

Narrating Non-Knowledge: The Novel and the Sciences of the Human Subject

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Non-Knowledge and the Novel (I) – "I don't know nothink"

One of the characters most famous in literary history for living in a state of non-knowledge is Jo, in Charles Dickens's 1853 novel *Bleak House*. "Jo sweeps his crossing all day long," the novel informs us, and he "sums up his mental condition when asked a question by replying that he 'don't know nothink'" (197).

But something more complex than a simple opposition between knowing and not knowing becomes perceptible in the novel when Jo's condition of ignorance is put on display during an inquest. The coroner seeks to determine whether to admit Jo as a witness, and this hearing is rendered as follows:

Name, Jo. Nothing else that he knows on. Don't know that everybody has two names. Never heard of sich a think. Don't know that Jo is short for a longer name. [...] No father, no mother, no friends. Never been to school. What's home? Knows a broom's a broom, and knows it's wicked to tell a lie. Don't recollect who told him about the broom or about the lie, but knows both. Can't exactly say what'll be done to him arter he's dead if he tells a lie to the gentlemen here, but believes it'll be something wery bad to punish him, and serve him right—and so he'll tell the truth.

"This won't do, gentlemen!" says the coroner with a melancholy shake of the head. [...]

"We can't take THAT in a court of justice, gentlemen. [...] Put the boy aside." Boy put aside, to the great edification of the audience. (Dickens 134)

The narrative choices in this passage are clearly designed to authenticate Jo's state of ignorance. Both the selective reproduction of his non-standard syntax, grammar and pronunciation and the glaring gaps of knowledge illustrate the complete neglect Jo must have experienced since the early years of his life. Still, the passage does more. Along with Jo's lack of knowledge, it also displays the simple and unaffected truthfulness with which he lays open the limited extent of his actual knowledge, which does, after all, include the handling of a broom and the awareness of the obligation to speak the truth. This last point, in fact, signals the shortcomings of the characters who are, within the fictional world of the novel, in the position of knowing and judging Jo. The text keeps an ironic distance from the patronizing attitude of the coroner and the smugness of the audience, effectively highlighting the share which these qualities bear in the production of Jo as a subject of ignorance, which leads the characters actively to overlook the pertinent knowledge that Jo does possess. Jo's unreserved truthfulness and his readiness to lay open the limitations of his knowledge are thus placed in stark contrast with the judgmental knowingness of those who end up preventing the articulation and inclusion of Jo's knowledge in the legal procedure, effectively colluding in the production of a specific instance of legal and social ignorance. At least to an attentive readership, the narrative thus puts on display different kinds of ignorance, establishing and conveying an ethical contrast along with the contrast in information – the ignorance of those who consider themselves as

knowing, and who are complicit with the societal failures responsible for producing Jo's ignorance.

The passage just quoted may have been modelled on a critical article which first appeared in the London weekly newspaper *The Examiner* some years prior to the publication of the novel. The piece is reprinted in the appendix to the Norton critical edition of *Bleak House*. Its authorship is unknown, but it is known that Dickens wrote for *The Examiner*. In the article, the questions posed by an Alderman are more specifically based on the Anglican catechism while the boy's testimony is more monosyllabic, and both are rendered directly rather than in the variety of free indirect style that Dickens employs in the novel:

Alderman Humphrey: Do you ever say your prayers?
 Boy: No; never.
 Alderman Humphrey: Do you know what prayers are?
 Boy: No.
 Alderman Humphrey: Do you know what God is?
 Boy: No.
 Alderman Humphrey: Do you know what the Devil is?
 Boy: No. I've heard of the Devil, but I don't know him.
 Alderman Humphrey: What do you know my poor fellow?
 Boy: I knows how to sweep the crossing. (Anon 926)

The article goes on to propose a similar set of distinctions between different forms and magnitudes of non-knowledge, but is clearly more direct in its means of signalling to the reader its critical stance towards the constitution of a particular individual as a subject of non-knowledge. More explicitly and indeed aggressively than in the novel, *The Examiner* suggests that the positions of knowing subject and ignorant subject might be reassigned once different kinds of knowledge come into play. The article goes on to imagine the tables being turned on the Alderman:

Let us suppose the alderman under examination:
 Q. Do you know what a logarithm is?
 Q. Can you construe an ode of Horace?
 Q. Can you read Greek?
 Q. Do you ever say anything which anybody thinks worth hearing or repeating?
 Q. Do you know what chlorine is?
 Q. What do you know? my poor alderman.
 A. I know how to eat a city feast. (Anon 927)

Once it becomes a matter of the literary or scientific knowledge of the day, the journal suggests, the person who previously held the subject position of knowledge will turn out to be a subject of non-knowledge. The sole remaining practical capability which the alderman is credited with – eating "a city feast" – foregrounds the polemical and triumphalist aggressiveness that accompanies the act of publicly displaying a person as ignorant, and is itself palpably informed with the class bias of the university-educated gentleman against the commercial classes.

As in the novel, but again more directly, the same move not only serves to shift responsibility for the boy's ignorance of the catechism towards the social frameworks that have failed to provide adequate care and schooling, but also to

underline the ethical value of the boy's frankness and openness as manifested in his confessions of ignorance:

There are many things which an alderman does not know, but would an alderman, put to the question, have been as strictly veracious as the boy in confessing his ignorance, especially if it were an ignorance to which any shame attached? (Anon 927)

The question is rhetorical. The alderman, *The Examiner* suggests, would have had recourse to "some shuffling, some evasion of the confession of ignorance" (927). Subjects with access to social privilege appear also to possess skills that help them avoid being recognized as subjects of non-knowledge. What makes the boy stand out is precisely his lack of resources allowing him to avoid being classified as an ignorant subject:

[...] amongst the many things [the boy] did not know was *to feign that he did know*. He was a truthful witness against himself, as society had to its shame suffered him to be; and for the very evidence of his adherence to truth most faithfully, the magistrate puts him aside as not to be trusted as a witness. (Anon 927, emphasis added)

The passage from *Bleak House* and the article in *The Examiner* differ significantly in their tactics and techniques of representation, but there are essential similarities. Both focus most immediately on the problem of the potential exclusion of reliable evidence on the basis of mistaken, class-biased distinctions between knowledge and non-knowledge. And both redirect the moral disapproval of the extent of the non-knowledge displayed by the interrogated subject, turning it into an indictment of a society which appears to offer no remedies to the neglect which the youthful street-sweeper has evidently suffered. But aside from the ethical dimension, there are strategic considerations. While, as I shall discuss below, these are part of the complex workings of literary subject-formation and signification in *Bleak House*, the *Examiner* piece unequivocally emphasises that there is a distinction between subjects according to how well-versed they are in the tactics for avoiding the impression of ignorance.

