


THE IMMANENT VOICE: AN ASPECT OF

UNRELIABLE HOMODIEGETIC NARRATION



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## ABSTRACT

Unreliable homodiegetic narration presents a unique mode of narrative transmission which demands the encoding within the text of 'translational indices', that is, signifiers of several kinds which justify the reader/receiver in over-riding the sincere first person avowals of the apparent mediator of the discourse. The argument establishes the presence of an epistemologically primary 'immanent' narrative situation within an ostensibly unitary narrative situation. Such a stereoscopic perspective upon the presented world of the literary work provides the reader/receiver with a warrant for a rejection of the epistemological validity of the homodiegetic narrator's discourse. Moreover, the thesis advances a typology of such translational indices as they occur in the dense ontology of the literary work of art. The narratological theory of unreliable homodiegetic narration developed in the first half of the dissertation is applied in the second half to selected exemplars of such narrative transmissions, demonstrating thereby the theoretical fecundity of the model for the discipline of narratology.

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## PREFACE

Narratology has gained both its name and its status as a discipline only fairly recently, with students of narrative the first beneficiaries of the more rigorous and theoretically sophisticated engagement of critics with literary texts. It has become imperative, if a serious investigation into any aspect of narrative is to be undertaken, to acquaint oneself not only with the structuralist explications of texts and the post-structuralist disenchantment with what they have come to regard as the futility of the enterprise, but with the historical/materialist thrust which has shaped literary criticism, in the Anglo-American field in particular, over the last two decades. Infusions of theoretical insights from individuals and Schools on the continent have challenged and at times threatened latter-day complacency in Departments of English, but, since my experience in 1974 of an Honours course in Literary Theory at Rhodes University, devised and co-ordinated by H.G. Ruthrof ( and my introduction, there, to Franz Stanzel's - at that time - recently translated Narrative Situations in the Novel[1971] ) my interest in the theory of narrative has remained a primary academic concern, often in the face of resistance to what has been derisively termed 'theoreticism'.

Familiarity with the work of a broad range of theorists is the initially daunting prospect facing the narratologist, for the specialists ( Stanzel, Ingarden, Cohn, Chatman, Bal, Rimmon-Kenan, Ruthrof, Genette, Iser, De Man or Derrida for example ) share a focus in their study of narrative per se, but write from theoretical positions as widely diverse as those of phenomenology and deconstruction. However, and this element of the study of narrative proves appealing, the models being developed, from whatever theoretical matrix, all issue in an application to texts which we hold to some degree in common.

My own enterprise in this thesis is an attempt to illuminate a small area of the vast field of narrative theory: though essentially a 'text-immanent' critic ( Fokkema, 1984 ) my position embraces that of some aspects of Reception Aesthetics, in that in positing and arguing for an immanent voice in an immanent narrative situation, the role of the reader ( receiver ) must, I have discovered, be accorded significance.

#### DECLARATION

Unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, this whole thesis is my own original work.

## INTRODUCTION

The thesis addresses the problematic of unreliable homodiegetic narration. While offering an essentially narratological analysis, it focusses, nevertheless, upon the system of compositional and thematic conventions which control the production of a text that is usually intended to be received by readers familiar with sustained ironic delivery. It is, however, not so much to the effects wrought by such a mode of transmission but to the mechanics involved in the control of such effects that the dissertation addresses itself.

The central problem confronting the theorist in this field when he/she turns to an analysis of just how it is that such a complex production as unreliable homodiegetic narration can be controlled can be quite simply stated. In pure homodiegetic narration the Ausgangstext or artifact comprises all and only those utterances made by the first person ( homodiegetic ) narrator. This extended conjunction of judgements admits of no failure conditions; that is, the narrator's assumed sincerity simply and directly imposes on the reader/receiver the requirement that the narrator's judgements be taken as they are intended to be understood. The narrator's judgements in such a narrative situation mean just what he/she intends them to mean, his/her position being, so to speak, epistemologically privileged. The

reader/receiver is not in a position to over-ride what are to be taken as the narrator's sincere avowals. The presentational process is identified with the telling of the narrator's tale ( as in, for example, Great Expectations, where Pip's narration provides the text with both its process - the activity of telling - and its world - that which is narrated. )

No such straight-forward account of 'unreliable' homodiegetic narration can be offered. Here the narrator's sincerity may be granted by the reader/receiver, but what is required is that the failure conditions for his referential acts must be specified. The reader/receiver, that is, must now legitimately be able to over-ride the narrator's descriptions of his/her world and of the events that occur in it. But the question ( and its apparent simplicity is deceptive ) as to how this is possible arises. Because the narrative act is presided over by a homodiegetic narrator the entire Ausgangstext is still co-extensive with the complex conjunction of the narrator's judgements, which mean exactly what they are intended to mean. Where, within the parameters of this Ausgangstext, can the reader/receiver find the evidential base which will ground his/her judgement that the narrator is unreliable? There appears to be no vehicle within the artifact itself which is able to carry such markers of unreliability.



It is possible that this felt 'absence' within the artifact has led theorists to attempt to identify the implied presence of the author as the touchstone for the judgement of unreliability. However, just as literary criticism abandoned the writer as the dominant reference point of textual interpretation, so, in this thesis, the argument avoids any attempt to seek the imprint of the writer, or such normative patterns as might emanate from his/her domain.

It thus becomes the task of this enterprise to identify, within the Ausgangstext itself, those markers that provide the reader/receiver with the evidential base for the judgement that in this instance the homodiegetic narrator is 'unreliable'. The identification of these markers, which I term 'translational indices', requires the construction of a new theory of narrative transmission for unreliable homodiegetic narration; and it is such an enterprise that forms the substance of this dissertation.

As epistemological relativism, especially that strain emerging from the Anglo-American school of deconstruction, threatens a new iconoclasm, an exploration of modern developments in the semantics of reference is manifestly required. If the argument in chapter 1 succeeds, post-structural thinkers such as those of the Yale school have underestimated the quality of argumentation that philosophers of language have brought to bear in the last

decade. The chapter argues for the necessity for narratological exegesis of placing the artifact within a mimetic situation, and attempts to reveal the self-defeating assumptions concerning the nature of reference held by the extreme relativists of the post-modernist movement. Where such representatives of this movement as Derrida play down the radical nature of the modernist/post-modernist fissure, the thesis finds itself in essential agreement. Modernist/post-modernist developments are treated as forming a continuum in the twentieth century's flight from certainty, without accepting the solipsistic position that having lost touch with the noumenal world we have automatically lost touch also with our phenomenal world.

Having surveyed developments in semantics in the twentieth century and having thereby defended the right of the critic to talk about 'the' world that is narrated by an anthropomorphically conceived character construct, utilising language that remains pragmatically stable within an intersubjectively interacting speech community, the argument is able to progress using concepts which before might have appeared superseded by the general wave of meaning iconoclasm that made claims upon the theoretical high ground.

In chapter 2 the ontological status of unreliable homodiegetic narration is analysed building on the foundations laid by Roman Ingarden and utilising the

narratological typology advanced by Franz Stanzel. Starting out from the concept of mediation the chapter argues that in ordinary homodiegetic narration no possibility exists for drawing the distinction between the way that which is narrated ( the presented world of the literary work ) appears and the way that which is narrated is. This follows from the fact of the epistemologically privileged position of a first person narrator. However, with unreliable homodiegetic narration, one must draw the distinction between how the presented world ( that which is narrated ) appears to the homodiegetic narrator and how it, in fact, is. That is, the possibility for over-riding the homodiegetic narrator's referential acts can now be demonstrated. In our normal world sincere avowals are sometimes over-ridden on the basis of independent examination of the facts referred to by the original utterer of the judgement. No such manoeuvre is, of course, available to the reader/receiver of unreliable homodiegetic narration. The presented world of the literary work remains, always, a mediated one. Thus the argument contends that, if the first narrative situation is shown to be unreliable ( that is, as a source of information about the presented world ), this can only be the case if the reader/receiver has access to a master narrative situation that is epistemologically primary.

