always tied to certain words and sentence structures, but, ac-
cording to Smith (1987:1), to our assumptions about what is appropri-
ate and relevant language use in situations. This includes types of speech
acts (such as apologies, requests, commands), places of silence, appro-
priate topics of conversation, and forms of address, which all are con-
sidered culturally-specific (Smith 1987:1). Furthermore, cultural pre-
suppositions can be found in the way we structure information in sen-

tences, passages, and how writers form whole stories. Accordingly, they affect our reading experience.

These presuppositions do not necessarily exist at the level of syntax, yet for the understanding of discourses, spoken or written, they are essential. If linguistically defined presuppositions have been connected with certain syntactic processes (Levinson, 1983:373), such as clefts in English, cultural presuppositions need not necessarily be tied in this way, and their identification may be problematic, especially since such presuppositions can do their work at a low level of awareness (Smith 1987: 3). Such presuppositions can be found in the way we connect concepts and things, and produce and understand events and situations in texts. Naturally, it is possible to find cultural presuppositions that are tied to certain linguistic expressions, such as definite noun phrases, and also some lexical forms, but also in the choice of topics and in the construction of passages and complete stories. Cultural presuppositions mainly function at the broader experiential level of communication, and they can rule the macro-structures of thought without us being consciously aware of such a ruling.

According to Smith (1987:1), everyone's language use gives rise to cultural assumptions about what is appropriate language use for particular situations. We also have expectations about effective structuring of information. The unconscious ruling of cultural presuppositions can cause interpretation difficulties in situations where appropriate language use is based on different sociocultural assumptions. These presuppositions are stored in our long-term memory, and through language they are transferred from generation to generation. They seem to have the function of maintaining cultural identity and unity. According to Gonzales (1987:143), the proper learning of a second language requires the transfer of cultural presuppositions.

Peter Strevens (1987:174) has presented a preliminary frame-work of cultural presuppositions transmitted through the English language and "other forms of cultural expression". Such presuppositions express culture through "its basic mechanisms and value-systems", which, according to Strevens, include such domains as philosophy, literature, concepts of nature and science, notions of government and the society's ultimate myths. These value-systems have influence on the use of discourse strategies in communication. In circumstances where a native speaker of English is confronted with a different culture, the emerging presuppositions, according to Strevens (1987:174), have influence on communication and may cause understanding problems and interpretation failure.

Strevens's first cultural presupposition is related to philosophy and religion. Strevens suggests that there are differences in the way people communicate if they believe in none, one, or several gods, and in what is the "relation of man to God, of man to man, of man to nature." There are also cultural differences in the way people view war and peace, life and death and what happens after death. Moreover, expressions of violence and death, ethical and moral questions, the rights and wrongs of life, the balance of good and evil, and the importance of truth are , according to Strevens (1987:174), deeply embedded in the English language.

Another cultural presupposition relates to literature which, according to Strevens (1987:175), is taken for granted by most native English people, but the very existence of literature is culturally specific. Some cultures value literature more than others. Other cultures may place greater emphasis on oral tradition (also Clyne 1987: 77). There are cultures that bind literature with religion. Strevens (1987: 176) points out that English literature has been bound with

Judeo-Christianity, and that there are remains of that heritage in language.

According to Strevens, Judeo-Christian beliefs and myths as they have been expressed in the Old Testament of the Bible have influenced the English language. What is especially noticeable is the way in which Strevens regards this to have influenced people's moral values. Ideas of sin, good and evil, and concepts of heaven and hell are derived from ancient Hebrew traditions. The New Testament, on the other hand, has brought some deep and emotional concepts.

A further cultural presupposition that is expressed through the English language concerns concepts of nature and "man's relation to the universe". It is proposed by Strevens (1987:175) that the existence of supernatural forces is in some cultures accepted without challenge while in others, as in the Anglo-American culture, science is brought to explain catastrophes and natural disasters. Concepts of science are very much taken for granted in the Western cultures, and Strevens notices that there are different sciences in the world. All cultures have their mathematics, for instance, and western science is not the only science, yet to most people in the west it is taken for granted that science as it is thought in the western world is the sole truth. Strevens values the notions of government as cultural presuppositions in the English language. Such notions are related to the social structure of the society and how the societies are controlled. Democracy, for instance, which dates back to ancient Greece, is taken for granted by most westerners.

The final category in Strevens's cultural presuppositions is the ultimate myths of societies. According to Strevens, European thought is based on the idea that in education and science, the intellectual aim is to seek for the truth. This is done by means of description, deduction and inference. The seeking of truth derives from ancient Greek thought

and, in particular, Aristotle's rhetoric. We order our thoughts to produce a valid argument, and focus on effects and causes. A distinction is also made between knowledge and belief, and knowledge is highly appreciated. Strevens also points out that the English language seems to propose certain European values that date back to Roman organisation and public virtues. These include such concepts as honour, pride, duty, fortitude and bravery, to name but a few.

The ultimate myth in native English speakers, according to Strevens (1987:177), dates back to the industrial and scientific revolution. Within the time after the industrial revolution, the English language has gone through a change in how technical, mechanical and mathematical concepts have become self-evident in language. Similarly, English speakers often refer to logic and rationality, and there is a need to express the truth and falsity of propositions. Strevens mentions that the language itself is not logic, but that people have the tendency to express logic and preciseness along with hypotheses and theories. This dates back to Cartesian logic.

Strevens' s analysis of cultural presuppositions is a preliminary framework, and it seems that it is insufficient in analysing all written or spoken discourses of English, because these presuppositions seem to rest too much on such cultural assumptions that relate to the history of white Anglo-American men. Perhaps the male value-systems of Anglo-American societies are based on these cultural presuppositions, but it is questionable whether they can be used in analysing and interpreting discourses that are productions of, for instance, women and ethnic groups. If it is the case that these presuppositions are the basic mechanisms that underline the use of the English language, it must be noticed that the English language excludes at least half of the population using English as their native language every day.

Strevens's cultural presuppositions derive from male history and the norms and expectations that have conventionally been inherent in male writing and speaking in the western world. The seeking of formality, and rationality, for instance, are concepts that are not valued by all female English writers and speakers. (Eagleton 1989: 90, Hutcheon 1989: 23,). Strevens's framework could be applied to analysing the cultural presuppositions intrinsic in the white Anglo-American male culture. We may say that the English language has had the heritage of these cultural presuppositions, and that there are remains of this heritage, because values expressed in Strevens's analysis have traditionally been promoted. Promoting them is ideologically grounded. These presuppositions are not necessarily reflected in all uses of the English language. Perhaps these presuppositions are not even inherent in most native English speakers. According to Gudykunst (1994:63), American men and women belong to different sociolinguistic subcultures, and they do different things with words. Perhaps the presuppositions suggested by Strevens are inherent in the subculture of white Anglo-American men.

It was pointed out above that Eagleton (1989: 89), suggests that women have different writing traditions from men. Especially noticeable since Gothic times is the deviation of women writers from linear and realist narrative and the logical and rationalist order of things. Women writers have used fragmentary and circular forms instead of linear progression. Women have left their works open and indeterminate as opposed to the definite single and rational order offered by men. Women writers have subverted the rationalist writing for centuries, and not only recently. For instance, according to Moers (1989: 115), Mary Shelley's Frankenstein is an example of the fragmentary and indeterminate way women writers form their discourses.

Another issue worth noticing is ethnicity. It is by no means certain that most people in, for instance, the United States acknowledge the cultural presuppositions isolated by Strevens. It has been estimated that white Anglo-Americans will be a minority in the United States some time after the turn of the century (e.g. Gudykunst 1994: 7). Ethnic groups have their own language traditions and they have also produced their own writings based on these traditions. In the United States, for instance, there is a strong tradition of African-American women writers from colonial times (Shockley, 1989: xviii). These writings are not necessarily based on the cultural presuppositions identified above. By using such writing traditions, women writers and writers of different ethnic groups have also showed the close relationship between fiction and oral tradition. For instance, Gayl Jones's *Corregidora* (1976), a story of an American blues singer, is a continuation of the oral story passed on from generation to generation in the singer's family. Such writings have a long tradition in the United States and also in other English-speaking countries.

Furthermore, the presuppositions that Strevens seems to regard as dominant in the English language are too stable to be used in analysing cultures since cultures are not stable entities but in constant change. Strevens' s presuppositions focus on issues that are masculine, formal, and propose male superiority and sexist attitudes. They also rely too much on the ideas from Christianity. For instance, it is by no means certain that emotional concepts derive from Christian myths. In this respect, Streven's analysis may be considered a good example of ideologically-bound assumptions.

We may say that Strevens's categories of cultural presuppositions are dominant because male writing and male language use has been dominant in western culture, and the presuppositions can be related

to the use of political power. But the analysis cannot offer a framework that underlines all language use, and it is not against these presuppositions that all writings can be analysed, except perhaps conversely. Women's communication conventions seem to be different and there may be a need to identify such presuppositions that have developed from these conventions.

However, it seems obvious that cultural presuppositions are important for analysing a discourse. Especially noticeable is the role of such presuppositions in understanding writings of people from different cultures, but everyone's own culture produces such presuppositions, too. According to Widdowson (1987: 11), to be understandable, literary writings must rest on cultural requirements and introduce new material on the basis of existing conventions. In this respect, literary writings have to be based on a variety of items that are shared by most of the people in some cultural area. Or they have to be based on the items shared by those to whom the text is targeted.

It seems important to open the hidden presuppositions and demystify the world-views that are inherent in our thinking. Maybe because of cultural presuppositions of which we are not aware, we tend to give value-judgements concerning other cultures and their superiority and inferiority, as has been noticed by Strevens (1987:177). Language comprehension and literary criticism which takes into account the socially, historically and culturally structured world in which the language is formed, acknowledges the existence of these presuppositions. It would seem that in evaluating and interpreting texts these presuppositions are more important than, say, narrative techniques.