Whether someone is categorised as a subject of knowledge or of ignorance, then, appears to depend on a complex range of factors. It has to do with the specific kinds of knowledge that are brought into play so that their absence can be demonstrated, and it depends on the distribution of authority in a particular situation. Ignorance appears to be a question of discursive frameworks, and of the specific knowledges relevant to these frameworks, rather than simply of the quantity of knowledge possessed by a particular individual. Moreover, whether, or in what way, a person is categorised as ignorant becomes a function not only of the question of who has the position of authority to attribute to another the status of a subject of ignorance, but of who has which resources and strategies at their disposal in order to avoid becoming constructed as subjects of ignorance.

Surrounding the self-declared subject of non-knowledge is, potentially, a whole array of speakers and subject positions whose own knowledge and discursive agency are predicated on this statement of non-knowledge. The alderman in the article employs a particular mode of questioning to establish the ignorance of the interrogated subject; with the effect that the knowledge to which the boy lays claim – how to sweep a crossing – is not recognized as valid by the alderman and the

institution on whose behalf he acts. The novel leaves the coroner's questions to be inferred from the series of answers through which it makes Jo voice his ignorance, at the same time that it extends Jo's explicit claims to knowledge so as to include the wickedness of lying and the obligation to tell the truth. In the article, by contrast, it is the journalistic voice that presents its own claim regarding the boy's veracity, based on an assessment of his explicit statements. Both passages, then, also display a range of possible ways in which certain types of non-knowledge in some subjects are correlated with certain other types of knowledge in other, differently positioned subjects, all within a context of power relations and moral evaluation. In short, the texts themselves constitute particular focal constellations of knowledge and non-knowledge which emerge in the process of their representation and critique of particular constellations of knowledge and non-knowledge.

The two passages analysed here may perhaps be too slim a basis to suggest that, both in the arenas of public debate and journalistic media and in the arena of modern literary fiction there exists a tradition of critical engagement relating to the conditions of subjecthood within constellations of knowledge and non-knowledge. But at the very least, the passages testify to the existence of differently structured discourses of non-knowledge. Both passages intervene critically in a discourse about non-knowledge, by way of analysing and putting on critical display certain foregoing instances of a discourse about non-knowledge.

By contrast, neither text explicitly makes a case for the systematic analysis of discourses of non-knowledge, in the different fields in which they occur: in literary fiction, in the arenas of public debate and journalistic media and, indeed, in literary criticism and literary scholarship. This article will offer some suggestions for the directions such a project might take. I propose to highlight briefly the contours of the recently proposed research focus of agnotology and specifically of an agnotological discourse analysis (section 2); then draw on an agnotological screening of some of Michel Foucault's work on the human sciences from the 1960s and 1970s in order to highlight what appears as a pervasive and significant agnotological dimension in modern societies, that specifically relates to the construction of human subjecthood (section 3); and return to the question of the systematic role of discourses of knowledge and non-knowledge in the context of literary narrative (section 4), before suggesting how a focus on constellations of knowledge and non-knowledge may prepare us for engaging with the specific modes of deploying and narrating non-knowledge in literary fiction, in the humanities and in the sciences (section 5).

Agnotology – Discourses of Non-Knowledge

The humanities have a rich tradition of examining both the history and the cultural locations of knowledge, in the more traditional forms of the history of ideas and the history of science, or more recently as cultural studies or science studies focusing on the construction of cultural or scientific knowledges. With the cultural turn of the 1980s and 1990s that specific concern with the construction and critique of particular knowledges and their truth claims has become one of the hallmarks of the humanities – to the degree that the science wars of the 1990s pitted the humanities, and notions of the social construction and cultural relativity of knowledge, against the sciences, and notions of objectivity and universal validity of knowledge. That stark opposition has come to give way to more differentiated conceptions and more constructive discussions since the turn of the twenty-first century. Specifically, indications of a growing interest in the role of the medium of narrative in the construction and mediation of scientific knowledge have come from both the humanities (Farzin et al.;

Morgan et al.) and the sciences, both in relation to their representation in public arenas (Peters; Dahlstrom) as well as in specialist arenas (Kirchhofer and Auguscik).

In 2008, Robert Proctor and Londa Schiebinger's *Agnotology* proposed shifting scholarly concern in the humanities towards non-knowledge. Agnotology, according to Proctor's programmatic essay, sets out to "question the naturalness of ignorance," positing instead that "ignorance, like knowledge, has a political geography" (6). Critical work will therefore focus on the analysis of "the conscious, unconscious, and structural production of ignorance, its diverse causes and conformations" (3). The complexities of the political geography of knowledge and ignorance can be discerned by way of a methodology guided by questions such as: "Who knows not? And why not? Where is there ignorance and why?" (6).

The concerns which *Agnotology* seeks to establish clearly stand in the tradition of the humanities' characteristic concern with the history, varieties and functions of knowledge, to which it promises to add an explicit focus on the varieties and functions of non-knowledge. They also clearly resonate with the issues discussed in the opening section. But while the critical engagements with constellations of knowledge and non-knowledge examined in the previous section remain, as it were, incidental and situational, agnotology holds the promise of a systematic critical and analytical engagement not only with constellations of knowledge and non-knowledge but also with specific discourses of non-knowledge, and with the specific functions of specific forms of non-knowledge within these discourses.

The general discussion of different conceptions of non-knowledge offered by Proctor in his programmatic essay provides an instance of the challenge to negotiate and combine these several levels. On the basis of its own conceptualisation of ignorance and non-knowledge, agnotology both critiques and rejects alternative cultural constructions, and most notably those established conceptions that would operate with the traditional, conventional and widespread assumption of "the naturalness of ignorance" (Proctor 6). The traditional conception posits the existence of a totality of possible knowledge, that will be divided, at any given historical point, into two subtotals: on the one hand, the sum of that which is known at a particular point, and on the other hand, the sum of that which is not known. This notion is connected to a concept of progress as the continual increase of what is known, and proportionate decrease of what is not known. Correspondingly, non-knowledge would always be understood as the "not yet known" (3). Ultimately, this involves a reduction of the concept of non-knowledge to refer to a knowledge that is not yet available; knowledge and non-knowledge are separated by a "steadily retreating frontier" (3) and ideally linked to a constant increase of knowledge and diminution of non-knowledge.