As the Ausgangstext of unreliable homodiegetic narration is nothing but a conjunction of the first-person narrator's

judgements which comprise the presentational process, any epistemologically 'meta' presentational process cannot operate through the explicit judgements themselves. Rather, this silent narrative situation must be immanent in the Ausgangstext. It is to this, the immanent narrative situation ( or, as it may also be termed, the immanent voice ), that the reader/receiver turns in order to find the evidential base which justifies the judgement that the homodiegetic narration, in this instance, is unreliable.

The thesis argues further that, where the epistemologically primary immanent narrative situation is present, certain fecund possibilities exist for the revelation of character ( by a process best described as 'showing' rather than 'telling' ). The reader/receiver is offered a stereoscopic perspective on the presented world where the deviations introduced by the unreliable homodiegetic narrator are dramatically employed to reveal the hidden structures of motivation. Such deviations are never able to be directly addressed within the secondary narrative transmission.

The very notion of unreliability in the context of narrative transmission requires, it is argued, the postulation within the Ausgangstext of the logically primary immanent voice. However, any such postulate must be defended in the critical arena and, consequently, evidence need be adduced that would support such a postulation in any

particular case of homodiegetic narration. The identification of such patterns of encodement as reveal the presence of the immanent voice is a challenge addressed in chapter 3.

Here a theory of non-denotational reference is advanced utilising Nelson Goodman's profound insights into the way worlds are made (1978). A typology of translational indices is proffered and defended thereby meeting the demand that, if the immanent voice is a necessary requirement for the possibility of unreliable homodiegetic narration to exist, then it must be possible to identify the patterns of encodement of this silent but controlling voice.

In chapters 4, 5, and 6, various types of unreliable discourse are identified and, by the application of the theoretical principles argued for in the first chapters, are analysed both to expose the subtle mechanisms of control wielded in these narrative situations and to vindicate their deployment as one of the most sustained forms of irony available to the modern novelist. Hence a theory developed largely abstractly in the first half of the thesis concerning the narratological nature of unreliable homodiegetic narration finds in its application in the second half the exemplars of unreliability it was formulated to account for.

Finally, I hope that while my critical approach may be closer to text-immanent criticism than that of either

Reception Aesthetics or the discredited biographical method, the role of the reader/receiver ( a compound construct which I deploy, advisedly, as it contains both an active and a passive quality which I deem relevant for the activity of receiving the literary text ) has been demonstrated as crucial for the realisation - in the fullest sense - of the literary work of art. The analyses of 'You Should Have Seen the Mess!', 'X', 'Haircut', 'My Last Duchess' and The Aspern Papers indicate that the application of the theoretical principles developed earlier achieves an expansion of meaning, which of itself provides a prima facie argument in favour of my essentially modernist context as critic.

Throughout the thesis I have adhered to a slightly modified version of the Harvard Style ( footnotes have been incorporated, as far as possible, into the body of the text and reference details, including page numbers, are to the editions of texts cited in the bibliography ). In the interests of greater clarity, moreover, I have divided each chapter into its pertinent subsections, providing them with key-pointer headings. The loss of a discursive style will, I trust, be compensated for in the achievement of greater clarity for the argument.

## Chapter 1: A Survey of the Developments of Semantics in the Twentieth Century

By briefly referring to the major philosophical moves made by the leading thinkers in the field, a context is provided which allows for the legitimate posing of such questions as are of crucial significance when exploring the notion of unreliable, homodiegetic narration.

### 1. Introductory remarks

It is the contention of this chapter that, because of significant developments in the philosophy of language especially in that area concerned with the semantics of reference, literary criticism is in a position ( however unwitting, at present ) to address itself to questions that are central to an understanding of the concept of a 'presentational process' (Ruthrof,1981:p 22). A working knowledge of current developments in the philosophy of language is, I shall demonstrate, a necessary pre-requisite for the activity involved in formulating legitimate questions that may be addressed to the literary work and which could not formerly, given the persuasiveness of

contemporary post-structuralist thinking (especially as it has manifested itself in the writings of the Anglo-American school of deconstruction ), receive comprehensive articulation.

Chapter 1, thus, traces in broad outline current trends in the contemporary semantics of reference, placing them in their historical context and exploring their ramifications especially as they pertain to literature. Such an undertaking has enabled me to address questions to the phenomenon of the literary work whose answers, in the first instance, radically reconstitute the literary critic's understanding of certain 'narrative situations' (Stanzel, 1955, transl. 1971) and, moreover, provide the basis for a fuller comprehension of the structures of intentional irony. Discussion, here, is of necessity merely preliminary, limning in the boundaries within which the epistemological questions are to be situated: a more complete articulation of the theoretical implications for narrative occurs in chapter 2.

## 2. Modern developments in the semantics of reference

In the philosophy of language our century can be said to have been dominated by investigations into that field which has concerned itself with the semantics of reference. Frege, with his distinction between 'Sinn' and 'Bedeutung' (1892, 25-50), focussed philosophical enquiry with a hitherto



unknown intensity upon this area of semantics. In the early writings of Bertrand Russell (1905; 1911-12a; 1912b) and finding their parallel, subsequently, in the Tractatus Logico Philosophicus of Wittgenstein (1922), questions of metaphysical system-building dictated the form that was imposed upon enquiries into the problematic area concerning the relation of language to the world. Philosophers now grappled with the problem of how the cycle of meaning could be broken, that is, of how language secured reference to the world.

In the spirit of the seventeenth century Port Royal logicians concepts were hypostatized and their subsequent 'mysterious' link to reality vindicated by being declared, by virtue of the requirements of the metaphysical systems to which they were handmaidens, a logically primitive necessity. Thus, Russell with his logical atomism constructed a hierarchy of being isomorphically locked into its equivalent semantic hierarchy.

Wittgenstein, in the Tractatus, required of language that it ultimately 'simply' be related to the world. His 'simple' names merely stood for 'simple' objects, unmediated by any set of descriptions. In order to break the circle of meaning within a closed semantic system just such a metaphysical necessity was required. Gilbert Ryle, developing and expanding the spirit of this claim in his search for the structure of an ideal language, spoke of the

'logical form of the fact', all too often unhappily encoded in its superficial and distorting grammatical form (1963: 33). The philosopher's task ( but not the layman's who, for Ryle, as a result of his/her theoretical naivety remained clear-eyed ) was to extract the pristine logical form through conceptual analysis which would, of itself and unambiguously, secure reference to the world. The latter would be such as described by the, now, pristine judgement.

Here is evidenced the tenacious 'meaning empiricism' (Bennet, 1971:p 225) that has been part of British philosophy since Hobbes and Locke. More deeply encoded than the mythical 'logical form of the fact', however, was the vicious circularity that such a programme of reference embodied. The 'logical form of the fact' is said to be that which isomorphically maps onto reality; and reality, it is claimed, is that which is isomorphically mapped by the 'logical form of the fact'. Obviously, what was clearly required was some form of 'error' theory that would be able to re-introduce criteria of success or failure into the quest for the achievement of reference.