One immediate problem concerning cultural presuppositions is that it is not very easy to identify which assumptions are culturally bound. Cultures are not stable entities but rather in constant flux, and

pointing out a culturally specific item may require the combined efforts from various fields of science and everyday life. Though Strevens has presented some concepts for the basis of analysis, these concepts are very broad and too stable, partial and in most contexts not even relevant. However, they are a starting point and new concepts are currently being developed in the fields of anthropology and intercultural studies. Some of the concepts offered by e.g. Gudykunst (1994) to explain cultural variation and the birth of cultural presuppositions, may be more valid than Strevens's analysis of cultural presuppositions.

In order to find out cultural presuppositions and to understand interpretation differences and similarities based on these cultural assumptions, it is necessary to identify how cultures differ from each other. There are various possibilities to construct categories and concepts to explain cultural variation, but to identify culturally specific items that affect the interpretation of literary writings, it is important to focus on such differences that can explain problems of communication across cultures. Though it may be possible, as it has been pointed out by Widdowson (1987:13), that literature cannot as such be used as ethnographic data, and that literary writings do not reflect ordinary language use, it must be noticed that all writings are productions of their time and place and cannot avoid the involvement of the culture from which they rise. Accordingly, all interpretations are productions of their cultural surrounding.

The following cultural differences, according to Gudykunst (1994: 39), are the main sources of communication problems between people from different societies. These dimensions are not stable and they do not focus on any specific culture, rather they express overall views of cultural differences that can impede communication even within one

cultural area. Understanding problems may well be caused by other dimensions of cultural difference, but overtly it seems that the following dimensions can assist in understanding some basic differences in communication that seem to separate people from different cultures and social groups and cause comprehension problems. The following differences may be the source of cultural presuppositions.

According to Gudykunst (1994:39), the major cultural difference that affects cross-cultural communication is between individualistic and collectivistic societies. Another pair of concepts that Gudykunst has found useful is whether societies use high- or low-context communication. Apart from the two main dimensional differences, Gudykunst discusses such concepts as uncertainty avoidance, power distance and dimensions of femininity and masculinity in cultures. They all seem to be applicable to conversational discourses in cross-cultural interaction, and it seems that at least some aspects of the following cultural differences directly affect text production and interpretation, too.

The basic difference between individualistic and collectivistic societies is in the way people understand the concept of self. The concept of self involves assumptions of how we view ourselves in certain situations and as members of certain groups. In individualistic societies, such as the United States, Britain, and Scandinavian societies, independence and isolation in personal choices are greatly valued, while in collectivistic societies, such as in most African and Asian societies, the identification of self is based on how you find your place in the kinship system. Fong (1992:117) uses the concepts of particle and field societies referring to similar cultural differences as represented by individualistic and collectivistic societies, respectively. In field societies group needs and goals come before individual needs, while in particle societies emphasis is placed on personal choices.

Certain differences in the identification of self would seemingly reflect on writing about the relations between people and in interpreting writings about these relations. Interpretation difficulties can be caused by how a person understands such concepts as families, the relations of people within families and communities, and the importance of these relations to people's actions and values. In individualistic societies people emphasise personal initiative and achievement, while belonging to a group is emphasised in collectivistic societies. In individualistic cultures people tend to have universal value standards which are applicable to all members of the society. In collectivistic cultures on the other hand, value standards are more particularly applicable to members of certain groups. (Gudykunst 1994: 41).

Moreover, in individualistic societies people tend to view themselves as unique individuals and separate from other individuals with separate emotions and thoughts, ego-centred values and esteems. In collectivistic societies, on the other hand, people tend to view themselves as part of a social order, or as members of some group. In collectivistic societies, people are conscious of where they belong in the social system and they adjust and accommodate to other people's requirements. They fit in the system, and the fitting-in itself is rewarding and gives rise to positive emotions.

Individualism and collectivism seem to exist in all cultures, and all people have both individualistic and collectivistic thoughts, but, according to Gudykunst (1994:42), in each culture one is often more dominant over the other. Individualism and collectivism provide a scale of values to all individuals and it is possible to have people who are individualistic in collectivistic cultures, and vice versa.

It seems important that we as readers understand the importance of differences between the dimensions of individualistic and collectivistic cultures, since certain issues of the identification of self would seemingly affect our interpretation. Some ideas of the identification of self may be left in the text implicit and presupposed and they may cause interpretation problems if we do not understand the existence of these differences. Knowing self is important in communicating across cultures, and when using a language other than one's native language. If we know what is inherent in ourselves it seems to be easier to identify and understand differences in others.

Smith (1987:3) points out that in every intercultural situation a negotiation of meaning is necessary, because people tend to use their own cultural assumptions about what is proper language behaviour. According to Smith (1987:3), the negotiation of meaning would involve five categories, which he calls the five senses. These include the sense of self, the sense of the other, the sense of the relationship between self and the other, the sense of the social situation, and the sense of the goal of the communication situation at hand. Kachru (1987: 131) regards this process of interpretation as contextual nativization in contact literatures. To comprehend, we as readers need to cooperate with the cultural requirements.

Gudykunst (1994: 14) divides the concept of self into three categories of identity: human, social and personal identities. Human identity includes views that we share with other people, or that we believe we share. Social identities include views that we share with other people of particular social groups of which we are members, and our personal identity includes those views that make us different and unique among other people. All these three identities, according to Gudykunst (1994:14) are the basis of our communication behaviour. Consequently,

all these three identities can be the reason why we as readers take some things for granted and "assume some items to be true".

While the dimensions of individualism and collectivism describe rather broad cultural differences, the dimensions of low- and high-context communication describe the differences of communication processes (Gudykunst 1994: 44). Cultures are different in what is the basis of accurate and valid communication. In cultures of low-context communication, information is coded more explicitly, while in cultures of high-context communication, messages are less coded in explicit forms and more is left in the immediate context and internal in people. It seems that high-context communication uses more implicit information and presuppositions based on shared knowledge than low-context communication at least in spoken discourses. Gudykunst (1994:44) points out that no culture seems to exemplify either end of the continuum of high- and low-context communication. Yet, according to Gudykunst (1994:44), high-context communication seems to be more dominant in collectivistic societies, while low-context communication is followed in individualistic societies.

People from low-context, individualistic societies tend to communicate in a direct fashion and use less ambiguous expressions. Constructing such low-context messages requires analytical thinking which focuses on parts, and not on the whole, while constructing high-context messages requires synthetic thinking and trying to understand things in their wholeness. The focusing on parts and their relations to each other makes people use linear logic in speech and writing, while synthetic thinking leads to use circles and dots and it is left up to the interpreter to construct the missing elements.

Cultures also differ in the way how they avoid uncertainty. Uncertainty avoidance is high in cultures where ambiguity is not toler-

ated and people have needs for absolute truths and formal rules and they do not accept deviations from norms in other people. Difference is viewed with fear. People from low uncertainty avoidance, on the other hand, view difference with curiosity, and, according to Gudykunst (1994:44), they also have weaker super-egos and lower stress levels.

These two dimensions seem to be useful in understanding how people operate with strangers. Because people from cultures high in uncertainty avoidance tend to avoid ambiguity, they also have formal rules and polite conventions and rituals for situations where strangers are met. If they are in a strange situation for which they have no formal rules, they can ignore the situation. To some extent, all cultures have a degree of uncertainty avoidance, and people within a culture low in uncertainty avoidance may view difference with fear and hostility, and vice versa.

When we interpret the texts of strangers we may avoid such information which is strange to us and of which we are not certain. In this respect, readers can ignore and reject new information and persistently stick to their own traditional views. Such people are not willing to comprehend views and ideas of other cultures. If we tolerate other people's views, we are willing to gather information about other people's cultures to be able to understand strange and unfamiliar discourses (Gudykunst 1994:123, Fong 1992: 120).

According to Gudykunst (1994:46), cultures are also different in the expression of power distance. Power distance tells how people accept power in their societies and how they define themselves with those regarded as less or more powerful. All societies express power, but they are different with respect to who is the dominant organiser of that power. The concept of power distance is useful in analysing how people in different circumstances and cultures are in

relation with people of different social and political statuses. People from high power distance cultures can, for instance, accept orders from their superiors without questioning them, while this would not be understandable to people who do not approve of the power systems.

One final pair of concepts that may produce cultural presuppositions is between femininity and masculinity. Cultures can be different in the way what elements are most valued in them. Masculine cultures seem to value power and things, differences in sex roles, ambition, and independence, while feminine cultures seem to give greater value to nurturance and the quality of life, interdependence, and smooth sex roles. According to Gudykunst (1994: 48), in Scandinavian countries and in Finland, femininity seems to be valued more, while for instance the United States is in the middle of the dimensions. Gudykunst also points out, that the expression of femininity and masculinity can also vary within a culture. The differences in the value-system of femininity and masculinity have influence in how people understand the sex roles. This could influence writings about sex roles and the interpretation of writings about the same and opposite sexes. In cultures where masculinity is predominant, people seem to have very little contact with the opposite sex when growing up.

The dimensions offered by Gudykunst seem to provide a fairly useful framework of cultural differences. Though the dimensions may not be exhaustive, they can be applied to the interpretation of literary writings which very often code such images that are dominant and specialised in cultures. All dimensions mentioned above can also be used for analysing comprehension problems within one culture, because they describe phenomena that can be regarded inherent in most people and they are not necessarily tied with any special cultural iden-

tity. It must be noticed that the phenomena discussed are by no means polarized, and the domination of the cultural presuppositions depends on the strength of the reader's (and also writer's) cultural identity.