An agnotological approach will reject such constructions of non-knowledge as inadequate, while at the same time (1) acknowledging the particular forms of their discursive presence whenever one comes across them, (2) analysing their particular role within a given constellation of knowledge and non-knowledge, and (3) potentially making them accessible to critical evaluation and discussion; and we may ask how similar or how different the discourses of non-knowledge, and the constellations of knowledge and non-knowledge will be, depending on whether they exist in the sciences, in the humanities, in literary narratives, or indeed in public debate and its media.

By taking a structural rather than a merely quantitative approach to knowledge, agnotology therefore contributes an innovative angle in critical and historical research, that can at the same time create new perspectives for intervening

in particular ongoing negotiations of positions of knowledge and non-knowledge. For it must be emphasised that there is not a simple either/or choice. It is not a question of either taking part in the negotiation of contested claims and attributions of knowledge and non-knowledge (and in the process using the available cultural and discursive techniques for constituting others as subjects of non-knowledge or avoiding oneself to be so constituted by others), or undertaking a systematic description of specific discourses of non-knowledge and specific constellations of knowledge and non-knowledge, by paying attention to the particular forms and functions of non-knowledge within these constellations and discourses, and to the ways in which these may be instrumental to the constitution of subject-positions of knowledge or non-knowledge, respectively. The analysis of the "political geography" of knowledge and non-knowledge will involve a systematic analysis both of historical and of contemporary discourses of non-knowledge. And this will include a critical analysis of the construction of positions of authority in knowledge discourses and in relation to knowledge practices, as well as a critical analysis of who becomes an object of knowledge and who is admitted to the status of authorised subject in relation to discourses of knowledge.

Agnotology can therefore be understood as a reflexive engagement with particular constellations of knowledge and non-knowledge, based on the understanding that both knowledge and ignorance are structural, rather than only or mainly quantitative phenomena. If the passages discussed in the opening section can be described as an incidental problematization of discourses of non-knowledge in literary narrative, as well as in journalism and public debate, then the concept of an agnotology designates the potentials of a systematic attention to constellations of knowledge and non-knowledge. An agnotological approach will therefore encompass a spectrum of dimensions: firstly, recognising and identifying the existence of particular discourses of non-knowledge; secondly, describing the locations, the operations and the functions of particular forms of non-knowledge within the context of particular constellations of knowledge and non-knowledge; and, thirdly, opening up these discourses of non-knowledge to historical contextualisation and critical evaluation.

The general question will then be: What discourses of non-knowledge and what constellations of knowledge and non-knowledge do we encounter in the sciences, the humanities, in the narratives of literary fiction, or in journalistic media and public debates? And are any particular such discourses or constellations characteristic of one or another of these arenas? Proctor may not be wrong when he remarks in passing that the traditional conception of "ignorance as a native state" destined successively to give way to increasing knowledge "may be the most common way that scientists think about our topic" (4). Yet it seems advisable to hesitate before attributing that conventional conception – based on a merely quantitative conception of knowledge as a totality divided into the two sections of the already known and the not yet known – to one particular field of modern knowledge. It is likely that scientists might want to contradict this claim, and it is unlikely that the claim could really form a general basis for a distinction between the sciences and the humanities. Instead, it seems more appropriate to state that this simplistic and inaccurate quantitative conception of non-knowledge has, in societies like our own, a cultural currency which comprises popular representations of science and the history of science but extends even to academic discourses both in the sciences and the humanities. One might perhaps go further and recognise that this traditional conception of ignorance as the "place *where knowledge has not yet penetrated*"

(Proctor 4), and its ethical imperative towards the production of knowledge, are deeply tied to the foundational conceptions of a Western, Euro-American ethos and rhetoric of knowledge production, in which the humanities have participated as much as the sciences.

Within the scope of this article, however, it will neither be possible to pursue this exploration, nor indeed the question of the characteristic discourses of non-knowledge and the characteristic constellations of knowledge and non-knowledge in and across the sciences. In preparation for this discussion, I will offer, in very broad strokes, the contours of a reflexive engagement with discourses of non-knowledge and constellations of knowledge and non-knowledge as they exist specifically, first, in the human sciences and, second, in the modern novel. If we engage in a productive discussion about the structural roles of non-knowledge in the sciences of the human and in modern literary narratives, we may be building a basis for fruitful and contrastive cross-disciplinary engagements with the roles of narrative in connection with discourses and constellations of knowledge and non-knowledge in the sciences.

Discourses of Non-Knowledge and the Sciences of the Human

Michel Foucault's work of the 1960s and 1970s contains several accounts of the emergence of the sciences of the human, and of their specific forms of knowledge and modes of operation, from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. Often seen as corresponding to successive archaeological and genealogical phases in Foucault's work, *The Order of Things* (orig. 1966), *Discipline and Punish* (orig. 1975), and *The History of Sexuality, vol. 1* (orig. 1976), offer partial accounts of the formation and operation of the human sciences, focusing on various angles in the related histories of knowledges and their institutions. Foucault's work of the mid-1970s has been highly influential in literary and cultural studies, contributing to the 'cultural turn' of the later twentieth century, leading to studies on prisons and the police in eighteenth and nineteenth century literature (Bender; Miller) and giving substantial if often controversial impulses to gender studies and queer studies (Sedgwick) as well as postcolonial studies (Said). The fact that Foucault also has ties to the history of science in France has been far less prominent in the critical reception, at least in Anglophone literary and cultural studies. Indeed, an exploration of the potential relevance of this dimension of Foucault's work to literature and science studies still remains, to my knowledge, a desideratum.

Regardless of where critics have placed the emphasis, Foucault has come to be widely seen not only as the champion of a certain form of discourse analysis, but as a controversial historian of knowledge, power and subjecthood in and beyond the human sciences. Taking the cue from agnotology, I will argue that it will also be fruitful to draw attention to Foucault as a historian of non-knowledge, outlining in very broad strokes what we may come to see as Foucault's agnotological gaze. Looking at Foucault's work through an agnotological lens, it is striking to what degree his successive studies all demonstrate how deeply and thoroughly the sciences of the human are marked by a fundamental reliance on discourses of non-knowledge. At the core of Foucault's critical project is a break with this fundamental reliance.