Wittgenstein, in his later writings, was responsible for a shift in the paradigm governing our notions of semantic intelligibility. Language was de-reified and functionalised. His famous maxim: 'Don't ask for the meaning, ask for the use', was to influence a generation of philosophers of language. With the inception of this approach, where stress

was placed upon the use of language rather than on language itself, a new 'actor' stepped out of the wings and took up a position centre-stage which he has never since left: this was the agent or speaker. The burden of reference was lifted from the shoulders of language and placed within the sphere of those things which are done, either well or badly, by man. In this way, the quest for the 'grail' that had consumed philosophers of language during the early part of the twentieth century, that is, for a disambiguated, logically pristine, 'ideal' language, mapping onto and mapped by the world, was abandoned. Reference henceforth was secured by a speaker in one of two ways:

(1) by ostensive definition or

(2) by sets of definite descriptions where the success/failure conditions are determined within the context of the speaker/hearer situation.

With this fundamental translocation of the responsibility for reference from language to the speaker of the language, the referential link postulated by the 'ideal language' theorists ( Russell, Carnap and Schlick, for example ) for reasons of metaphysical system-building as holding between language and the world, was now seen to hold, rather, between referrer and referent. Sir Peter Strawson, in his famous debate with Russell (1950: 320-44), drew the distinction between sentences and asserted sentences or judgements, with only the latter capable of having assigned

to them the values of truth or falsity. Kant's stress on the primacy of judgements as the bearers of truth or falsity was thus revitalized; truth or falsity becoming once again the property of judgements.

Reference, now, could be secured via the referential devices of indexicals and/or clusters of descriptions. The use of self-reflexive tokens located the speaker in the here-and-now; and definite descriptions eliminated unintended candidates, leaving the referent to be selected by virtue of its unique satisfaction of the relevant criteria expressed in the cluster of descriptions offered by the speaker to his audience. The securing of reference had, in this way, clearly become subject to a 'co-operative principle' making demands on the participation of both speaker and hearer in a conventionalized context.

The first victim of this new and humbler pragmatism was the precision that had been regarded as one of the defining characteristics of the ideal language which philosophers, in the early part of this century, had sought. The open texture of concepts, their ill-defined parameters, were seen to provide both the strength and the challenge of a living, evolving language. Wittgenstein's talk of 'family resemblances' (1968:p 32e #66) had accustomed philosophers, owing to the homely quality of his metaphor, to a degree of semantic imprecision. The loose set of definite descriptions such as that suggested above proved intractable to tight

organization. Shifting clusters of these descriptions were all that emerged and with them – the best that could be wished for – philosophers simply had to be satisfied. This new linguistic orthodoxy, however, was to be confronted in the writings of Saul Kripke, by a challenge that was to unsettle the complacency that had descended upon the earlier paradigm . Mustering powerful arguments to support his philosophical objections, their lineage capable of being traced back through John Stuart Mill to Plato, he forced philosophers of language to abandon their newly secured positions of complacency.

Kripke argued cogently that reference could, in many cases, be secured and maintained in the face, not only of a significant proportion of the definite descriptions constituting the cluster proving themselves to be false, but even in the more radical situation of the entire cluster of descriptions itself proving to be false. This fundamental challenge to the so-called 'cluster theory' (1980:p 63) had to be met if the entire paradigm of reference was not to be overthrown. The force of Kripke's position was readily acknowledged and it became apparent that if the anomalies in it were to be accounted for, the 'cluster theory' would require a degree of augmenting (1980: p 63).

Kripke argued that reference could be secured utilizing a set of entirely false descriptions and that, thus secured,

it could be maintained by means of what he postulated was a basic link ( which he thought could be causal in nature ) said to hold between name and referent. This is clearly in the tradition of the primitive referential link advanced by Mill (1843) and Russell (1905; 1911-12a; 1912b). Thus, to give a Kripkean example, a speaker could refer to a woman in a crowded room by describing her, definitely, as 'the one drinking champagne', even though, in fact, she were drinking lemonade. Reference could, nevertheless, be secured for the hearer by means of this false definite description and the example could be elaborated to show that such reference could be maintained through a 'chain' of contacts, all of which might have utilized entirely false sets of definite descriptions to underwrite them.

Saul Kripke's critique, like Wittgenstein's before him, was not to remain unquestioned. Recognising the validity of much of his criticism, the defenders of the old orthodoxy sought to accommodate their theory by the adaptation of their position to that of Kripke. The writings of the late Gareth Evans (1982), together with those of John Searle (1983) on intentionality, recast the position held by the 'cluster theory' adherents. Recognition, it was argued, had to be given to the agent's ability to situate himself within a spatio-temporal field. The primitive capacities of an organism which enabled it to achieve such orientation, and which had provided much of Kripke's criticism with its intuitive appeal, had to be acknowledged and incorporated

into any adequate theory of reference. Recognitional skills existing, even at a pre-verbal stage of an organism's development, had to be integrated; a pre-verbal child's capacity to identify and re-identify its mother could not presuppose advanced manipulation of such referential devices as clusters of definite descriptions. The primitive ability evinced, therefore, by the pre-verbal child, for example, to locate and orientate himself in space and time needed to be accommodated within the parameters of the 'cluster theory'. Searle, with his talk of 'a network of other intentional states' and 'a background of practices' (1983:p 19); and Evans, with his 'information-based thought' (1982:p 131) were able to accommodate such a phenomenon. Thus, the pre-conceptual encounter of the small child with its world, or the adult's unarticulated recognitional cues, embedded in his ability to recognise that this person, for example, is the person he saw yesterday, was seen to establish an agent/object link able to provide the fundamental basis for such referential skills as are used by articulate adults in their attempts at finding their way around their world and in ensuring that their fellows, too, recognise selected parts of that world. Here the communication chain that Kripke emphasised (1980:p 91) was robbed of its adhesive power and was now seen to be constituted by those primitive sets of skills that underlie our natural recognitional capacities. To return to the Kripkean example quoted above ( where reference was secured through the use of a false

description: she is drinking lemonade and not champagne ) it can be seen that such referential links as are established in personal encounters within our shared world can assist in maintaining reference, even if subsequently defective clusters of descriptions are encountered.

Re-interpreted, it can be stated that the basic referential link is no longer in opposition to the 'cluster theory' but is regarded ( and should be incorporated into the theory accordingly ) as a sub-set of those natural abilities that we, as human beings, must have, if at our most basic level we are to participate in the 'life-form' of our species. The cluster theory finds its role and its justification when securing reference need be achieved within a fully articulated linguistic setting: a setting necessary for the securing of any object not of our time or of our place. For example, we can no longer encounter the emperor Nero and, consequently, he can only be referred to by the referential devices ensconced within our language. This less primary form of reference cannot be either secured or maintained when confronted by the systematic failure in the truth claims of its relevant cluster of descriptions. My thesis will utilise the distinction between basic and secondary forms of reference in its explanation of the nature of the co-text ( a term used by Butler [1984] ) and its reference to the truth conditions that obtain in the external world.