3 DEFINITIONS AND PROBLEMS

It seems obvious that presuppositions can be found at various levels communication. Presuppositions affect text production and they affect the interpretation of a literary discourse. Linguistic presupposition is here defined in pragmatic terms involving language use in context and language users. For readers as interpreters linguistic presupposition belongs to the implicit part of the text, where information is understood by means of textual backward reference or by means of reference outside the text. The implicit part can be seen as an expression of assumed shared knowledge, beliefs and assumptions of a special social and cultural setting introduced in the text, and it is influenced by the politics and ideology that underline the cultural surrounding.

The notions of semantic and logical presupposition are in this thesis found inappropriate in explaining the nature and use of presupposition in discourse. To explain the use of the sentential processes that have conventionally been regarded as linguistic presuppositions, the concept of presupposition pool is used and redefined. Linguistic presuppositions are here regarded as building blocks of the presupposition pool on the part of the writer. Together with cohesion and perhaps bridging assumptions, and meanings of certain lexical items and conceptual connections linguistic presuppositions construct the linguistic context for the identification of implicit information in texts.

Presupposition pools, as they are defined here, take into account the linguistic context and the extralinguistic situation. It is

noticed that presuppositions can be found at several levels of communication, and all presuppositions are not necessarily tied with any linguistic presupposition but belong to the way writers use concepts together, imply meanings, and construct contexts to form the one assumed shared presupposition pool. Very often such information is left only implied and backgrounded in texts and the one shared presupposition pool, the common ground can be constructed by non-linguistic means. Such presuppositions are not bound with any syntactic forms but belong to the way the writer has chosen topics, how the writer connects concepts together and presents information on the whole. When literary writings are concerned, the form of the entire text from cover to cover can implicitly tell the readers about the intended message. The genre can be a building block of the shared presupposition pool as well.

There are presuppositions in texts that belong to the background knowledge, beliefs and values reflected in the texts. Such presuppositions are affected by the social and cultural context in which the text is situated and from which the literary message is sent. It is very often that the social and cultural surrounding of the text is distant and unknown to the reader. The text and its reader rely on different assumptions about what is taken for granted. A written discourse is not part of a present shared situation at hand between writers and readers. It is a production of its time and place, and cannot avoid the involvement of the social and cultural circumstances from which it rises. Similarly interpretations are productions of their time and place and cannot avoid the involvement of the reader's presupposition pool. The difference between literary writing and its interpretation comes from the fact that writing is a completed thing, while reading is a process at hand. Very often there is a considerable distance in time and place between the

text and its reader. This distance can cause interpretation problems and there is no communication bond.

Misinterpretations and misconceptions can be based on a variety of things but perhaps the most influencial presuppositions causing interpretation problems are, broadly, cultural. To understand the message of any literary writing it is necessary for the reader to know at least something about the culture and the social circumstances from which the text rises and which the text implicitly reflects. Literary writings are not productions of some individual's representation of artificial reality, they reflect and use general assumptions of their social, cultural and historical surrounding. At the same time they also implicitly reflect the social and political powers of the society and the ideological underspinnings of the society.

It seems that presuppositions are important in analysing a literary discourse, since the implicit can affect interpretation at various levels of communication. However, there are some problems of identifying presuppositions other than the linguistic. Linguistic presuppositions are fairly easy to point out in writing, but as was noticed, they are only a minor part of presuppositions that can affect text interpretation. Since we as readers are not necessarily aware of the ideological attitudes and cultural presuppositions that are inherent in us, it may be difficult to identify such things in texts, especially if the texts express an ideology and a culture that is a lived and accepted experience to us.

To identify ideological assumptions in texts, it may be relevant to ask whose ideology is expressed and how this ideology does its work. Apart from openly expressed ideological and political assumptions, ideological structures can be hidden. They can be embedded in the choices of words, and conceptual connections. It is also possi-

ble that the topic of the entire discourse is one ideologically-bound item. It is also possible that the information structure in the text is connected with some specific political opinion, and that the text is used as a political medium. All writing can be regarded as ideologically grounded and no text can escape having assumptions based on some ideology. Some of the issues discussed in this thesis could be helpful in identifying hidden ideological assumptions. These include class, race, nationality, gender, age, and the social and political forces that are underneath societies.

If it is difficult to identify ideological assumptions, it is not much easier to identify cultural presuppositions, either. Sociocultural-cultural norms and conventions seem to determine all levels of linguistic production and interpretation and they cannot escape ideological grounding. Socio-cultural norms are often deeply embedded in discourses and they rule our thoughts, even though we would not be aware of them. Socioculturally-based presuppositions are often only implied, and writers can assume that readers make the missing connections and understand the implications because of shared knowledge, beliefs, values, habits, and customs in a particular cultural environment.

In analysing cultural presuppositions some of the frameworks discussed above may be appropriate. These include such presuppositions that are productions of cultural differences introduced by Gudykunst. Parts of Strevens's framework could perhaps be used as well especially in analysing the subculture of white (male) Anglo-Americans and its relation to other subcultures in Anglo-American societies. These cultural presuppositions can perhaps provide a fairly good frame for ideological groundings of Anglo-American societies.

Cultures frequently produce and inhabit sub-cultures. Sub-cultures are groups within a broader cultural□surøunding and they have something in common with the dominant culture, but also form values and social rules of their own. It is possible to identify a variety of subcultures, such as youth cultures, ethnic cultures, subcultures of sexual groups and social classes. To some extent these subcultures cross language and national boarders and they may produce their own social norms and rules that may rule thinking and also produce subculture presuppositions. It is very often the case that a literary writing expresses itself within some special subculture and it seems that knowledge of such subcultures may provide frameworks that could be used in analysing presuppositions related to these social groups. At the same time knowledge of subcultures could also assist in understanding social and political relations between different groups in societies.

The following analysis attempts to use the concept of presupposition in finding a communication bond between Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* and the present writer as reader in a context which is both linguistic and intertextual, as well as ideological and cultural. The notion of presupposition pool will be used to identify the common ground of the text at the point of reading the opening passage of the second chapter. The passage is chosen because it gives a broad view of the social, ideological, and cultural context which is regarded as thematically important in the text. The passage is analysed through such linguistic structures that implicitly construct the alleged shared presupposition pool with the reader. This includes linguistic presuppositions, bridging assumptions, and some cohesion.

It must be pointed out here, that there are problems with passage isolation just as there would be problems of sentence isolation. One single passage of a book has by no means enough information for a proper analysis of a literary writing. In its worst scenario, it is possible to misunderstand the entire text and ruin a reading experience. But for reasons of space limitation it was found relevant to use only one passage as an example of how the alleged shared presupposition pool is constructed by linguistic means. One passage is a fairly coherent piece of writing having a topic and a conclusion and relations that cross sentence boundaries. Reading the first chapter is naturally part of the shared presupposition pool. References to previous parts of the text will be discussed when they are regarded as relevant for the analysis.

The second part of the analysis discusses the relationship of the literary form and the idelogical structures in the text. This relates to assumptions concerning the genre and gender and their relationship with cultural and social presuppositions. It was found relevant to combine issues of the genre with issues of ideology, since it is suggested that the form of the text is in relation to the political function of the text. For cultural presuppositions, and assumptions concerning the genre and ideological structures relevant information from other parts of the book than the passage will be concentrated on.

The text is situated in the United States and it uses socially and culturally specific items related to the American society. Since The Woman Warrior can be said to express at least one subcultural context, namely the Chinese-American subculture, the text has images and assumptions that are based on this surrounding. Certain subcultural assumptions about this special cultural context will be included in the analysis, since they seem to be important for interpretation.

4 PRESUPPOSITIONS IN THE INTERPRETATION OF THE *WOMAN WARRIOR*

4.1 THE TEXT: THE WOMAN WARRIOR; MEMOIRS OF A GIRLHOOD AMONG GHOSTS

Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* is an autobiography combined with fiction. The book functions on three levels: true stories told to the author by her mother about their female relatives, reinventions of the lives of these outcasts from either the Chinese or American society, and fantasies based on the writer's childhood dreams of the stories from China she never visited. *The Woman Warrior* is a combination of fiction and personal history. Apart from occasional appearances between the stories, and the final chapter of the book, the narrator is in an observer position. Most of the stories are situated in a fictive China, and they tell about Kingston's female relatives. In this respect, Kingston's narrative strategies do not follow the forms and limits of conventional autobiographic writing.

The book describes problems of growing up between two cultures. When it was first published (1976) it opened doors to the previously closed Chinese-American society in the United States. Understanding parts of the novel may require knowledge about this ethnic minority, but also some knowledge about the history of old China. However, the main sociocultural environment influencing the arranging of information in this text is that of the United States.

Apart from opening doors to an ethnic minority, the text also revealed some of the mysteries of the even more closed society of Chi-

nese women. It gives a woman's view of the problems of a young girl who has to struggle to survive between the requirements of two cultures. The text expresses a cultural transfer situation where the ancient Chinese society is a value system of the author's parents who use the Chinese values to educate their Chinese-American children. The text is not only an account of experienced reality but it is a special account of forming history by describing women's life in two societies.

Because of the special autobiographic form, the two cultural surroundings, and the point of view of the author it is suggested in this thesis that there is a communication bond between the text and its reader in a context which is linguistic, intertextual, ideological, and cultural. To identify this context the concept of presupposition pools is applied. The analysis is carried out in two phases. First, the linguistic items to construct the presupposition pool of one passage are discussed in their relation to the expressed ideologies and culture. Second, the specific autobiographic form of the text is connected with ideologies. It is suggested that the genre expresses and assumes ideological and cultural cooperation as identified in the passage. The ideology in this text relates to the confrontation between masculine and feminine values. Possible misinterpretations due to cultural loading will also be discussed.