The Order of Things is, among other things, a study that historicises the emergence of the modern sciences devoted to life, to labour and to language – sciences that correlate with a conception of the human as living being which is both materially and culturally productive. Foucault's historical account seeks to elucidate the epistemological conditions of possibility of these sciences which began to emerge around 1800, and to demonstrate the radical differences that separate them from

earlier scientific formations: natural history, analysis of wealth, and general grammar (cf. esp. 218-226). Famously, though, Foucault's decision to present not a history, but an "archaeology of the human sciences," as the book's subtitle reads, is prompted by an inability to integrate into an historical account the changes that divide the former from the latter formation of knowledge. A "great hiatus [...] occurred in the modern episteme at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries" (354), the book famously asserts: "knowledge takes up residence in a new space", and the spaces of knowledge are separated by an "original rupture" (235).

Foucault is programmatically unclear about the factors that led to the shifts in the formations of knowledge described in *The Order of Things*. Discussing what factors may possibly have brought about or promoted the epistemic shift that he locates around the turn of the nineteenth century, he concludes that "this profound breach [...] cannot be 'explained'" (236). There remains a specific and explicitly recognized area of non-knowledge, "a discontinuity [...] enigmatic in its principle" (235) regarding the factors that brought about the change in the fundamental conditions of knowledge production around 1800.

At the same time, Foucault is very clear in his analysis of the specific mode of deployment of non-knowledge which characterises the newly emerging episteme. Non-knowledge plays a central role in relation to the "sciences of man" that emerge as "part of the modern *episteme*" (398). Foucault proposes the following succinct definition:

[A] 'human science' exists, not wherever man is in question, but wherever there is analysis – *within the dimension proper to the unconscious* – of norms, rules, and signifying totalities which *unveil to consciousness the conditions of its forms and contents*. (398, emphasis added)

Foucault's account therefore posits the human sciences as a relevant object for agnotological problematisation. Nor is this proposed in a tentative way, since he adds: "To speak of 'sciences of man' in any other case is simply an abuse of language" (398). The sciences of the human participate in a structural deployment of non-knowledge; they study those dimensions of human beings as living organisms and as materially and culturally productive beings which determine human beings' physical and mental states and behaviours without their being aware of it. They therefore effectively target human non-knowledge about human life and behaviour, in a way that became possible in consequence of a particular epistemic shift that took place around 1800.

The analysis of the structural deployment of non-knowledge as part of complex arrangements of knowledge production centred on the scientific study of the human continues to form an essential dimension of Foucault's critical research. This is most immediately visible in Foucault's critical perspective on the history of discourses about sexuality. In the first volume of his *History of Sexuality*, Foucault describes the constitution of sexuality as the focus of scientific study, sketching the various stages in which this takes place. The summary account which he gives of the structural deployment of knowledge and non-knowledge within the frameworks of discourses on sexuality reads like a concrete case in point for his earlier general observations on the human sciences:

[T]here has evolved, over several centuries, a knowledge of the subject; a knowledge not so much of his form, but of that which [...] causes him to be

ignorant of himself. [...] the project of a science of the subject has gravitated, in ever narrowing circles, around the question of sex. *Causality in the subject, the unconscious of the subject, the truth of the subject in the other who knows, the knowledge he holds unbeknown to him* [literally "le savoir en lui de ce qu'il ne sait pas lui-même"], all this found an opportunity to deploy itself in the discourse of sex. Not, however, by reason of some natural property inherent in sex itself, but by virtue of the tactics of power immanent in this discourse. (70, emphasis added)

As the final sentence underlines, Foucault's focus is on the structural and institutional production of specific types of ignorance. The non-knowledge put into play here, located in one subject and relating to the degree to which subjects know themselves, cannot be conceived separately or independently of an equally specific knowledge which has its location and basis of existence elsewhere: it is "the truth of the subject in the other who knows" (70). Subjecthood, from this perspective, becomes an effect of a complex constellation of knowledges and non-knowledges within the individual, which are however correlatives of an additional arrangement of institutions and subject-positions of knowledge production which elicit and target them. In fact, it is the focus on these connections that defines and distinguishes Foucault's agnotological gaze from previous constructions of non-knowledge in relation to sexuality.

Foucault is of course by no means the first to conceptualise links between non-knowledge and subjecthood in connection with scientific knowledge relating to sexuality. He analyses, historicises and, quite clearly, seeks to displace the ways in which discourses and approaches associated with Freudian psychoanalysis theorise the unconscious. As is well known, these are based on the distinction between the conscious and unconscious dimensions of the psyche, and the understanding that the production of the sexual unconscious is an effect of a repression. The shift that Foucault proposes, in implicit opposition to psychoanalysis, is (1) to recognise explicitly the prominent role which the discursive construction of an unconscious takes in relation to sexuality as a field of knowledge, and at the same time (2) to historicise it by situating it within the wider genealogy of particular formations of power/knowledge correlated with the question of sexuality and its consciousness. In a move that may be justly described as agnotological, Foucault understands the production of ignorance as both a by-product and an instrumental component in the operations of the evolving discourses about sexuality: non-knowledge emerges as an effect of particular operations of power, conditioned by the institutional settings and practices of knowledge production in relation to sexuality rather than a quality of the research object, the psyche, itself.

Discipline and Punish is perhaps the study most insistently concerned with the specific operations whose combination produces the knowledge base for the constitution of human subjects as ignorant of themselves. The book highlights the intersections of specific kinds of power relations with specific practices and settings of knowledge production, as it traces the gradual and distributed emergence of the elements and techniques of disciplinary power, as well as their successive adoption and combination across a wide range of institutions such as schools, hospitals, prisons, factories – different in purpose, but increasingly similar in organisation. Even though Foucault's account is marked by a desire to avoid any claim to a systematic, teleological and totalising perspective, the emblematic figure of the "panopticon" associated with this kind of power relation has often been taken to indicate just that. Nevertheless, Foucault insists that the rationales guiding the processes of the

adoption, variation and specification of disciplinary techniques across different institutional settings tended to follow local and tactical rationales; rather than being effects of a centralised and uniform deployment, they were located in the dynamics of the operational conditions that marked each particular setting.