Contemporary developments in the semantics of reference, then, as evinced by the writings of Searle and Evans, can be seen to be taking place within a paradigm sympathetic to mimesis. In other words, in defending the 'cluster theory' against Kripke's criticisms, reference can still be seen to be fundamentally a function initiated by a speaker and directed at his audience, with language operating as the vehicle while remaining essentially situated in its extra-linguistic (mimetic) setting; that is, between speaker and hearer. Speakers are able to orientate themselves within the public world and, using the referential devices of language, can align their orientations with those of their fellow man. Language can be used to refer to enduring objects, identifiable and re-identifiable, situated in an intersubjectively accessible world. But, although reference within this theoretical model can be both secured and maintained, it remains essentially defeasible. As one moves from the position of centrality as regards one's primitive orientation in space and time towards the more rarified reaches of the literary work of art, the conditions for the successful achievement of reference become progressively more etiolated. At the secure end of the spectrum, where the success/failure conditions are relatively easy to specify within the bounds of the contemporary paradigm, we would find the literally rendered declarative sentence, 'The large black cat sat on the mat'. This assertion, bounded by such constraints as are set forth by Grice in what he calls a

'co-operative principle' (1967. See Pratt, 1977: p 125) and which govern truthfulness, appropriateness and informativeness, for example, can have its mimetic commitment fairly readily exposed. It is realised in a speaker-hearer situation, with shared conventions available to be called upon and which enable the hearer to identify which particular 'cat' and which particular 'mat' the speaker intends to refer to. The challenge for interpretation, however, is foregrounded and is given a sense of increasing urgency as the use of language begins to depart more and more from its literal base. (Butler, 1984: chapter 2.1 and 2.2.)

The specification of the presented world of the literary work thus highlights the problematic relationship that obtains between meaning and reference. The non-literal statement must have its meaning accessible if the necessary concomitant referential acts are to be 'read off' as it were. The process of refining this accessibility requires a theoretically informed re-reading of the literal base of the assertion, as the relationship said to hold between an assertion and its truth conditions becomes gradually more attenuated the more metaphorical the assertion. To reach an understanding, though, of the non-literal assertion, requires an act of interpretation dependent upon a range of decisions that must be made concerning which implications of the central metaphor must be disengaged and which must be affirmed. In addition, if that interpretation is to be a

critical one, it must manifest the ability - upon demand - to justify the suspension of those implications which are usually taken to hold for the concept in its literal deployment.

The question of a concept's implications is, however, an extremely vexed one, especially as semantic entailments follow from judgements and not, strictly speaking, from the individual concepts themselves. Kant's dictum that a concept is nothing but a 'predicate of a possible judgement' (Critique of Pure Reason. Kemp, 1964: p 106 ) need be recollected and its force acknowledged. Philosophers have conventionally accepted that the implications of a concept, especially when they are regarded as logical entailments, are self-evident to any mature native speaker of the language. Such self-evidence ( of what have been termed 'analytic' truths ) and the foundation of any hierarchy of conceptual implications have been dealt a severe blow in the form of an argument first advanced by Willard van Orman Quine in his famous paper 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism' (1953). The main consequence of this argument was to be that the mimetic situation of language, under the dominant paradigm of the twentieth century, was to feel its first shivers of apprehension; for if referential acts are 'read off' judgements, and judgements can themselves take no univocal reading, the movement from language to the world can no longer be tracked.

Quine argued that a tautological truth such as 'a = a' or a tautological declarative statement such as 'a bachelor is a bachelor', generates an analytic truth when a cognitively synonymous term is substituted, salve veritate, into the original formulation. Thus, if 'bachelor' is cognitively synonymous with 'unmarried man', one can generate from a tautology, 'a bachelor is a bachelor', an analytic truth, 'a bachelor is an unmarried man' by substitution. That is, we can get from 'a = a' to 'a = b' by substitution of a cognitively synonymous term for one of the terms of the original tautology. This procedure adequately recapitulated our intuitive sense of the etiology of analytic truths. The core of the critique against the epistemological stability of our notions of analytic entailment was, however, to lie in the next stage of the argument.

Quine had shown that our grasp of analyticity was dependent upon our prior grasp of cognitive synonymy. He now proceeded to put pressure on our understanding of the nature of cognitive synonymy. He asks when we can say of two expressions that they are cognitively synonymous, and replies to the question posited with a pertinancy, which was to disturb empiricist complacency, that this may be done only when one term substituted for another in a tautology generates an analytic truth. Cognitive synonymy is, thus, suddenly revealed to be dependent upon our prior grasp of analyticity: the vicious circle is closed. Analyticity, which has, traditionally, been defined in terms of cognitive

synonymy has been shown to be a requirement for its definition. The circle can only be broken, Quine insists, by the development of a fully articulated semantic theory from whose axioms the analytic truths of the language can be generated. Unfortunately for twentieth century philosophers of language such a theory does not yet exist and, it is feared, can not even be adequately formulated.

The prospect, then, of formulating a fully developed semantic theory was met with skepticism but although philosophers of language recognised, on the one hand, the enormous difficulties involved in the articulation of such a theory; on the other, they knew what rigorous demands it would have to satisfy. In this regard one should look at, for example R.M. Kempson (1977), especially his introduction, pp 1-10. Utilising a finite set of rules it would have to explain the generation of word and sentence meaning as well as specify the nature of the dynamics of their interaction. It would have to account for the possibility of word and sentence ambiguity as well as articulate the generation of such linguistic phenomena as synonymy, entailment, contradiction, implication and so on.

While the theory of syntactics needs to specify not only the vocabulary of that language but also its syntax, with its concomitant transformational and recursive rules specifying which of the formulae shall count as well-formed within the language, the semantic theory must, among other

things, be able to specify the truth conditions of the well-formed formulae generated by the syntactics of the language.

This link, between truth conditions and meaning, was explored by Donald Davidson (1967: 304-323). He hoped that the formula devised by Tarski (1944) for a theory of truth might provide the basis for a theory of meaning. His goal was to explain the obscurity of concepts such as 'meaning' in terms of clearer concepts ( philosophically speaking, that is ) like 'truth'. Tarski had claimed for example that 'Snow is white' is true, if and only if snow is white; 'snow is white' being the name of the sentence, snow is white, where the predicate, 'is true', always takes as subject an element of the meta-language.

The early verificationists (Ayer, 1936; Carnap, 1936 and 1937; Schlick, 1936) had tried to capture the meaning of a sentence through its method of verification and their programme involved the exploration of the practical ways one went about establishing the truth conditions of a sentence. Now, Tarski had paired the name of the sentence with sets of conditions guaranteeing the truth of that sentence. However, if we know under what conditions a sentence is true, or conversely, under what conditions it would be false, then, Davidson realised, we can be said to know its meaning. If these truth conditions constitute the meaning of the sentence, we can refer to them by using the sentence itself

in its material mode where the formal/material mode distinction parallels the meta-language/object language distinction.

Thus, 's means that p' becomes equivalent to 's is true if p'. The advance that was made by the introduction of this formulation was that the problematic term, 'means', was eliminated. Unfortunately, because of peculiarities within the truth-table by which the sign for material implication is defined, too much, semantically speaking, is 'let through'. In our world, 'water is wet' and 'snow is cold' always have the same truth value and, in an extensional logic ( by which is meant a logic that ignores the intensional occurrences of expressions - what Frege terms sense or 'Sinn', and Mill calls connotation - and only deals with the expression's denotation or reference ), they can be substituted for each other with the resultant sentence, 'snow is cold if water is wet', being true. We need, however, to be able to distinguish sentences that co-incidentally share the same truth value from sentences which necessarily share the same truth value. In an attempt, therefore, at a more restrictive matching, the formula was changed to: ' s means that p' is equivalent to ' necessarily s is true if and only if p'. The formulation suggests that the meaning of a sentence can be specified if one gives the necessary and sufficient conditions for the truth of that sentence. Such a specification of meaning would allow all relevant inferences to be drawn; relevant, that is, to the

notion of logical truth. But the notion of logical truth is merely another way of talking about analytic truth, and once again we are brought face to face with Quine. The obscurity of a notion such as meaning has been 'explained' by means of the at least equally obscure notion of analyticity.