4.2. PRESUPPOSITION POOLS; CONSTRUCTING THE COMMON GROUND

In this section the identification of presupposed ideological and cultural information will be done on the basis of some linguistic structures in the text. The passage below is discussed in relation to the roles

of the linguistic expressions constructing the presupposition pool. Most of the constructions discussed in this section are syntactic processes called presupposition-triggers (e.g. Levinson 1983:181) but some other linguistic methods to hide additional information will also be discussed. These include bridging inferences, cohesion, certain lexical items, special conceptual connections, and the structure of the information representation in the passage.

The constructions discussed may or may not be anaphoric in reference. Such clear cases of reference that can be explained in terms of anaphora, cataphora or cohesion will be excluded, because they can be understood through straightforward textual reference. Since the passage below is in the middle of the story, it is likely to contain references to previous parts in the text. Such cases will be discussed when they are necessary for the analysis. The following is the opening passage of the second chapter in *The Woman Warrior*:

(Sentences are numbered for clarity:)

(1) When we Chinese girls listened to the adults talking-story, we learned that we failed if we grew up to be but wives or slaves. (2) We could be heroines, swordswomen. (3) Even if she had to rage across China, a swordswoman got even with anybody who hurt her family. (4) Perhaps women were so dangerous that they had to have their feet bound. (5) It was a woman who invented white crane boxing only two hundred years ago.(6) She was already an expert pole fighter, daughter of a teacher trained at the Shao-lin temple, where there lived an order of fighting monks. (7) She was combing her hair one morning when a white crane alighted outside her window. (8) She teased it with her pole, which it pushed aside with a soft brush of its wing. (9) Amazed, she dashed outside and tried to knock the crane off its perch. (10) It snapped her pole in two. (11) Recognizing the presence of great power, she asked the spirit of the white crane if it would teach her to fight. (12) It answered with a cry

that white crane boxers imitate today. (13) Later the bird returned as an old man, and he guided her boxing for many years. (14) Thus she gave the world a new martial art.

The first presupposed information can be found in the subordinate clause right in the beginning: *When we Chinese girls listened to the adults talking-story.* The presupposed information is in the two definite constructions *we Chinese girls* and *the adults talking-story.* Only the first definite construction has an identifiable textual antecedent. The second construction contains additional information which must be gathered from various parts in the text and it also refers to an extralinguistic context.

In *we Chinese girls* the reference to something mentioned before is introduced by all three items of the noun phrase. The personal pronoun *we* functions as a determiner and gives some of the defining meaning itself. It brings in a deictic element, which can be related to the use of the first person singular in the first chapter; *we* includes *I* when used writer inclusively. Since this is an autobiography, the writer inclusive use of the personal pronoun is defined by the genre. Thus in *we Chinese girls* part of the definite construction is deictic, and used anaphorically. The rest of the construction is fully repetitious to something mentioned before in the text.

The other definite construction in the subordinate clause is *the adults talking-story.* It is an interesting construction, since there are implications linked directly with the choice of the words *the adults talking-story.* The meaning fragments indicate child-language, and the construction may also be a direct translation from Chinese. There is also an implication of triviality as can be understood from Kingston's mother's words later in the text (1977: 164): *"They're just talking-story. You're always believing talk-story."*

In the first chapter the simple form *story* was used, but with more information in the conjoined words: the stories the adults told to children were "stories...to grow up on" (Kingston, 1977: 13). Here the definite form *the adults talking-story* repeats the information about the story-telling tradition said explicitly in various places in the first chapter. The reader is introduced to the situation of the Chinese girls, but some of the information is only implied. The construction explicitly tells the reader that story-telling is used as a method to educate girls and to teach them the demands of the adults' Chinese culture. Readers also know this information on the basis of what has been said before.

But there are added implications, too. The two definite constructions represent two different entities which are contrasted because *girls* and *adults* contrast in meaning. At the same time, the two cultural surroundings, the old China represented by the adults and the American society represented by the growning Chinese-American girls, are also contrasted. The reader already knows about the education tradition, but the added aspects of old China in the translation and the triviality implicitly tell that the presented situation is not without its problems. The implications refer to a generation gap and a cultural gap which are the two main themes of what will follow.

Apart from person deixis, the subordinate clause states the general situation in the text, which reflects on all other information in the passage. Since this is the opening sentence, it has great thematic importance. The agentive subject of the first and second sentence *we (Chinese girls)* influences the entire passage, and it is in fact possible to relate *we Chinese girls* in the beginning to *she* in the concluding sentence even through anaphora. What is said in the beginning of the passage is the topic, and it rules the understanding of the

information to come.

The subordinate clause implies that the reader already knows, and is supposed to know at least something about the information so subordinated. In Leech and Short (1981: 221), it is noticed that subordinate clauses can be the circumstantial background against which the following clause is highlighted. So the major focus of information is on what follows. Yet, here the subordinate clause, which also has a backward reference, is important in its role as the opener of the passage and chapter. Together with the main clause it represents the topic, the discourse subject of the passage and has influence on everything that will be said, not just in the passage, but in the entire chapter. All information that will follow in the passage will be understood against the setting where *(we) Chinese girls listened to the adults and learned.*

The clause is the only connection in the passage to something that has been mentioned before in the text. After this opening, the text develops into a subtext telling about the heroic swordswoman. Therefore, the subordinate clause is a necessary connection to keep the coherence requirement. It is the general background of the chapter and establishes a link to the more explicitly stated parts of personal history in chapter one.

The complex first sentence gives rise to another linguistic presupposition where the structural source could be the (so-called) factive verb *failed.* The common suggestion has been that factive predicates express the truth of their complement. Truth is naturally subject to the context. In this text, it is assumed to be true, or rather it is taken for granted that Chinese girls typically grew up to be wives or slaves. But the main structural source of this presupposition could also be the counterfactual *if - then* conditional, which can

be made slightly more explicit by turning it into an opposite position and adding *then: if Chinese girls grew up to be but wives or slaves, then they failed.* To understand the following information in sentence (2) *We could be herones, swordswomen.* the negative counterpart of the counterfactual is required, but the writer has left it implicit. The main issue is to understand the unexpressed (with the added modality) *if Chinese girls were heroines and swordswomen, then they wouldn't fail.*

The presupposed information that Chinese girls grew up to be wives or slaves need not necessarily be background knowledge. It can be understood as known by some readers, but it need not. It has no textual or situational antecedent, but some readers may regard it as common knowledge. Most readers would not find this information surprising, since it is in line with what has been said before in the text about Chinese girls. It fulfills the preconceptions that we may have on the basis of what is expressed in the text before. The writer has chosen embedding for the information structure, which at the same time is in an informative position at the end of the sentence. The effect of the presupposed information is that we as readers take it as a known fact that Chinese girls grew up to be wives or slaves.

There is further implied information in sentence (1) *When we Chinese girls listened to the adults talking-story, we learned that we failed if we grew up to be but wives or slaves.* This information is not due to a linguistic presupposition, but perhaps to semantic association and structural linking. In interpretation, it is possible read that Chinese girls grew up to be *wives and slaves.* This is possible because of the word *but,* which is here used in the sense 'only'. When used in this sense, *but* has a negative aspect in its meaning, and provides a negative environment to *or.* Greenbaum and Quirk (1990:268) propose that *or* can be equivalent to *and* when connected with a negative

element. And it is in this sense that at least some readers can probably understand *but wives or (but) slaves* as actually conveying *but wives and (but) slaves*. Further reading of chapter two convinces the reader: *"She said I would grow up a wife and slave, but she taught me the song of the warrior woman, Fa Mu Lan."* (Kingston 1977:26).

But instead of just linking wives and slaves, we can also equate wifery and slavery. The equating is supported by the structural similarities between *wives or slaves*, and *heroines, swordswomen* in sentence (2) *We could be heroines, swordswomen..* We have two similar plural forms positioned at clause ends. Though there is no co-ordinator present in *heroines, swordswomen*, it could well be inserted. This linker must be *and*, since heroines and swordswomen are epithets. In interpretation, it is possible that the form of *heroines, swordswomen* and the semantic linking effect reflects on *wives or>and slaves* and *wives* and *slaves* become epithets, too. Besides, the general theme of the book supports this linking. For example, from the following instance in chapter one it can be understood that Chinese women were like slaves in their marriages:*"The other man was not, after all, much different from her husband. They both gave orders: she followed "* (Kingston, 1977: 14).

An item which is left implicit but which rises several times in this passage can be called 'man' The word *wives* is certain to ask for the association of *husbands,* and *slaves* can be connected with *masters.* It is possible to evoke the element 'man' with words *heroines* and *swordswomen,* too. Since they are female words, their male counterparts *heroes* and *swordsmen* can easily be associated. When connected with the counterfactual conditional, it is possible to get a structure: *If Chinese girls grew up to be wives of husbands and slaves of masters, then they fail.*

Moreover, if it is possible to understand *wives* and *slaves* as synonyms, it is also possible to understand *husbands* and *masters* as synonyms and united under the superodinate 'man'. In this respect the end of the first sentence could actually be interpreted as conveying that (we) Chinese girls failed if we grew up to be wives and/or slaves of 'man'.

The presence of man can be inferred from various other information sources as well. Such information as *raging across all China* and *getting even with anybody* describe actions that can be, and with stereotyped visions of gender roles very often is, associated with men. It may be impossible to say whether the interpretation is asked for by the text, and whether it is in the common ground of the discourse or in the mind of the reader. I would say that here the item *man* is called for the interpretation, because there are so many occasions where it can be filled in, and especially because of the presuppositions in sentences (4) *Perhaps women were so dangerous that they had to have their feet bound.* and (5) *It was a woman who invented white crane boxing only two hundred years ago.*

The source of presupposition in sentence (4) is perhaps the "factive" predicate *were dangerous*. The presupposed information is that *women had their feet bound*. This information is not given in the text before, but it may be assumed by the writer that it is common knowledge to most people that in ancient China there was a tradition to bind women's feet to keep the feet from growing. Fairly common knowledge is also that this tradition caused a variety of problems to women. It must be noticed that it is not explicitly mentioned that women's feet were bound in China or any other place, thus the understanding of this part may require previous knowledge about the tradition. The information is presented as a known tradition, and it is presented with an opinion

about this tradition. Because of the raised entity 'man' from previous parts, and the explicit *women* in this sentence, the semantic opposite *man* is in the text again. It is also raised with the word *dangerous* which calls for the object: dangerous to whom? Readers can interpret that the feet-binding tradition was instituted because women were dangerous to men. Thence it must have been instituted by men. Behind this implication there is an ideology which can also be connected with the following sentence.