Foucault painstakingly enumerates the techniques that make up disciplinary power and details their operation. Across the fields in which it is exercised, disciplinary power draws on specifically adapted techniques of "distribution" and "spatial arrangement" (141-49), it exercises "control of activity" e.g., through "timetables" and other "temporal arrangements" (149-56), and it organizes processes which in turn enables the "composition of forces," creating not merely efficient means of controlling and supervising, but also enabling and increasing productiveness (156-69). Depending on the context of deployment – whether in hospitals, schools, factories, or prisons – the specific variations and combinations of these techniques make it possible to institute specific sets and patterns of minutely organised and networked activities. Disciplinary power also establishes corresponding subject positions whose role it is to monitor, interpret and evaluate the individual practices and activities, and the variations in their performance. The techniques of "hierarchical observation" (170-77) and "normalising judgment" (177-84), are combined in the format of the "examination" (184-92) which exists in many variations suited to their different institutional contexts, and forms an indispensable and pervasive practice across the spectrum of disciplinary settings.

The examination, argues Foucault, has the effect of "transforming the economy of visibility into the exercise of power" (187) by way of introducing "individuality into the field of documentation" (189). As a result, "each individual" becomes a "case" constituting "at one and the same time [...] an object for a branch of knowledge and a hold for a branch of power" (191). There are close connections between "the appearance of the card-index and the constitution of the human sciences" (281), Foucault asserts. The "setting up of a documentary system" (281) amounts to the creation of a medial basis that makes it possible for disciplinary institutions to constitute individuals as cases. The knowledge of individual subjects is based on the case files which are kept according to the specific criteria relevant to the respective institutions. The contents of these case files may or may not be known to the individual subjects, and the meaning of the data they contain may or may not be understood by them. But those whose institutional roles give them access to the data in the case files will also have the knowledge, methods and authority to produce that knowledge about the individual subjects which defines them even if they themselves do not possess or cannot articulate it. In other words, the individuals themselves are at best secondary sites for authoritative knowledge about themselves, but primarily objects of knowledge, and subjects of non-knowledge; by contrast, the primary agents whose institutional position enables them to observe, record and evaluate the behaviours and statements of individuals according to an expert knowledge unavailable to the individual themselves, include the practitioners of the sciences focusing on humans.

Prisoners are by no means the only individuals in modern societies for whom case files exist, and Foucault persistently reverts to the connections that link the rise and spread of disciplinary power not only to the birth of the prison but also to the emergence of the sciences of the human. He describes the procedures that combine the exercise of power with the production of knowledge in ways that regulate the formation of individual identity in modern societies as "scientifico-disciplinary mechanisms" (193). Citing examples across a range of institutions – including

medical, criminal, juridical, military, academic, educational and pedagogic settings – Foucault suggests how a “swarming” (211) of these “scientifico-disciplinary mechanisms” created the conditions under which subjecthood is constituted both in the contexts of social existence and of the production of scientific knowledge about humans in their collective and individual existence. It is these “scientifico-disciplinary” settings and techniques that combine to “give birth to man as an object of knowledge for a discourse with a ‘scientific’ status” (24).

The formation of the human sciences, and the constitution of individual humans as objects of knowledge and subjects of non-knowledge is part and parcel of this mode of knowledge production. According to Foucault, they can then be seen as knowledge-effects of the spread of “scientifico-disciplinary” techniques which, at the same time, also entails power-effects. The formation of a modern society whose institutions rely on “scientifico-disciplinary mechanisms” of knowledge production has brought about, Foucault argues, a “reversal of the political axis of individualisation” (192). Instead of the ascending individualisation found in older types, e.g., the feudal society, in which those with a high social status were more highly individualised than those of inferior social standing, modern societies operate on a principle of descending individualisation, meaning that “as power becomes more anonymous and more functional, those on whom it is exercised tend to be more strongly individualized” (193). And as the modes of exercising power shift, so do the corresponding types of knowledge. The human sciences, Foucault claims, and specifically “[a]ll sciences, analyses or practices employing the root ‘psycho-’ have their origin in this historical [shift concerning] the procedures of individualization” (193).

If, in *The Order of Things*, Foucault spoke of his own non-knowledge of the reasons for the epistemic changes he was describing, his work of the mid-1970s is able to point to particular types of power relations whose interconnections with particular forms of knowledge production create the conditions of possibility for a scientific knowledge about human subjects. And if these institutional premises are unconscious, it is not because they are not known to the practitioners who produce or validate the knowledges in question, but only because their role as epistemological framework is not explicitly acknowledged and conceptualised by those practitioners. Making visible the constitutive function of “scientifico-disciplinary mechanisms” provides fundamental, if perhaps partial, insights into techniques sustaining the structural deployment of non-knowledge in the sciences of the human and in the forms of subjectivity correlated with these. The cultural production of non-knowledge, in the very specific form of the conceptualisation of human subjects as non-transparent selves, is discernible as a core element in the sciences of the human. From *The Order of Things* via *Discipline and Punish* to volume one of *The History of Sexuality*, the sciences of the human subject are demonstrated to pivot around a particular gap in human self-knowledge, which the very modality of their operations of knowledge production also produces. Human sciences, and the ways in which they constitute the individuality of humans, are essentially modes of scientific knowledge production that target that which defines humans without their being aware of it. Within very specific institutional structures, they seek to produce knowledge in the space opened up by human non-knowledge, and by the non-transparent self.

Non-Knowledge and the Novel (II) – The “Problematic Individual”

How can these insights become productive in relation to literary narratives and the question of narrating non-knowledge? If we can take Foucault to have argued that in

modern societies the lives of many, if not most, are substantially shaped, protected, regulated and adjudicated by institutions (of education, of work, of physical and mental health and of security) whose operation is crucially based on the deployment of scientifico-disciplinary techniques which in turn entail the constitution of individuals as non-transparent selves – then how are the ways in which literary characters are narrated in modern novels implicated in this situation? If Foucault may be said to have provided us with an agnology of the human subject in modern societies, how might we arrive at an agnology of the literary character in modern fiction?