To return to the challenge of mapping a concept's entailments - required, it will be recalled, for the task of identifying those implications of a metaphor which must be disengaged in order to understand which of the literal entailments of the term used, in the first instance metaphorically, must be activated for us to grasp its force - it now appears that we have lost ( at least given the state of contemporary debate ) our theoretical right even to talk about self-evident analytic truths; and the manoeuvre suggested by Davidson, to handle the problem of the specification of meaning in terms of truth conditions, no longer appears a viable one. This is largely because he was forced to invoke some modal concepts which threatened his attempted advance of understanding with the accusation of circularity.

Even the notion of entailment, perhaps less problematic than that of analyticity, involves one in the introduction of modal terms like necessity; for  $p$  entails  $q$  if and only if it is true that necessarily not both  $p$  and not  $q$ . ( To make the point in more accessible prose: 'If running entails having legs, this would only be true if it was necessarily



the case that the claim that one could run while lacking legs was always false.' ) Again the closure of the circle of language threatens, owing to an inability to give any theoretical account of how univocality of meaning is possible.

A truth-based theory of meaning attempted to construct a set of semantic rules which would map an interpretation ( a set of truth conditions ) onto an uninterpreted sequence of symbols organised into well-formed formulae by the rules embodied in the syntactics of the language and thereby conferring a meaning upon that sequence. Davidson's programme, even if it were able to overcome the central flaw outlined above, would still be merely a specification of meaning, not an explanation of it. The crucial dimension of understanding meanings seems unaccounted for: and meaning is at the centre of this whole debate.

Eschewing theory construction, arguments have been mounted by, for example, Strawson and Grice (1956;1967) and, most recently, by Swinburne (1984), that it is possible to widen the circle of definitions, on a wholly pragmatic basis, to such a degree that all mature speakers of the language will be able to achieve satisfactory agreement about the analytic truths in a language. Thus, while conceding to Quine the point that 'No statement is immune to revision' (1953: 41 ) these philosophers maintain, in general, that the distinction between those truths which are

analytic and those which are synthetic can be drawn; such a distinction being vindicated on pragmatic grounds, because of its fecundity for philosophical debate.

This pragmatic justification of the analytic/synthetic distinction becomes even more respectable if the mimetic nature of language is acknowledged. In his later writings Wittgenstein argued that the fundamental nature of meaning - the 'understanding' component ignored in Davidson's theory - is exposed within language games that provide one with the conventions governing usage constitutive of the terms' meaning. These language games are themselves grounded in a shared form of life which enables its players, via those sets of shared natural capabilities to 'know how to go on' when otherwise the circle of language would have run its full course to closure. This account of understanding, with its base in the human repertoire of natural expressions and actions, provides the grounding for intersubjective agreement which is indispensable if the debate about the nature of conceptual entailment is even to begin to take place; with man's shared corporeality emerging as that component of commonality which provides him with the ability to share both his significations and his world. The mimetic commitment of language remains, therefore, albeit in a more sophisticated and complex fashion, the leading paradigm within the field of contemporary semantics. The deconstructionists themselves are forced to concede the

importance of this paradigm in the categories they use when mounting their skeptical attack.

This journey through the landscape of developments in modern semantic theory vindicates a qualified adherence to the belief that the essentially mimetic nature of language is still intellectually respectable; a belief which is of central significance if my theoretical enterprise is to be validated.

### 3. The relevance of the concept of mimesis for narrative situations

Debate about the mimetic nature of literature has formed the subject of critical enquiry since Aristotelian times and is currently, in the hands of the deconstructionists, receiving short shrift. However, the history of the term mimesis indicates that it has undergone radical conceptual shifts in different periods so that to grapple with the notion at all, a sophisticated understanding of its etiology is a fundamental pre-requisite. A consequence of ignoring the evolutionary development of the term mimesis is the premature rejection of its validity as a critical concept before its value has been assessed properly: often the movement away from mimetic readings is occasioned by normative pressures that are the product of a particular kind of critical orientation in a particular age (Abrams, 1953).

It is vital to be clear about the fact that 'theories of Mimesis function in and are determined by an entire philosophical system' (Politi, 1976:p 18). From Plato and Aristotle we have inherited the theory of mimesis that suggests that what is meant by the term is, fundamentally, 'to be assessed in terms of what is meant by the 'real''. Though Politi argues that there are two variables in the analogy - on the one hand there is mimesis, on the other, what is to be understood by the 'real' - the concept of mimesis is better conceptualised, I believe, in terms of a dyadic relationship, where mimesis is a theory of the nature of the relationship postulated to hold between two entities, namely the artwork and the world. Critics of literature have often applied the concept without, perhaps, adequately understanding what philosophers, at the time, have meant by the 'real'.

Mimesis thus specifies the nature of the relation holding between art and the world. This relationship is intended as a mirroring one: in other words, formally it could be expressed as the demand that the literary work isomorphically map the nature of the real world. However, our grasp of the 'real' world is itself mediated by the theories we construct to explain this world to ourselves. Our world is a function of what our best theories about it embody. These theories have ranged from the purely idealistic, where the category of space is entirely dispensed with, to theories of naive realism, where it is

believed that the world is as it is perceived and that perception is itself direct and non-inferential. Thus the two terms of the mimetic relationship are both equally mutable.

When we turn to the twentieth century, especially to its latter half, we discover that because of philosophers such as Foucault, Goodman, Rorty, Quine and Feyerabend, whose theories underpin the post-modernist movement in epistemology, recent developments in the theory of knowledge have led to a fairly extreme form of relativism (D'Amico, 1986:135-145). Truth no longer appears attainable and our theories of the world, and consequently our grasp of it, have become tenuous in the extreme. It is against this intellectual climate of doubt and uncertainty that we must place the post-modernist developments in literature. If art is thought to stand in some relationship to our world, this thesis need not be given up because one has become disillusioned with a particular theory of the nature of this relationship. The discontinuities and uncertainties that are the hallmark of all post-modernist thought (Fokkema, 1984) may truly indicate that the belief in a rigid, isomorphic, one-on-one mapping of the world by art can no longer be seriously advanced; but this does not entail that the thesis that art relates to its world must be given up. On the contrary, the post-modernist movement is clearly a response to, and a depiction of, such a grasp of the twentieth century mind upon its world. A theory of

reference has been found wanting through the deliberations of meta-theoretical thinking and it is this thinking, as we have seen above, that has reshaped a new tentativeness in our commitment to the world. These meta-theoretical deliberations are themselves grounded in modern explorations into the nature of meaning which, as we have seen, situate semantics in a public world of action. It would be a damaging form of inconsistency if the conclusions of the modern enquiries into epistemology and semantics were to be used to take issue with the presuppositions of the theories that establish their validity.

In rejecting a simplified world-language connection theorists like those of the Yale school of deconstructionists ( especially, for example, Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller and Geoffrey Hartman ) who dispense with the notion of reference have re-sealed the circle of meaning. Terry Eagleton in summarising Anglo-American deconstructionism is moved to say that for them,

Literature is the ruin of all  
reference, the cemetery of  
communication. ...[It] sees social  
reality less as oppressively  
determinate than as yet more  
shimmering webs of undecidability  
stretching to the horizon.

(1983: p 146)

Such an option betrays its literal-mindedness: for, while one can obviously be skeptical of any naive mirroring of reality by language, the notion of reference has proven itself vital for the formulation of any theory of semantics; and an explanation of its pre-conditions ( that is, a speaker-hearer situation, the co-operative principle and so-on ) has led to postulates that will prove invaluable in the formulation of questions to be directed at the co-text of any literary work.