Sentence (5) *It was a woman who invented white crane boxing only two hundred years ago.* represents one type of structurally tied presupposition, namely the cleft. Conventionally, clefts have been said to both focus on an element in a sentence, and also to express information in the relative clause as presupposed, known, or expected (de Beaugrande 1980:122) or "relatively given" (Greenbaum and Quirk 1990: 412). Sentence (5), as clefts in general, is built with a semantically dummy subject *it* followed by a form of the verb *be,* which both give prominence to the third element, here to *a woman.* In the relative clause we have the anaphoric *who* (anaphoric in relation to *a woman)* followed by the presupposed information *(someone) invented white crane boxing.*

Though *a woman* seems to be introducing a new noun phrase because it opens a reference-chain of this special woman who invented white crane boxing, and because of the common introductory role of the indefinite article, it is part of a previously established entity. All readers know that this specific *a woman* refers back to *women* in the sentence before and even further back finally to *we Chinese women* in the beginning. This is a necessary link for the text to be coherent. The anaphoric reference is created by a member-of-a-class relation.

If we consider *a woman* anaphoric in relation to *women*, we have established a cohesive reference to other parts in the text. With the wh-part of the cleft construction there is no textual backward reference. The relative clause *who invented white crane boxing (only two hundred years ago.)* conveys information which has no textual or situational antecedent, and which is not necessarily background information shared by the writer and reader, either. It can be, but it is not necessary.

The form of this sentence has a textual function. What is conveyed here is not only an introduction to the textually new element *white crane boxing*. The cleft also highlights the idea that it was a woman (and not a man) who invented white crane boxing. Semantically, the contrasted implicit element *a man* is connected with the focus *a woman*. Whether white crane boxing is known to readers or not, it is presented as if given or known. The issue here is the gender of the person who invented it. Here the presupposition pool seems to be constructed by implied contrasted means.

Naturally such readers who know exactly what type of martial art white crane boxing is, can make out more from the text. Just as in the presuppositions mentioned before, some previous knowledge about the presupposed information would assist in interpreting the shared pool. We can say that martial art forms are by most readers associated with men rather than women. The cleft construction gives prominence to the idea that it was a woman who invented a male-related martial art form.

On the other hand, readers who do not know anything about white crane boxing, are not left in the dark. The text also introduces the possible unknown item fairly explicitly. First it is staged into a background position and presented as a known fact. Then the history of the birth of white crane boxing is introduced. In the concluding sentence, white

crane boxing is reintroduced with an explanatory *a new martial art*. The text asks for knowing at least something about martial arts but it does not ask for knowing about white crane boxing. Perhaps the writer has thought this a relevant way to familiarize white crane boxing.

The cleft sentence here backgrounds information and functions as the topic for what will come. It may be regarded as the subtopic of the subtext or subworld in the passage textworld. From this instance on, the story in the passage tells about the woman who invented white crane boxing. The cleft functions as the thematic background and rules the microstructures that will come. There are two anaphoric reference-chains starting from the introductory relative clause: words referring back to the white crane: *the crane, the bird, its wing*, etc., and words referring back to boxing: *fighter, martial art,* etc. In this respect the cleft is an important construction in the structure of the passage.

Prince (1978: 898) regards clefts of this type as informative-presupposition clefts, and states that the idea of using such clefts is to inform the hearers, to tell them something as a known fact, even though they do not necessarily know it in advance. According to Prince, on the textual level such information is new, but it is presented as if it was given. Prince (1978: 900) makes an observation that could easily be connected with this text, that clefts like this are well suited for persuasive and educative discourses.

The information in the relative clause is also in some respect focused. Staging new information to this position is to give it a certain meaning component of uniqueness, as has been suggested by Huddleston (1984:466), which would not be case in the non-clefted form. According to Soames (1982:486), in such cases the status of the information indicates that the writer expects, or wishes it to be regarded as

uncontroversial information. It is possible to understand at this point that there is special uniqueness connected with white crane boxing.

Here the point of using the presupposition may be claimed to be to serve certain purposes, such as, for instance, to take it for granted that someone invented white crane boxing and to highlight that this someone was a woman and not a man. The association of 'man' is inevitable, since there would be no point in using contrastive focus without an element of contrast, which in this case must be the evoked man. In section 4.4. it is suggested that there is an ideological framework embedded in the text, and this ideology seems to be embedded in this sentence as well. The ideology is connected with issues of gender. Accordingly, there is an ideology behind the interpretation of the implicit element 'man'. In this respect, the common ground of the text seems to ask for ideological cooperation. As will be noticed later in this paper, the presupposition pool also asks for cultural cooperation.

In general, definite entities are brought into a text on the assumption of shared knowledge about the identity of the referent. The decision to use the definite article varies contextually. By using a definite description the writer assumes that the reader makes the necessary referential connection. Definiteness can be connected with entities that have been mentioned before at the textual level, but it can also be connected with entities that are unique in reference, i.e. they are common knowledge. They can also be episodic (de Beaugrande 1980: 138) in which case they are knowledge shared by the discourse participants, and they can be specific, institutionalised and so forth. There is a multiple variety of uses of the articles, both definite and indefinite, and the relevant choice always depends on the context. Articles are essential for the connectivity of the story. Here only such occasions will be discussed, where a definite entity is brought in the text to introduce an

element. Such entity has no textual antecedent and cannot be explained in terms of anaphoric reference.

The definite *her family* in sentence (3) *Even if she had to rage across China, a swordswoman got even with anybody who hurt her family.* has no textual antecedent. Naturally, the defining possessive *her* is anaphoric, but the construction *her family* should be seen as a definite description, where the possessive pronoun functions just like *the* would, making up part of the defining meaning of the construction. It could be said that there is a presupposition involved: *She (a swordswoman) has a family.*

It is also possible to regard the presupposition as a missing link between explicitly mentioned items. Missing links, also called bridging assumptions in Brown and Yule (1983:257) and Graesser and Clark (1985:30) are inferences that readers make in working out references. They can be regarded as universals, though they can also be culturally variable. We as readers can make such an inference more or less automatically. *Her family* need not be regarded as a conventional pragmatic presupposition at all because it can be understood through a universal semantic association. The item is in the presupposition pool by virtue of our knowledge of the world.

Knowledge of the world and our assumptions provide a further implication in this context. If the swordswoman has a family and she rages across all China and fights for her family, she acts in a manner which is often associated with men. When it is said that she could be a heroine and a swordswoman raging across China, it is implicitly said that she could be like man. The negative choice offered to the Chinese girls at the end of the first sentence implies that they fail if they grow up to be wives and slaves of their husbands and masters. The positive choice includes a man, too. It is implic-

itly said that they do not fail if they act like men. Both the negative and the positive choice mean that women have a family and both the positive and the negative choice position 'man' higher than women. Once again the text asks for such (ideological) cooperation where women and men are contrasted.

Other instances where a definite description is used with no previous textual antecedent, and cannot be explained in terms of cohesion, are the following: *the world, the spirit of the white crane, her window, the Shao-lin temple,* and *the presence of great power.* Not all of them are cases of what have conventionally been regarded as existential presuppositions, yet they are presuppositions in the sense that they are components of the presupposition pool.

The world is an entity conventionally regarded as having unique reference. Though it would be interesting to discuss what world is referred to here, and what assumptions may be included in using the word, to the interpretation of this text it is not a relevant issue, because it is not the subject matter of the text at this point to discuss the identity of the world.

Outside her window involves another bridging assumption, which is closely related to presupposition: that the girl is inside something, maybe a temple, which has a window. This construction defines the overall local deixis of the subtext.

The rest of the definite contructions, on the other hand, can be regarded as existential presuppositions in the conventional sense. They are textually informative and new, yet the writer has found it relevant to introduce them as definite. Especially *the presence of great power* and *the spirit of the white crane* are used like the other presuppositions. They bring up textually new information in a presupposed or known form. The text perhaps asks for understanding the elements as symbolic or

even mysterious at the moment. The reader's attention is guided and raised. Later in the same chapter the mysterious *the presence of great power* is brought more explicit by linking it with another mysterious element in the passage *the talking-story*: *"At last I saw that I too had been in the presence of great power, my mother talking-story."* (Kingston 1977:25)

The reader is made a party of the situation. Maybe it has been important on the part of the writer to familiarise the reader with the information. This educational role can be found in various instances. Since the first chapter and the beginning of this passage present the personal history of the writer fairly conventionally, the fact that suddenly birds have spirits can be confusing to some readers. *The Shao-lin temple* and *the spirit of the white crane* are not necessarily familiar items. The definite forms may be used to get (American) readers acquainted with culturally distant items.

4. 3 SUMMARY

It seems that in this text presupposition pools can be constructed by various different ways in relation to the expressed ideologies and culture. THe presupposition pools include linguistic presuppositions, some lexical choices and their semantics, and bridging inferences. I have excluded most such anaphoric references, as can be understood by referential cohesion. However, cohesion is an important part of constructing the presupposition pool as well.