Foucault's passing comments on literature point us part of the way, at best. The substantial debate about Foucault in literary studies does not, as yet, include an explicitly agnological angle, and has not addressed specifically the possible connections between literary character in modern fiction and Foucault's conception of modern subjecthood. And while Foucault has written about literary texts, they do not feature prominently in the books where he engages with the human sciences. Occasionally, literary references are used in these works in order to illustrate central arguments. In *The Order of Things*, *Don Quixote* and the novels of the Marquis de Sade are invoked at points when Foucault outlines the transitional phases from the renaissance episteme to the classical episteme, and from the classical episteme to the modern episteme respectively (51-55; 227-29). In *The History of Sexuality, vol.1*, Diderot's *Les bijoux indiscrets* [The Indiscreet Jewellery] is cited as emblematic of the incitement to discourse, the "mise en discours" of sex that the volume proposes to reconstruct (77-80). In *Discipline and Punish* there is a very brief reference to the connections between literary narrative and the scientific approaches to human subjectivities conditioned by non-knowledge. The reference occurs in a passage where Foucault relates the spread of disciplinary settings and the phenomenon of descending individualisation to the emergence of new cultural narratives of individuality, citing specifically "the passage from the epic to the novel, from the noble deed to the secret singularity, from long exiles to the internal search for childhood, from combats to phantasies" (193). The passage continues:

The adventure of our childhood no longer finds expression in 'le bon petit Henri', but in the misfortunes of 'little Hans'. The *Romance of the Rose* is written today by Mary Barnes; in the place of Lancelot, we have Judge Schreber. (193-94)

By implication, and without discussing the specifics of the connection or focusing on the role of non-knowledge, through the mere inclusion of "the passage from the epic to the novel," Foucault connects the question of character in the modern novel to his analysis of modern subjecthood. Yet Foucault does not reference particular novels as illustrating the modern narratives of individuality, but cites psychoanalytical case histories and the writings of those connected in one way or another with the "sciences, analyses or practices employing the root 'psycho-'" (193).

Clearly, then, tracing the forms and functions of non-knowledge in connection with literary narratives, and the specific discourses of knowledge and non-knowledge relating to them, will involve some specific screening of literary narratives and literary theory. Foucault himself has written about the specific features of subjecthood in the context of literary discourses in his famous essay "What is an Author?" (1969) to which I will revert below. First, though, it seems worth noting that while both the examination and the case history are formats that authors have widely drawn on in

literary narratives since the nineteenth century – and even beyond the genres of detective fiction and the psychological novel – it can hardly be a question of equating literary discourse or the analysis of literary characters in general with the scientific discourse in the social and behavioural sciences. Literary scholars are not as a whole committed to psychoanalysing literary characters, although at times there have been lively debates about the degree to which this might be possible in principle or in relation to particular novels. Nor is it standard procedure to diagnose the conditions of literary characters, as doctors do those who have a medical condition, or to establish criminological profiles motives.

At the same time, the claim that modern novels are distinguished from earlier forms of narrative by their concern with individuals as subjects of non-knowledge resonates strikingly with one of the famous theoretical accounts of modern fiction from the earlier twentieth century. Georg Lukács, in his *Theory of the Novel* (1920), is also concerned with “the passage from the epic to the novel.” Lukács casts the protagonists’ non-knowledge as a central structural feature of the modern novel when he identifies the “problematic individual” (78) as the novel’s focal element. Specifically, Lukács claims the protagonist’s progress from being a subject of non-knowledge about themselves towards becoming a subject of self-knowledge is a constituent element of the plot structure in modern fiction. While the particular paths and degrees of this process of overcoming these initial states of non-knowledge of the self may vary greatly from text to text, the fundamental connection between the construction of the fictional plot and the gradual or sudden realisation when characters come to understand deep truths about themselves and their existence – a knowledge that has been shown long to elude them – runs through modern fiction as a genre-defining feature. Lukács contends that this specific conjuncture of character portrayal and plot construction is fundamental to the function of modern literary fiction and its ability to represent and problematise modern society. This is a world in which an assured knowledge of the individual’s place in the world has given way to a “transcendental homelessness” (41) because scientific progress and the economic and political dynamics of a modernising society have shattered all certainties about the natural or God-given form of social and individual existence that apparently were offered by the cultural knowledges of traditional societies in the past – an account which functions as a frame narrative frequently recounted in modern societies, providing a consensus that helps make sense of a situation in which apparently a consensus is no longer possible (cf. Lindemann and Kirchhofer). The epic is, according to Lukács, the narrative form that corresponds to societies which are still intact; the novel emerges in consequence of their loss. Hence, while epics essentially represent intact communities with intact worldviews, the modern novel is about “the life of the problematic individual” (78). The problematic individuals, protagonists of modern novels, are invariably understood as subjects of non-knowledge, at least for a significant portion of the story that is told about them. “The outward form of the novel,” writes Lukács, “is essentially biographical” (77), i.e., it records the more or less notable events in the life of the protagonist. “The inner form of the novel,” Lukács then declares, is “the process of the problematic individual’s journeying towards himself, [...] towards clear self-recognition” (80). The relation between the protagonists’ knowledge and non-knowledge is, according to Lukács, the defining element of the plot structure and dynamics of the modern novel.

Lukács’ *Theory of the Novel* may appear dated, and it is certainly based on fairly traditional canons of nineteenth-century European realist fiction. But Lukács is by no means alone in positing the claim that the protagonists’ progress from a specific

state of non-knowledge – ignorance of themselves and their true needs – towards a state of knowledge is a central and indispensable structural feature of the narratives that generate interest and carry plausibility in our culture. Nor is the narrative concern with the non-knowledge of characters confined to institutional contexts and elite reading practices. Jessica Brody's *Save the Cat! Writes a Novel*, a striking creative writing manual inspired by a similar manual for screenwriters (Snyder), recommends a very similar pattern in connection with popular and market-oriented practices of producing novels for maximum popularity and market impact.

The declared purpose of the *Save the Cat!* books is to help writers construct a story or manuscript that will find a publisher, or a Hollywood film studio that will buy the script and make it into a movie. The fundamental thing, according to Brody, is to create a protagonist that will carry enough appeal to engage audiences and keep them interested throughout, since this will make the difference between manuscripts that are perceived as marketable and will be taken on by publishing houses, and those that won't. "The relationship between character and plot is an essential one," Brody states in the opening pages of her book, and then goes on to ask: "How do you create a hero [...] worthy of an entire novel written about them?" (9). The way Brody answers her own question sounds like it was written in terms of an agnotology of the literary character:

Easy!