The development of my thesis in the following chapters will demonstrate that any mapping of an interpretation onto the sequence of symbols making up the text must allow, at some juncture, for a type of mimetic commitment ( in the sense of the necessary activation of referential functions ) by the text to a world or worlds beyond its closed circle of meaning, if the implications that flow from the text and which generate its semantic richness are to be intersubjectively deducible.

The Searle/Evans defense of the 'cluster theory', arising in response to Kripke's barrage against it, as well as the pragmatic defence of analyticity mounted by Grice and Strawson, underwrites, I believe, the argument I develop in chapter 2 for the existence in a literary work of a narrative voice, guiding the mimetic commitment of the receiver of the textual signals; a voice which has, until now, remained unidentified by contemporary critics.

Contemporary developments in the semantics of reference, then, as evinced by the writings of Searle and Evans, can be seen to be taking place within a paradigm sympathetic to mimesis. Speakers are able to orientate themselves within the public world and, using the referential devices of language, can align their orientations with those of their fellow man. Language can be used to refer to enduring objects, identifiable and re-identifiable, situated in an intersubjectively accessible world. But, although reference within this theoretical model can be both secured and maintained, it remains fundamentally defeasible. As one moves from the position of centrality as regards one's primitive orientation in space and time towards the more rarified reaches of the literary work of art and its essentially mediated co-text, the conditions for the successful achievement of reference become progressively more etiolated. This etiolation is largely a function of the reader/receiver occupying a position ontologically distinct from that of the presented world, and if reference is to be secured for the reader/receiver, this can only be done by means of the clusters of descriptions offered by the mediator.

Because of the uniquely privileged epistemological position occupied by the first person narrator vis-a-vis the presented world, the reader/receiver is forced to accept any sincere description of the presented world of the literary



work given by the homodiegetic narrator as a true description, if for no other reason than that all of his sincere descriptions of the presented world, given his privileged epistemic position, are simply incorrigible. Thus the success conditions for the first person narrator's acts of reference are simply the assumed sincerity of all of his avowals. If, in a fictional work, the narrator avows, for example, that the world was a sad place in 1944, that is how we must take it to be. The failure conditions for his acts of reference, however, cannot be specified in conventional homodiegetic narration.

In unreliable narratives the mediator's referential acts do not automatically succeed, and this must be because it now becomes possible to specify the failure conditions for his acts of reference. The unreliable narrator, to state it differently, has been rendered corrigible. A necessary condition, though, for the correction of the unreliable narrator's description of the presented world is that the reader/receiver must have access independent of the mediator to the world as it is rather than as it appears to the mediator. But as the reader/receiver is ontologically divorced from this world, it is still necessary that such access as is now required be essentially mediated. Thus, an alternative form of mediation must be present in narrative situations of this kind. This mediator I have termed the 'immanent' narrator (1986a:41-56). Of course, as this narrator does not speak, its discourse must be qualitatively

of a different nature. It can only involve the control of our beliefs concerning its intentions, a control manipulated by the encoding of what I term 'translational indices' throughout the presentational process. That any such pattern exists in any particular work and that such a pattern justifies the beliefs which the reader/receiver has gained about the intentions of the immanent narrator will require grounding in a sustained argument to this effect. It is this sustained argument, I believe, that constitutes the interpretation of the work.

I have argued that the immanent narrator must manifest its intentions in the presentational process of the literary work via translational indices which govern the formation of the relevant beliefs in the reader/receiver. These are not to be found, however, within the semantic stratum (Ingarden, transl. 1973) of the work, for these words are those of the unreliable homodiegetic narrator and mean precisely what they are intended by him to mean. The translational indices in question, as I have argued elsewhere (1986b: 49-55), must be realised in other ways, their variety and complexity ranging from those encoded in the syntactics of a literary work to those encoded in the dramatic configurations of the presented world.

Reference, as I have gone to some length to establish, is a function involving both speaker and hearer. Thus, merely to engage with the presented world of the literary work

requires of the reader/receiver of the text the imaginative postulation of a speaker who is the source of its central unity. That is, it is only subsequent to this postulate's being made that all the sentences which may be deemed to constitute the text are rendered as judgements. Just as it is possible to refrain from making this postulate, with the result that the text becomes merely a string of sentences, so it is possible in cases of unreliable homodiegetic narration to refuse to acknowledge the immanent voice. This is another way of simply denying that the mediator in a particular instance is unreliable. The loss, radical in the former instance but still major in the latter, is one of significance. The ultimate appeal given any interpretative strategy is to the gain in significance of a literary work of art; assuming that such a strategy is employed by the critic to the effect that, at any point, he/she would be prepared to defend the appropriateness of the interpretation.

The dramatic juxtapositions between elements of the text and components of the co-text ( such as the framework of beliefs that situate the hypostatized reader ) provide the main field for the control of what I have termed translational indices. These essentially extra-semantic considerations reveal the necessity, where any case of first person narration is to be deemed unreliable, of placing the entire text within a mimetic situation. As argued above, mimesis is a dyadic relationship, which relates the literary

work to the world. However, the world is itself complex and the mimetic relationship holding between the literary text and the world could be expected, sometimes, to relate to different aspects of it. This has been demonstrated in the discussion of the ultimate grounding of meaning in 'forms of life' above. But the literary text can also stand in a mimetic relation to other extra-semantic aspects of the world. For example, I argue in chapter 2 that one of the indices operating in Muriel Spark's short story, 'You Should Have Seen the Mess!', requires for its activation that the reader/receiver should judge the homodiegetic narrator's social values as limited against his/her own conception of the worth of such values. Thus the extra-semantic beliefs of the reader/receiver are essential for the 'correct' grasp of the presented world of this work. This relationship of the text to its co-text follows from the final interpretation settled on, but qualified, of course, by the degree to which one's argument underwrites that final interpretation. The epistemological point, here, is that interpretations can be held; but 'in fear and trembling'.

Unreliable narration can be seen to be perhaps the most sustained realisation of structural irony available to an author. The argument for the essentially mimetic nature of narrative transmission, as I have advanced it in this chapter, is an especially cogent one. In those narratives which are characterised by both an overt and a tacit mediatory presence, certain fundamental elements coerce the

reader/receiver towards a recognition of the conditions necessary for the existence in this narrative situation of a voice other than that of the homodiegetic narrator. In other words, the reader/receiver becomes aware of the necessity ( if the full significance of the narrative is to be experienced ) of giving credence to the controlling immanent voice in what amounts to a stereoscopic narrative transmission; a recognition, moreover, of the translational indices whereby the existence of the immanent voice within the complex and problematic matrix of relationships comprising the text ( which itself stands in some set of definable relations to the external world ) is corroborated. This world must not be naively conceived of as the 'Ding-an-sich': the history of epistemology since Kant has revealed the essentially elusive nature of the noumenal world. With Quine (1961:16) we must learn to live with the world as described by our dominant paradigms, fleeting though they may prove themselves to be:

Our acceptance of an ontology is, I think, similar in principle to our acceptance of a scientific theory, say a system of physics: we adopt, at least insofar as we are reasonable, the simplest conceptual scheme into which the disordered fragments of raw experience can be fitted and arranged.