All linguistic devices discussed above seem to serve a purpose in the text. In most cases new information is arranged at the textual level by using forms that conventionally belong to known or presupposed information, i.e. by using clefts, definites, subordination, and so-called factual predicates. It may be that the writer expects the readers to have

at least some knowledge about what is being referred to. Information in the subordinate clause, for instance, requires textual background knowledge, and some background knowledge from outside the text about the Chinese feet-binding tradition may be needed to understand sentence (4). But by presenting information this way the writer can also instruct those readers who may not have background knowledge about the items that are not introduced in some earlier instance in the text.

By subordination, and by using clefts and factual predicates information is staged to a background position to get more prominence to the juxtaposed items. The focal parts get the reader's attention. All the devices discussed are convenient methods to get more information packaged in one passage, and to lead the reader. By staging some items in a background position, or considering some meaning fragments presupposed, the writer can ask for the reader to take information for granted, and guide the reader's attention to openly informative parts. Using, for instance, linguistic presuppositions as rhetorical devices is a convenient method to persuade and teach the reader. The reader can get an impression of an educated, well-formed text.

There is a further purpose for using these forms. This is to make statements, to express opinions or attitudes about the information taken for granted. One statement is rather openly expressed in the counterfactual conditional in the first sentence: *if Chinese girls grew up to be but wives and slaves, then they fail*. This counterfactual is the cornerstone of the passage structure, and followed by its implicit negative counterpart.

This analogous structure is left implicit. Readers are expected to make the necessary connection. What is left implicit is something similar to the following: *If Chinese girls grow up to be heroines, swordswomen,*

then they do not fail. This is the statement structure in the passage, and together with the subordinate construction it forms the basis for the entire passage, in fact for the entire second chapter. The rest of the passage and most of the rest of the chapter is a substory about the heroic swordswoman supporting the main statement.

There is a general educational role in the passage. This purpose relates the passage and the message in it to the overall theme of the discourse. This is to tell the readers about the writer's family of ethnic minority, the Chinese American society in the United States. The writer has chosen a specific point of view to describe the ethnic minority, and this point of view serves a political purpose. The text in its structures reveals and produces ideological assumptions related to the role of women in a society run by male rules.

The main implicit element in the structure of the passage seems to be 'man' and the text asks for such cooperation were men and women are contrasted. The text expresses implicit information about the obvious ideological confrontation between masculine and feminine values. By the means discussed, the linguistic structure of the passage supports the suggested ideological and cultural cooperation to form the presupposition pool, and the communication bond between the text and its reader.

4. 4 IDEOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND THE GENRE

The passage structure seems to support the suggested idea that the construction of the presupposition pool in this text requires ideological cooperation. The general ideology relates to gender roles and differences between male and female values. There are various instances in the passage where men and women are contrasted by implicit means.

In this section ideological assumptions will be discussed more broadly and connected with further information in the text and with the relationship between gender and genre. It is suggested that there is a relationship between the autobiographic form and the ideological function of the text. It is also suggested that the autobiographic form can be related to the second main element identified in the passage to construct the presupposition pool. This relationship between the form and function is to teach the readers about Chinese culture and ideologies underneath both the traditional Chinese culture and the United States.

Conventionally, there are formal criteria that have underlined autobiographic writing. Traditional autobiographies follow a linear progression and a chronological order of actual events in someone's life. It is also commonly believed that autobiographies express the writer's true personal history and that it is private as opposed to public. For this privatizing reason, it is also commonly and - it is assumed here - falsely believed that autobiographies are not political.

The Woman Warrior is not constructed according to the traditional conventions of autobiographic writing. Conventionally, autobiographies are constructed by what might be called an objective factual perspective where important things in life are told in an order where there is a starting point and the story goes on to a certain ending point in time. This is not the form of *The Woman Warrior*. Kingston brings up important things in an order of her own, subjectively and reflexingly rather than objectively and factually. Kingston does not only tell a few important events of her life. The book includes fictive elements because they, to her, contribute to identifying her historical and cultural past at the time of the writing.

This text is not merely a document of happenings in the author's life, but it forms a picture of the author which is a combination of the writer's cultural identities, Chinese and American. The traditional Chinese stories, for instance, belong to the writer's image of herself. They are part of her because they are a major part of her childhood education. Accodingly, the text is an account of the American writing tradition and it uses images of American life as its background. Though Kingston has grown up under the strong influence of Chinese culture, she becomes merged with the American culture around her and points out that in the end she asks "what is Chinese tradition and what is the movies?" (Kingston, 1977:13).

The book is a combination of traditional stories, fiction about the life that could have been chosen for Kingston in China, and re-inventions of the hard lives of the writer's female relatives in China and in the United States. At times the writer is present in the text and at times observing from a background position. The perspectives keep swifting throughout the book. *The Woman Warrior* is a combination of different writing forms, different genres.

For instance, the story of the heroic woman fighter, Fa Mu Lan, which begins in the passage above and continues to the end of the chapter keeps appearing from time to time until the end of the book. It does not follow actual events in the writer's life with a strict chronology. The writer is included in the story because of the setting in the beginning where she is included in the *we* (*Chinese girls*). Through the story of Fa Mu Lan the writer constructs a fictive history of a life that could have been chosen for her in China.

The story of Fa Mu Lan is a traditional Chinese story used in the writer's family to educate children. There are several other stories and inventions in the book but perhaps the story of Fa Mu Lan

is thematically the most important because it is also included in the title *The Woman Warrior*. The writer could have been a swordswoman in the old China. Through this fictive element the writer contrasts the lived experiences of Chinese women in the USA and in old China with story-telling. The heroic stories are just fiction. The reality is far from being heroic.

This text is constant communication with its reader. The writer has found this particular form as appropriate to serve her communicative purposes. The use of certain forms and writing conventions - and deviations from conventions - are the writer's way to establish a common ground with the reader. Sometimes texts ask for knowledge about literary conventions to become successful communication, or to become what writers wish their writings to become. Writing conventions are often an established norm and reflect a state in the society. They also reflect change in societies. At times some writing styles are more promoted, at other times some other conventions get more prominence. The genre cannot avoid being involved in the established conventions of the society. At the same time, genre conventions and their changes affect our personal reading experience.

The Woman Warrior does not follow any linear order of actual happenings in the writer's life. Instead it forms a circle where the writer is sometimes present and sometimes fades to an observer position. In using different strategies in her autobiography the author has challenged some of the conventions and norms of autobiographic writing. It is an attempt to change high culture values which form conventions and norms to writing. At the same time it also shows the powers underneath these values.

It must be noticed that assumptions and presuppositions based on conventions of the genre are culturally specific and subject to change in time. In evaluating texts the time of the writing and the time of the reading are both important elements and should not be ignored. It should also be acknowledged that during the writing time certain conventions and genre rules may have been stronger and more influential than at the time of the reading.

According to Linda Hutcheon (1989: 10), it was typical in the 1960s and 1970s among women writers and writers from ethnic minorities to challenge authorities, and especially to challenge the historical writing of men. It is not possible to say if the writer has had this in mind when writing her book. Similar deviations from certain literary conventions have been regular for over twenty years in our Western culture. Most of all, Kingston's autobiography as a form can be regarded as an example of a very long tradition which, however, has been silenced from history, namely the traditional writing of women. In the book the writer gives a reason for telling her personal history in this particular way. She wants to tell her childhood stories because she wants to continue the story-telling tradition of her mother. Kingston, too, became a story-talker (Kingston 1977: 184).

The stories in the middle of the personal history are methods by which the writer tells her readers about her childhood and her culture which has been mysterious to most (American) readers. Her culture and the oral story-telling tradition her mother has taught her are perhaps the most influencial elements that write through her, but in a form which is addressed to American readers. After her childhood Kingston loses her parents' beliefs and myths and leaves home "to see the world logically"(1977:182). She could not find the logic in her mother's stories. Later in her life she finds out that the

stories are an important part of her Chinese heritage. Leaving home for logic is going out to the rational male world represented by the American society. The symbolic leaving in the final chapter of the book is immediately followed by a return. When becoming a story-talker she continues both her Chinese and female tradition and the story-telling becomes part of her American identity.

At the same time there is also a political purpose. Kingston wishes to assist towards a change in ideological attitudes through the medium of personal history. Her strategies to construct personal history do not follow conventional forms of autobiographic writing. Since the conventional forms are productions of the dominating social and political powers of the society, the deviation from a convention is a deviation from the norms of the ruling powers. So the deviation serves a political purpose. In this respect the autobiographic form is related to the political function. The book is a representation of the author's personal history and an expression of a political opinion.

The deviation from the literary style of modernism is often regarded as postmodernism. For the last twenty to thirty years postmodernism has been the main concept to define philosophy and art. *The Woman Warrior* has been regarded as postmodern because it shares a variety of elements with other writings defined as postmodern. For example, as most postmodern texts *The Woman Warrior* uses stories, mythologies, and traditional story-telling combined with other forms of writing. Postmodern also uses parody or irony to criticize the society. (Hutcheon 1988: 12, 1989: 50, Hassan 1982: 58)

But the society is not parodied from an outside position, since postmodern is inside the culture. It is a form which has challenged writing conventions and especially conventions of the so-called high art. Postmodern is also very much used by women writers and writers

from ethnic minorities because of the shared aims of challenging dominant orders. (Hutcheon, 1989:12). It is at least for these reasons why *The Woman Warrior* has been regarded as postmodern. In this respect it is also political, since the use of the writing form is a political opinion about conventional forms of writing. There are further political aims that can be related to the issue of gender.

The Woman Warrior has been regarded as a representative of the postmodern tradition, but at the same time Kingston can also be a representative of the female tradition. According to Hutcheon (1989:161), the two writing forms cannot have the same political and ideological aims because postmodernism has been a central part of late capitalism in a variety of different forms of representation. Late capitalism is lead by the dominant male ideology challenged by feminist writing. (Mitchell: 1989: 102, Eagleton 1989:4, 89). There is an obvious ideological contradiction between the two writing forums.