You simply give them:

1. A problem (or flaw that needs fixing)
2. A want (or a goal that the hero is pursuing)
3. A need (or life lesson to be learned) (9-10)

This recipe strikingly resonates with Lukács's definition of the protagonist as a "problematic individual." The problem or "flaw that needs fixing," according to Brody, is in fact invariably connected to the reader's knowledge of the characters' non-knowledge about themselves; the "want" or "goal that the hero is pursuing" stems from a mistaken conception that the protagonists have about themselves; and the "need," or "life lesson," consists precisely in the protagonists' accession to specific knowledge about themselves and their individual identities. Like Lukács's problematic individual, then, Brody's heroes start out in a position of formative non-knowledge of themselves. The character's problematic quality, and the structural connection between that problem and the plot, hinge on this non-knowledge. The plot construction and, as Brody suggests, the appeal to readers and hence to publishers both rely in defining ways on the interest generated by the characters' first setting out on their paths towards attaining their misconceived goal, and then coming to realise, in a gradual process or through a sudden revelation, what it is that they really need.

Before we dismiss Brody's claim as simply a sales pitch to prospective novelists, we may consider it striking that variations of this underlying pattern – the narrative need to remedy the subject's non-knowledge of themselves – recur across Brody's recipes for popular fiction, Lukács's philosophical theory of the novel, and the modes of individual subjecthood that, according to Foucault, are afforded by and correlate with the "scientifico-disciplinary" institutions of knowledge production which have brought forth the human sciences. Even if the individual narratives and narrative techniques are capable of a great deal of variation, the fundamental structural coincidence between the perspectives on modern fiction offered by Lukács and by Brody resonates suggestively with Foucault's claims regarding "the passage

from the epic to the novel" quoted at the beginning of this section. Lukács and Brody differ strikingly on the ontological status of their central tenet – Lukács describes it as a historical correlative to modern societies while Brody's claim that it is "*buried deep within our DNA as humans*" (5) testifies to the degree to which the construction of the human in the human sciences has gained a wider cultural currency, and has been effectively naturalized. But the agnotological gaze offered by Foucault allows us to discern the emergence of a general pattern of institutional and para-institutional production of knowledge about subjects of non-knowledge that can in turn be connected to the emergence of new cultural narratives of individuality. These narratives are crucially focused on individuals as subjects of non-knowledge, surrounded by a layered network of subject-positions who know, hold or produce the knowledge that the subjects themselves are lacking. This cultural shift also coincides with emergence of the modern novel.

Outlook: Mobile Focal Constellations of Knowledge and Non-Knowledge in and around Modern Literary Narratives

Central as they are, these assertions of the fact that non-knowledge is a staple constituent of the protagonists of modern novels do not amount to an agnotology. They describe just one particular type of deployment of non-knowledge in the modern novel, albeit a highly prominent and significant one. They do not seek to reconstruct the discourses and subject-positions of knowledge whose structural correlation with the protagonists' specific non-knowledge combine to give relevance to both. In concluding, I propose to return to Dickens, and also to draw on Michel Foucault's partial analysis of modern literary subjectivities in "What is an Author?" in order to suggest how one might begin to envisage an agnotology of the fictional character in the modern novel.

There appears to be a good distance between the character and non-knowledge of Jo in *Bleak House* and the stances we have encountered in Lukács and Brody. Clearly, Jo is very far from being a protagonist in Dickens's extensive and complex narrative. He does not know a lot about himself or his background, and neither does anybody else in the novel. He might perhaps be accurately described as a problematic individual, certainly one in whose situation and subjecthood the problems and injustices of society become palpable. But he never comes anywhere close to being on what Lukács calls a "journey towards self-recognition," or of learning what Brody terms his "life lesson," finding out what he really "needs," as opposed to what he misguidedly "wanted." But equally clearly, we have seen that Jo and his status as a subject of non-knowledge are highly liable to figure as correlatives to a whole set of different subjects of knowledge who claim the moral or social authority to pronounce on Jo's ignorance, in modes that are not entirely dissimilar to the "hierarchical observation," "normalising judgment" and "examination" identified by Foucault as staple ingredients of "scientifico-disciplinary" production of knowledge on individuals and their non-knowledges.

In order to move towards an agnotology of the fictional character in the modern novel, then, we need to move beyond the limitations set by accounts that focus exclusively on protagonists and on their progress from non-knowledge to self-knowledge. Not all literary characters are protagonists. And there is a far greater plurality of constellations of knowledge and non-knowledge, both within modern novels and in the various discursive environments in which novels are read, discussed, and analysed. In addition to the characters themselves, any narrative voice, and any other character connected to them in the story, may come to figure as a

subject of knowledge about a particular character's non-knowledge. Next, the knowledge and non-knowledge of literary characters – as well as narrators – can become an issue beyond the fictional narrative, in the diverse spectrum of settings where novels play a role. Literary characters are therefore susceptible to becoming the focal points of complex and layered constellations involving both intra-textual and extra-textual subject-positions of knowledge and non-knowledge. Many different types of readers may come to assume subject-positions of knowledge relating to the non-knowledge in particular fictional characters and novels. Moreover, if these readers happen to be producing critical discourses within frameworks of academic training or research, their own degree of insight into the non-knowledge of particular fictional characters and narrators may come to be categorized as knowledge or non-knowledge by those who hold the subject-positions of academic examiner, or of fellow critic. And of course, there is a great variety of readers and readerly positions who may constitute themselves as subjects of knowledge in relation to particular characters' non-knowledge, which the general label of "lay readers" does not begin to describe adequately (Kirchhofer 113-17).

In addition to this plurality of subject-positions and constellations of knowledge and non-knowledge, we will also need to take into account the fact that the subjecthood of a literary character differs radically from that of a human individual. As is well-known, literary characters are not subjects that are independent in their decisions of what to say and what to do; they do not have their own degree of consciousness of what they know; and even though they may of course be constructed as such within the fictional world of the text, they are not so in all respects where they signify. Instead, their subjectivities, their behaviours, and their voices are part and parcel of the ensemble of literary devices that make up a narrative text. What they say and think, including what they say or think about themselves, is part of the total web of signification that makes up a given novel. The subjectivity of the literary character is tied up with the question of subjecthood in a literary narrative which we may partly approach relying on structural narratology and the categories of narration and focalisation, and partly with the help of Michel Foucault's account of the "dispersion of [...] selves" which is a salient "characteristic of the author-function" ("What Is an Author?", 113).

Once we connect these aspects with each other, what comes into view are complex and layered networks of subject-positions and discourses of knowledge and non-knowledge relating to fictional characters. These span literary narratives themselves, as well as the range of different institutional, personal, cultural or commercial settings that engage with literary narratives; they also involve the ways in which the techniques and representational strategies of the literary narrative interconnect with the wide spectrum of forms of readerly engagement, of reading and responding, of analysis, discussion and examination (in all of the senses of the word), and also with the complex discursive operations of authorial agency.