It is to this human world, imbued with its values, and including the people that inhabit it ( with their beliefs and their socio-culturally influenced perspectives), that the text makes reference. How it achieves this is problematic, but that it does, is shown by the argument to be simply a requirement for the possibility of unreliable narration. The main antagonists of this view correctly perceive that there can be no relationship holding between the text and the external noumenal world, but incorrectly deduce from this that there can therefore be no relationship holding between the text and its extra-semantic co-text. If, in the eyes of the deconstructionist critics, all in the final analysis is merely 'play', then it is 'play' of a kind that nevertheless permits of interpretation, acknowledging the force and mimetic nature of the complex bond holding between the text and the phenomenal world.

## Chapter 2: The Immanent Voice

(i) The construct of an immanent voice is elaborated and closely argued for establishing the context of an immanent narrative situation where the presence of two mediatory voices suggests a stereoscopic perspective upon the presented world.

(ii) The reliable/unreliable distinction is suggested as pertinent to an understanding of the mechanism of the immanent narrative mode.

### 1. Introduction: mediacy and narration

Analysts in the field of narrative since Percy Lubbock (1921) whether writing in the Anglo-American tradition or that of the continent have recognised, implicitly, the centrality of the notion of mediacy or indirectness to narrative:

[War and Peace] is rendered by the story teller, whole, as a scene directly faced by himself, instead of being reflected in the experience of the rising generation. It is true that Tol-

story's good instinct guides him...  
away from the mere telling of the story  
on his own authority; at high moments  
he knows better than to tell it himself.

(Lubbock, 1921:p 38)

Lubbock's normative criticism here aside, he implicitly recognises what has come to be regarded as the distinguishing feature of narrative (Stanzel, transl.1971 ). It is discernible in neither the lyric nor in dramatic works where immediacy or directness of presentation are characteristics of the forms, separating them from their more recent sibling. The concept of mediacy, thus, must provide the narratologist with his/her point of departure: ✓ however, there are yet elements of the concept that warrant greater clarity if its usefulness for criticism is to be extended.

It is a truism then but nevertheless worth repeating that a story requires a story-teller; a presence of whatever kind that performs the function of relaying the tale to the listener. The story-teller, or narrator, performs a pivotal function in the sequence involving, finally, the apprehension by the reader/receiver of the narrative: it is this 'presence' that filters the details of the narrative; whose varying and variable aspects impose differing dimensions of complexity on the nature of the relationship between the reader, the narrated events, and the author. The



narrator 'mediates the potential fictional world' and it is in him/her that 'the reader's mental illusion finds the bridge and the road which lead into the land of fiction' (Stanzel, 1971: p. 6). Narratologists largely agree that the reading act involves the concretization of this mediator on the part of the receiver of the tale (by exactly what process is the business of Reception Aesthetics and, though the ensuing chapters provide some insight into the mechanisms of the particular narrative situation that provides this dissertation with its focus, no claim is made for a comprehensive account of reception); and thus is established the intricate matrix of relationships central to narrative of whatever kind: between the author of the fiction, the implied author, the narrator, the narratee, the projected fictional world(s), the hypostatized reader and the reader/receiver of the tale. Such complexity, because of the absence of the defining variable, the narrator, is inevitably missing from the technical landscape of the lyric or of dramatic works.

The theoretical point of departure, thus, lies well within the mainstream of critical debate on narrative (1); and it is my intention here to assess, critically, some of the accepted precepts of narratology as it now stands and to offer a refinement of certain concepts in current usage within the discipline. With Gerard Genette (1980) I am under no illusion that my analysis of selected texts will have clarified with any finality a particular area of narrative

discourse, but I hope that what I shall bring to the surface will provide an insight into an increasingly intriguing area of the mechanics of narrative. The pioneers in the field set discourse in motion by providing sweeping typologies: the focus of this and the ensuing chapters is, however, kept deliberately narrow so that greater clarity may be brought to certain areas of narrative discourse, thereby illuminating more sharply such features of narrative as have not yet been fully examined ( or which have not received adequate attention at the hands of critics.) In doing so I hope, with Genette, to 'have furnished the theory of literature ... with some objects of study that are no doubt minor, but a little trimmer than the traditional entities...' (1980:p 264).

## 2. The literary work of art as a stratified intentional object: some objections to Ingarden's model

Fundamental underpinning of my theoretical position ( as I indicated in the introduction ) is provided by Roman Ingarden who, while concerned to explore the field of aesthetics rather than that of narrative per se, nevertheless has bequeathed to the discipline a wealth of incisive analyses of, and philosophical insight into, the mode of being and the formal structure of works of literature (1973). His phenomenological account of the literary work of art as a stratified intentional object comprising, minimally, four inter-related 'layers' is

unparalleled. (2). It is perhaps essential though that I list these strata here because they are not yet widely understood and, at a certain juncture, I find myself challenging his account of the mode of being of the literary work of art.

Ingarden's four strata, then, which he regarded as minimally requisite for a literary work to come into existence, are:

1. The stratum of verbal sounds and phonetic formations
2. The stratum of semantic units.
3. The stratum of schematized aspects where states of various kinds portrayed in the work come into appearance.
4. The stratum of the objectivities portrayed in the intentional states of affairs projected by the sentences.

Each stratum, moreover, has what he terms an aesthetic value of its own and contributes to what Ingarden calls the 'polyphonic harmony' and therefore to the aesthetic value of the entire structure. A fifth, metaphysical, stratum (arguably a component of, say, Lardner's 'Haircut' or James's The Aspern Papers) can be discerned in great works of literature, but Ingarden rules it out for the literary work of art as being desirable, but non-essential. From the outline of this schema, sketched above, one is made aware of the fact that Ingarden's investigations are, in the first

instance, broadly philosophical, operating at the macro, rather than the micro level which, of necessity ( the broad demarcation of the field having been accomplished ), is the domain of more recent theoreticians in the field of literary studies. Thus, while taking issue with the minutiae of his theoretical postulates as regards the literary work of art, the modern critic must, I believe, accord Ingarden the respect due to a predecessor of his stature; one whose reach has proved no less than remarkable.

For Ingarden, as indeed, for any critic sympathetic to his model, the second stratum is central since it requires the other three and yet determines them so that they have their ontic bases in it. He devotes a great deal of attention to the meaning units and it is at this fundamental stratum that I wish to level criticism. (3) With the introduction of sentences into the schema a number of issues are raised. They are, in the main, problems for semantics ( their existence and complexity lending supportive weight to the importance of contextualising the debate within the development of semantics as I have in chapter 1 ), the primary one of concern, here, being Strawson's distinction between asserted and non-asserted sentences, which focusses upon the differences between sentences on the one hand and judgements on the other (Strawson, 1950: 320-44). Judgements we construe as asserted sentences, reference being activated by a speaker. It is only - and significantly - at this juncture, and within the context established in chapter 1,

that questions of truth or falsity come into play, as only an assertion or statement ( and not a mere sentence ) can be described as having the property of truth or falsity.