But is may be possible to undo the obvious contradiction by understanding the time of the writing. Twenty years ago postmodern writing was a powerful new writing forum which gained attention in the middle of canonical writing forms. What we may now call postmodern convention was then challenging conventional literature. The category of postmodern is not necessarily a category chosen by the writer but by those who wish to make categories. The writer has chosen a form which can be considered related to the oral tradition of her mother's "talking-story". Because the author continues her mother's tradition, she provides a role-model for other oppressed women to keep female traditions. The text reaches out for the silenced women readers who try to find their identity and keep their womanhood within male-dominated societies. It asks for ideological cooperation. Implicitly the text tries to assist in changing the gender roles no matter how strong

roots they have. It proclaims, for instance, through the choice of the writing form, that it is possible to change ancient role-models without ruining the entire cultural identity.

Kingston points out that women in old China did not choose the way they lived their lives in a patriarchal society. They could not but some of them also would not. The text asks for women to an ideological fight from inside the dominant systems. Kingston mentions items from the traditional Chinese society by which women have supported the male-dominated order. For instance, she tells her readers that a Chinese word for female first person singular corresponds to slave. Against this sexist attitude Kingston attacks: "Break the women with their own tongues!" (Kingston 1977: 49).

American readers are also notified of similar items in their own society. For example, by using the word *swordswomen* the writer points out to her readers that the use of sexist language can also be avoided in English. It must be noticed that the use of *swordswomen* in the 70s must have gained more attention than perhaps today since in the past twenty years the English language has gone through at least some change towards abolishing sexist items.

The writer has taken a position to reveal the workings of the ideology of the traditional Chinese society. To take such a position has an ideological grounding, and the traditional Chinese society has an ideological grounding. There is an obvious clash between the two ideologies in their relation to women's roles and how women rule their sexuality and their personal choices. The writer has chosen to reveal secrets and tragic histories of her female relatives under the oppression of the patriarchal Chinese society where it is more profitable to "raise geese than girls" (Kingston 1977:48). Kingston does not only show the oppressed position of Chinese and Chinese-American women. She quotes

her father's words: "A husband may kill a wife who disobeys him. Confucius said that. " Kingston also questions the whole male domination and the ideology supporting any such domination. Ironically, she points out: " Confucius, the rational man." (Kingston 1977: 173).

Against such ideological structures (American) readers can test their ideological assumptions. The American society and the ideological grounding that is underneath the American society is also presented. By pointing out problems of her life as a girl and woman of an ethnic minority group, Kingston also points out the basic ideological groundings of the white American society. The majority of the problems in this book relate to racism and sexism. When the text uses ironical remarks such as connecting Confucius with other rational men, it also connects the traditional Chinese society with the modern American society. After all, rationalism seems to be very deeply embedded in the American society. Implicitly, the text reminds the readers of how little difference there is between the two societies in their attitudes towards women.

The passage structure and the autobiographic strategies give an image that the writer tells her (western) readers about her Chinese culture. Simultaneously, the text also implicitly reveals the ideological structures that work underneath both the traditional Chinese society and the United States. The writer's point of view is ideologically grounded, and both societies are in the text presented to express ideologically grounded assumptions about life in general, and about the life of women in particular.

This text has an identifiable political purpose and it functions as a political medium representing its particular political interests by revealing the workings of other ideologies with different political interests. For instance, what seems to be taken for granted at the end of the

first sentence in the passage above is that Chinese women grew up to be wives and slaves. It can be common knowledge, or knowledge of the writer, or assumed by the writer to be common knowledge that these two roles were the only ones that a Chinese woman had, unless she became a fighter. Whether this really was the case in the traditional Chinese society, is actually irrelevant from the ideological point of view.

The issue that the writer has chosen to point out the limited variety of possibilities to a Chinese girl is ideologically grounded. The very pointing out has a political purpose and indirectly offers the readers the political agenda of the text. This agenda is to assist in changing the value-systems that underline male-dominated societies. This political agenda is addressed to the ideological forces that work underneath the American society in the1970s, and indeed to any society with similar ideological forces.

Rationalism is not the only issue that implicitly asks for readers to connect the two societies together under the notions of male domination and control over women. The story in the beginning of *The Woman Warrior* is about an aunt of Kingston who gets pregnant by a man who is not her husband. Though the harsh punishment that she and her entire family get from other villagers is probably difficult to understand by most American readers, the story also implicitly raises questions about the control over women's sexual behaviour. The story is followed by Kingston's mother's educative words in the present American society: "Now that you have started to menstruate, what happened to her could happen to you. Don't humiliate us" (Kingston 1977: 13).

These educative words are a challenge for all readers to test their ideological assumptions about who controls women's sexuality. In old China the society controlled over women's sexuality, and a whole fam-

ily was put to shame because of an unwanted pregnancy. But it may be possible to say that shame is also on many (American) families of the 1970s and today in similar situations. According to Goddard (1987: 166) and Caplan (1987: 17), female sexuality is in the western world on the surface private, but still controlled by the family, among others. Goddard points out that honour and shame are at the heart of the domination over women's sexual behaviour in the western world as well.

Kingston provides an explanation of why Chinese people study birth charts when they arrange marriages and why they control women's sexuality. The control is conducted to prevent incest and marriages and sexual relations with relatives in a population where everyone has at least eight million relatives. Men in one village can all be a woman's brothers and uncles and great-uncles and fourth brothers. There are a hundred and fifteen titles of relatives. Any (American) reader can understand the strangeness of the multitude of relatives. The control over women's sexual behaviour is because of the multitude of kinsmen. It is dangerous for the population to let women have free sexual relations. This is a rational and wise control, but naturally the implied strange issue is that the control was not on men's sexual behaviour. Men were not controlled, because they are the controllers, naturally. The entire kinship system is to give the rulers a possibility to control.

The text uses a variety of stereotypes, some implicit, some more explicit in relation to gender roles. The writer can assume that the readers make the missing connections of implied elements because she knows the stereotypes in the American society. The important implicit element in the passage discussed earlier is *man*. There is no need to explicitly mention the item *man* because the writer can rely on the reader's stereotypes about female and male roles.

We know that the man is there in the passage structure because we know, for instance, that to be a wife there has to be a husband somewhere. The evoked implicit entities *husbands* and *masters* are offered to the readers as the male role models in the old Chinese society and contrasted with the female roles *wives* and *slaves*. This implication is supported by the cleft construction, which openly plays with our stereotyped assumptions of male and female roles. Accordingly, martial art forms like white crane boxing are more often associated with men rather than women and the factive predicate *were dangerous* asks for the infilling of *man*. At various levels men and women are contrasted.

Because man is included in the sentence, it is possible to understand that women can invent martial art forms, and be as competent as men. So both the negative and the positive choice for a Chinese woman includes men. It is possible to make an ideologically grounded judgement that Chinese women are either wives and slaves of men, or they could be like men before their feet were bound by men. Both propose male superiority. With a thought-to-be cooperative ideology it is possible to extend the interpretation and read that feet-binding was a nasty tradition that served male purposes in a patriarchal society and kept women from doing interesting things. This is a possible instance of ideological overcoding, assumed to be co-operative with the text-expressed ideology.

It is no secret in this text, or nowhere else for that matter, that the traditional Chinese society was patriarchal and women in old China were in an oppressed position. Kingston presents examples of this oppression through the stories of her female relatives and items that are deeply embedded in the Chinese culture. For instance, marriage in Chinese is synonymous for taking a daughter-in-law. A married woman could be sold, stoned, traded, or by other evil means disgraced by her

husband's parents (Kingston 1977:15). Kingston gives various examples of the vulnerability of women. Women are tortured and raped and killed and rejected in this book due to the demands of male sexuality.

But it is not only the traditional Chinese society that produces female victims. By showing how vulnerable women are the text implicitly attacks the conventional way of showing women erotically in the Chinese culture, and even more so in the American culture. Women are described as victims of the use of male power. The female body, according to Hutcheon (1989: 90), is "the locus of power politics".

Kingston also tests and provokes her readers' stereotyped and racist attitudes towards ethnic minorities. One such instance where mainly American readers are offered a bait to test their attitudes towards Chinese-American girls and women, is when young Kingston is asked what she wants to become when she grows up. The girl answers that she wants to be a lumberjack in Oregon (Kingston 1977:49). American readers are expected to have an image of Oregonian lumberjacks and this image is as far as possible from the image they have of Chinese-American women, and any woman in the American society. The text plays with people's preconceptions and stereotypes and at the same time implicitly reveals them and reminds how deep embedded people's racist and sexist attitudes are.

There are several more explicit instances in the text where racial attitudes in the American society are observed. Such instances are not always connected with racism against Chinese-American people, but racist attitudes against other ethnic groups in the United States are also revealed. From the ideological point of view, the text creates the feeling of sisterhood and brotherhood with people of different ethnic groups. Even though Chinese-American people are described as distant and isolated from all other American people,

Kingston also wishes to create a bond between herself and people from other American ethnic groups that have also been oppressed.

The main such ethnic group in the text are Black Americans. Black people are presented as being victims of the use of white American power politics. There are examples in the book to show how Kingston has come across racism in her everyday life. Ordinary people describe colours to each other by, for instance, usings terms like "Nigger Yellow". Kingston also mentions that she was fired from a job because she refused to co-operate in organizing a banquet to a restaurant with racist connections. At the same instance, she also mentions who is her enemy and perhaps the target of her political activity in the American society: "...business-suited in their modern American executive guise, each boss two feet taller than I am and impossible to meet eye to eye." (Kingston 1977:50).

The political interest and the educative and informative image of the text must be related to the time when the book was published. Today the text no longer is a sole example of the roles of women in the traditional Chinese society, and in the Chinese-American society but in the 70s Chinese and Chinese-American women and women from ethnic minorities had not yet been in a position to express themselves freely.