We can already discern all these in the passage I have quoted from *Bleak House*, especially in contrast with the article from *The Examiner*. In my initial discussion of these passages, I have emphasised the similarities between the two sources, aiming at that point to highlight the situational critique of the social and cultural production of ignorance that they both offer. Not that an emphasis on the similarities between the texts is entirely misleading. When the narrative voice declares that Jo "sums up his mental condition when asked a question by replying that he 'don't know nothink'" (Dickens 197), it aligns itself closely with a position of knowledge that comprises full insight into Jo's "mental condition" even as it reports

and endorses Jo's declaration of his own non-knowledge. Like the article in *The Examiner*, the novel posits a situation of interrogation and examination (such as the phrase: "when asked a question") – a situation that displays the features of an "examination" comprising Foucault's elements of "hierarchical observation" and "normalising judgment" quite as plainly as the hypothetical examination of the alderman imagined in *The Examiner*.

But *Bleak House*'s actual rendition of the questioning of Jo by the coroner displays a far greater volatility of subject-position and a much greater interspersal of positions of knowledge and non-knowledge, than the straightforward question and answer arrangement cited in *The Examiner*. Here is the passage again:

Name, Jo. Nothing else that he knows on. Don't know that everybody has two names. Never heard of sich a think. Don't know that Jo is short for a longer name. [...] No father, no mother, no friends. Never been to school. What's home? Knows a broom's a broom, and knows it's wicked to tell a lie. Don't recollect who told him about the broom or about the lie, but knows both. Can't exactly say what'll be done to him arter he's dead if he tells a lie to the gentlemen here, but believes it'll be something wery bad to punish him, and serve him right – and so he'll tell the truth. (Dickens 134)

Jo's voice, or the substance of what Jo says and thinks, is rendered in a variety of reported speech, that moves quickly from the initially announced situation of an interrogation ("Name, Jo.") to the reporting only of Jo's statements, leaving the questions that elicit these statements to be inferred only. While the narrative foregrounds the lack of any form of education which is signalled both by Jo's accent and non-standard grammar and pronunciation and by Jo's ignorance of the fundamental category of "home" and of the religious foundations of the obligation to speak only the truth, it also tacitly transforms Jo in some fundamental respects into a subject of knowledge – and a kind of knowledge which the narrative perspective emphatically endorses, even as it dismisses the standards of "normalising judgment" accepted by the coroner and all other characters present in the scene. ("Boy put aside, to the great edification of the audience"). In the way that it is narrated, Jo's seeming display of ignorance is effectively counterbalanced by his unshakeable affirmation of knowledge which concerns firstly the requirements of the work from which he makes a meagre living, and secondly the non-negotiable obligation to speak the truth. Jo is ignorant of the religious or ethical reasons for this latter obligation, but he repeats his affirmations of knowledge three times.

The novel resembles the journalistic article in denouncing, resisting and partly inverting the ways in which someone is individualised and constituted as a subject of non-knowledge in correlation to a subject-position of knowledge held by the agent in power, in an instance of what Foucault has described as descending individualisation. In *The Examiner*, however, resistance is the work of the journalistic voice only – a voice which, in the columns of its own journal, holds the power to turn the tables on the magistrate and submit him to an examination. The boy's vindication is a vicarious act, performed by the journalistic voice on behalf of the disenfranchised boy. In the novel, this dimension is also present quite clearly, but not exclusively. In addition, the techniques specific to fictional narrative also make accessible the subjecthood of the individual who comes to be constituted as a subject of ignorance, inviting the reader to share the experience of being thus constituted, even as it simultaneously narrates this ostensible subject of ignorance as a subject of knowledge. Dickens's narrative

manages to assert Jo's specific form of knowledge even as this knowledge is being rebranded as ignorance by people whom the text ironically condemns for their own ignorance which leads them to treat Jo as they do.

The "dispersion of [...] selves" characteristic of literary narrative, thanks to the particular modes of operation of the "author function," thus produces a very specific kind of political or cultural micro-geography of the discursive production of knowledge and non-knowledge. It creates a situation in which Jo speaks, or can be understood to speak, but which also includes the voice of the coroner, who has the power to adjudicate over Jo's condition of knowledge or non-knowledge. While the coroner tacitly arrogates to himself the position of a knowing subject and explicitly pronounces Jo ignorant, the passage implies that he had a moral choice; he could in principle have chosen to validate Jo as a subject of precisely the knowledge which is relevant to the situation. This, in fact, is the moral judgement that the narrative invites its readers to arrive at, just as much as the article in *The Examiner* does. But while *The Examiner* offers the explicit statement by the journalistic subject, the novel presents us – within the parameters of what we have come to understand as the "author-function" – with a complex aggregate of voices that we conventionally connect with the voice of the author. The assertion of the coroner's moral scope of agency, and also the implicit criticisms levelled against the coroner and the entire audience present at the inquest, either for not knowing, or for being deliberately unwilling to balance their moral judgment – all these originate from a more comprehensive subject-position which we may identify as the narrator, or as the "implied author," or perhaps simply as Dickens. Finally, the act of suggesting that this is not exclusively a matter of moral problematisation, and that we should also perceive in this passage the cultural production of ignorance through the deployment of the "scientifico-disciplinary" techniques present in the "examination" is one which I for one am making in this essay, with the help of Foucault and agnotology.

The distinctive modes of signification that can characterise literary narratives interconnect with "scientifico-disciplinary mechanisms" in manifold and specific ways, and in a plurality of different cultural or institutional locations. These cannot only be represented as part of a literary narrative, but are, in specific varieties, also at work when literary narratives become the object of any kind of teaching or examination in any form of educational or academic environments, as well as with the more variable forms of discourse and interaction that characterise the critical debate or the wide spectrum of other public ways of discussing, valuing or retailing literary narratives.

In preparation for any discussions relating to the question of narratives of non-knowledge in the sciences, it will be useful to engage in a reflection on these forms of the production of knowledge and non-knowledge through the devices of literary narrative and of literary analysis, discussion and criticism. If we can make these modes of narrating non-knowledge transparent in the specific ways in which they come into play both in literary narratives as well as in the discourses about narrative fiction, we will have gained a plausible basis for envisaging and encountering the "political geographies" of narratives of non-knowledge in the sciences.

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