A reader of this text can perceive a lot of information about the American society in the 60s and 70s. Apart from racial and gender issues the text also disusses issues of youth culture, drugs, political movements, religion, and other walks of American life of the time. The text observes the American society from inside the society. From the ideological point of view, the ones discussed above may be the most important ones.

This text is a political medium and not just private history of Kingston.The personal and the polical are intertwined and the bounda-

ries between the traditional distinction into public and private disappear. The Woman Warrior wishes to demystify prejudiced assumptions about the Chinese culture by uniting China with similarities in the American society. The form of the autobiography is a combination of the writer's Chinese culture, a long female tradition in writing, and a challenge to the dominant writing conventions in the American society at the time of the writing. The challenge is cast to male authority by proposing female traditions. In this respect, the genre is connected with the gender. The literary form supports the main ideological issue in this text to contrast and confront female and male traditions.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study is to discuss the role of presupposition in interpreting literary writing and to provide a framework on both the micro-level and the macro-level of interpretation to identify these presuppositions. Maxine Hong Kingston's autobiographic The Woman Warrior. A Girlhood Among Ghosts (1976) is analysed in the light of expressed ideologies and cultures, and the structures used in the text to construct the political and the cultural. The Woman Warrior is regarded as communication from the story-teller to the reader. It is suggested that there is a communication bond between the text and its reader in a context which is both cultural and ideological and which is constructed in linguistic expressions, in the implicit part of the text, and in the specific autobiographic form. The text is suggested to presuppose ideological and cultural cooperation for the communication purpose to be fulfilled.

The concept of presupposition pool (Venneman 1975) is in this thesis used and redeveloped to identify the communication bond. The

presupposition pool is the hypothetical common ground where the text gets its even more hypothetical optimal interpretation. Writers have their own presupposition pools which are the fund of their lived experiences and the basis for their assumptions concerning the possible reader. Assumptions relating to the possible reader reflect on the choice of words and sentence structures and the information presentation as a whole. For instance, some information can be left implicit since the writer assumes the readers to make the necessary referential connection because of alleged shared knowledge, assumptions, and presuppositions.

Readers, accordingly, have their own presupposition pools which they use at any point of reading. The reader's contribution to construct the one presupposition pool is to understand the linguistic expressions and their references, but also to form an interpretation which is a production in its own right. Readers try to find out the pool by connecting the information at hand with what has been said previously in the text, but also with their previous reading experiences and, broadly, knowledge about the world. The interpretation is also affected by readers' preconceptions about the text as a whole and the information in the text. The pool is dynamic and grows as the text proceeds. It is filled with information from previous parts of the text, but also from outside the text. It also has a textual operator, the topic, which is responsible for some of the alleged shared information.

The redefinition of the presupposition pools in this thesis focuses on the context. The linguistic context of presupposition includes certain sentential processes often called presupposition-triggers. These triggers are sources of presuppositions at the level of syntax. The most common linguistic structures which embed implicit information are definite descriptions, clefts, pseudo-clefts, counterfactual conditionals,

and the so-called factual predicates. A variety of other phenomena have also been identified by linguists and philosophers.

Though the number of different presuppositional phenomena as such is fairly large and for instance definite descriptions are used frequently, texts can also have presupposed information which is not built into any of the linguistic presuppositions mentioned. Texts very often presuppose knowledge and shared assumptions and beliefs from outside the text and the context refers to an extralinguistic or environmental situation. Such presupposed information can be found in the way concepts are connected together, or presuppositions can be special lexical items, or they can be contextual in nature. Very often texts presuppose a social and a cultural context, as indeed The Woman Warrior does. For all these reasons, the context of presupposition pool was defined in terms of both the linguistic context and the environmental context. The different aspects of context are regarded as essential to understand the message constructed in the linguistic exspressions and the implicit part of the discourse.

The redefinition of the presupposition pools also concerns issues of the topic, the situation, the communication event, and background knowledge. The topic for presupposition pools is defined by the text and it can be responsible for a variety of implicit items, and consequently for a variety of misinterpretations, since people can have different assumptions concerning what issues can be connected under a topic. For instance the topic 'love' discussed in connection with an extract from Jeanette Winterson's Written on the Body can mean different things to different people, and the meaning can vary culturally, socially and historically, and also personally.

The situation in a literary communication is also defined by the text. The type of the communication event is in this text regarded

presupposition pool is structured by linguistic means. The focus is on implicit information. Second, the autobiographic form of the text was related to the suggested political function identified in the passage.

In the passage, Kingston uses a variety of forms that have conventionally been regarded as linguistic presuppositions. By using certain structures the writer can familiarise items which may be unfamiliar to the readers, or which the writer may assume to be unfamiliar to her readers. These forms seem to introduce items and entities as known. There are definite entities, so-called factual predicates, and a cleft introducing textual new information, and a counterfactual conditional embedding a statement. These linguistic devices are in the passage used to background information. The reader's attention is guided to the focal more informative parts.

Backgrounded parts contain information which relates to Chinese culture. Only some backgrounded items seem to presuppose previous knowledge about Chinese culture. Readers are perhaps expected to already know something about the Chinese feet-binding tradition and about martial arts, both generally well-known subjects in connection with discussions about traditional China. All other subjects relating to Chinese culture are more informative. White crane boxing, for instance, is introduced to the readers as a form of martial art even by presenting its birth history. Perhaps white crane boxing is not expected to be so well-known. On the basis of its passage structure and the presentation of information, the reader can get an image that the writer teaches her readers about her Chinese culture.

There is also further implicit information in the passage. The text asks for a cooperation to contrast men and women. Implicitly, the writer presents the roles of Chinese women and men in the traditional Chi-

nese society, and points out the oppression of Chinese women. Kingston also repeats the thematically important subject about the oral story-telling tradition used in China to teach children. From the implicit parts in the passage it is possible to find out the two main subjects of the text. The first subject is to raise discussion on gender roles and the second is to present Chinese culture.

The autobiographic form of the book is regarded as serving the same two functions. The special form of the text is the writer's contribution to pass on the oral tradition of her mother's "talking-story". As a woman and writer Kingston becomes a story-teller, too. Simultaneously, the form also reflects a need for change in autobiographic writing during the 70s. By expressing the story about her personal history in this particular way, the writer has deviated from the convention of presenting experienced past factually. This text speaks to American readers, and the deviation from the conventional form serves a political purpose to subvert such conventions and escape restrictions and norms that underline historical writing. Through the fictive stories, the text presents a relived past of women in the traditional partriarchal Chinese society and a lived present in the United States. After all, Kingston points out, these two societies are not so different in their relation to who is in power.

The specific genre is a political medium raising issues that contrast men and women and masculine and feminine traditions. At the same time it raises issues of power relations in societies, both the traditional Chinese society and the United States. The text speaks to American readers and presupposes knowledge of the social and cultural life in the United States from the time of World War II until the 70s. The parts in the text that concern Chinese and Chinese-American culture are openly informative.

In this respect, both phases of the analysis seem to suggest similar relations between subjects. On various levels of communication the text seems to teach (American) readers about the Chinese culture and raise issues of gender. Consequently, there is a communication bond suggested to be found in the context which is ideological, cultural, as well as linguistic and intertextual, and which can be identified using the concept of presupposition.

It seems that the concept of presupposition pools can be applied to the analysis of a literary discourse. However, there are also problems. The first problem concerns linguistic presuppositions. Since the definition of the linguistic presupposition is problematic, there has been a general tendency to avoid its use in practice. Theoretical discussions seem to have come to a void and there is little agreement as to which phenomena are presuppositions.

Some of the sentential processed could perhaps be regarded as bridging assumptions, some implicatures, some could perhaps be explained in terms of componential semantics. Using a non-defined notion in the analysis is perhaps not relevant. However, the linguistic presuppositions identified in the structure of the passage seem to contribute to the construction of the assumed shared presupposition pool in this context, and they were found useful in opening constructions that bore ideological and cultural element in this particular passage. It must be noticed that all the phenomena discussed in the analysis need not be presuppositions under the same definition. Subordination, for example, is not always included in the list of linguistic presuppositions. Yet, at least in this passage, subordination is used just like the other mentioned devices. Overtly it seems that linguistic presuppositions could be applied to opening implicit parts of discourses. There is, however, a need for conceptual clarifi-

cation and perhaps redefining the notions.

The concept of presupposition can also be used at broader levels of communication expressing implicit elements such as attitudes, ideologies, and culturally specific lexical and conceptual items. Since it is possible to find out presupposed items relating to the notions of culture and ideology, it should be equally possible to find presuppositions relating to history. As was pointed out, this text cannot avoid its historical context of the 50s, 60s, and 70s in the United States. Historical presuppositions may be helpful in identifying ideological and cultural conventions and norms that are specific to certain times. Accordingly, it seems possible to find presuppositions that are socially bound.

There is a further problem concerning the term presupposition. If it can be used as a virtual synonym for assumptions, as it has been used in this thesis and in pragmatic theories and theories of cultural presupposition, there is perhaps a further need for some specification. Because presupposition is a fairly formal word, it may be the case that assumptions have replaced it and the term presupposition is limited to surroundings were the formal connotations are preferred. Yet, there seems to be enough room for both terms. For further theoretical purposes, there is perhaps some need for conceptual clearance.

Since there are cultural barriers that need to be overcome in cultural interaction, it would seem obvious that opening some myths under the notion of cultural presupposition would make people understand other cultures. Perhaps the most important thing would be to understand those presuppositions that are inherent in every one of us and make us say and do things and take certain things for granted, and reject other things without our being aware of them. However, the problematic issue is always who decides what are cultural presuppositions. As in the case of Strevens's framework, cultural presuppositions can

express more of the ideology of the one making the domains. So there may be some need for reforming in the domains of cultural presuppositions, too. It seems, however, that cultures cannot easily be put to specific stable categories since cultures are not stable entities.

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