Now, as the transition from sentences to judgements presupposes a speaker, the reader, when treating the sentences that constitute the literary work as judgements, has to postulate a fictive speaker ( or voice ). For example, the simple declarative sentence, 'The cat is on the mat' has no existential commitment: that is, no-one is committed to any particular cat or mat: whereas, when someone asserts that sentence, at least he/she commits him/herself to accepting the existence of a cat and a mat to which the sentence makes reference. To react, therefore, at what may be termed the 'judgemental' level commits the reader to the postulation of fictional characters; a commitment whose validity is essential to the argument being advanced here. Ingarden's stratum of portrayed objectivities does not, in fact, accommodate the subtle logical presuppositions involved in the transition outlined above. To be called in the first instance into fictional being, characters who will occupy the presented ( fictional ) world ( and who form part of what Ingarden designates his realm of portrayed objectivities ), may be given as the referents of the judgements being made in the work. This is not, however, the only means by which they can be summoned into fictional being: in homodiegetic narratives whether the mediator occupies a central or a peripheral position with

regard to the presented world, the homodiegetic narrator is automatically conjured into being ( or, as Ingarden would put it, concretized) within the presented world once the reader treats as judgements the sentences that constitute the 'presentational process' (Ruthrof,1981:p 26) of the homodiegetic discourse. It is, significantly, only in homodiegetic narration that the narrator occupies a position within the presented world of the narrative. In authorial, figural and - as I shall demonstrate below - immanent narration, while a fictive speaker is necessarily posited by the reader, he/she occupies a separate ontological realm, rarely entering that of the presented world ( except in extraordinary narrative situations such as, for example, John Fowles' The French Lieutenant's Woman [1969] and Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children [1981] ). In narratives such as these it could, however, be countered that the first person narrator is not postulated within the recollected presented world. However, with a minor modification, namely that the speaker must at least be temporally and spatially contiguous with that presented world ( or in other words, peripheral to the world in question ) the general principle will hold. Post-modernist writers exploit the technical possibilities inherent in such situations.

There are, then, two ways in which individual characters may be realised in the presented worlds of narrative fiction:

1. When they appear as the referents of sentences which are construed as judgements.

2. When the very act of treating the sentences of the literary work of art as judgements ( as in first person narrative ) entails a commitment by the reader to the fictive speaker ( or first person narrator.)

These ways of realising character cover, in fact, the broadly demarcated narrative situations that Stanzel ( 1971; 1984 ) calls authorial, first person and figural. However, it is only in first person narration ( a concept referred to by Genette [1972, transl. 1980] as 'homodiegetic narration', and which I use interchangeably with first person narration ) that both these means of conjuring character are operative: in the other modes of narration, the second is inoperative. Moreover, in these modes ( authorial and figural ) the reader's commitment to the postulation of a fictive speaker as an entailment of treating the sentences as judgements does not conjure up the fictive speaker ( narrator/mediator ) within the presented world. The narrator in these instances stands in a relation to the presented world that is not spatially or temporally contiguous and which is perhaps best understood using Genette's term, 'focalisation' (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:chapter 6, especially). For example, there is the authorial commentary of the kind prevalent in much eighteenth century fiction and of the kind currently prevalent in metafictional

works: In Tom Jones, to name only one example where spatio-temporal contiguity between narrator/mediator and presented world has been forsaken by the author, there are comments such as: 'To say the truth, Mr. Allworthy's situation had never been so bad, as the great caution of the doctor had represented' (1966:p 23). Commentary of this kind, with its authorial overlay, causes ( among other things ) as Stanzel puts it, 'tension to arise between the characters' own interpretations of their experiences, and the authorial narrator's comments and reflections' (1971:p 49) upon them.

Whether the speakers are realised in the fictional worlds of prose narrative by means of either 1. or 2. above, the important consideration for this theoretical position is that it is only with the recognition by the receiver of the narrative of an implicit speaker that, in our cognition of the literary work of art, we are able to move from the semantic stratum ( Ingarden's second level ) to that of the portrayed objectivities ( Ingarden's fourth ). What emerges from the above as a critical construct of some force is what I call the notion of 'ontic ascent', comprising a series of conditioned levels which, when clearly apprehended by the critic, precludes the blurring of boundaries on his/her part. This conditioned relationship, as I see it, provides the theoretical bonding for Ingarden's four discrete strata and it is these theoretically bonded, impacting levels that constitute, then, the literary work of art.



A pertinent question ( one which is largely overlooked, except by post-structuralist critics who fail to engage with it adequately ) that must be addressed to the literary work of art is: How can it cope with its threatening solipsism? That is, how, as readers of such narratives as may be designated unreliable and homodiegetic, do we introduce a principle that will allow us to draw the distinction between 'way of seeing'; that is, the subjective perspective of the homodiegetic narrator and 'thing seen': that is, the world of the narrative which may be objectively construed. Solipsism threatens because the presented world of a novel stands in no readily accessible relation to our world. The subjective perceptions of the narrator cannot, for example, be corrected for bias: we are unable, on the basis of independent evaluation of the facts of the presented world, to correct the narrator's account of those facts ( as we might correct another person's distortions or misinterpretations of events in our world ). This is so because we have no access to the facts of the presented world of a novel other than through a mediator's ostensibly incorrigible rendition. To gloss over what occurs under certain narrative conditions as merely 'inference', which it appears is what Ruthrof is doing when he states that: 'The reader must assess the narrator's mental short-comings and shift the misinterpreted world so that it coincides with what he infers to be the implied authorial stance' (1981:p 131), seems to be to ignore an intriguing aspect of the

presentational process in narrative. Clearly, narrative allows for this distinction, between the presented world as it appears to the narrator and the presented world as it is, to be drawn. In the example which I have selected for the purpose of demonstrating this feature of narrative, Muriel Spark's, 'You Should Have Seen the Mess!', the problem as I see it is to explain the mechanics of an achievement that allows the reader ( where there is no apparent mediatory presence other than that of a limited or 'unreliable' narrator) to correct distortions and to arrive at what 'he infers to be the implied authorial stance'. In chapter 3 I offer a brief typology of what I term translational indices whose presence in the text alerts the reader to the possible existence of an 'immanent' voice from which is inferred the existence of the immanent narrative situation.

### 3. 'You Should Have Seen the Mess!': the immanent narrative mode

In Spark's short story, the implied reader moves rapidly to a vantage point that encompasses and exposes the naivety ( or limitations ) of the ( ostensible ) homodiegetic narrator. The grounds for this perspective, whereby the conventional epistemic relationship of inferiority ( on the part of the receiver ) to superiority ( on the part of the narrator ) is inverted, inhere in what is essentially ( but loosely ) defined as the ironic mode. The New Criticism with its focus upon the text-as-text, and a concomitant search

for internal patternings and consistencies of form, in the ultimate interests of 'objective' criticism, was especially concerned to explicate irony; the literary device, that is, which allows for the registering of distance ( or disjunctions ) between the view of the reader/receiver and that of the narrator. A number of internal clues would reveal the irony in any one narration: in Spark's short story the discrepancy between the narrator's values, for example, and those central to the immanent narrative situation is responsible for generating ironic tension. But pointers of this kind may be more or less subtle with, perhaps, authorial interjection redirecting or shaping the reader/receiver's responses to the thoughts and utterances of the narrator. The controlling ironic mode creates what may be regarded as a 'stereoscopic' perspective for the reader. As will be shown, the world presented by the limited first person narrator ( in 'You Should Have Seen the Mess!' ) is juxtaposed to a distinctive mode of narrative transmission which I term the 'immanent' narrative situation. This comprises a 'voice' - for it engenders a discourse - of a unique kind, guiding the reader to a perspective upon the presented world which is distinct from that of the first person narrator. Hence it can be seen that in first person or homodiegetic fictional prose narrative the solipsistic status that threatens can be avoided on those occasions when the dual perspective on the presented world is made possible by the presence in the text of the

voice of the immanent narrator. However, solipsism must inevitably result if an immanent narrator's presence cannot be detected in the unfolding presentational process. The solipsistic state itself in homodiegetic narration is by no means to be regarded as defective: the point is that unreliable homodiegetic narration cannot be realised where the receiver is prohibited from drawing the 'way of seeing'/'thing seen' distinction referred to above.

It appears that despite the subtlety of their theoretical positions critics like Stanzel and Booth, and more recently, Genette, Ruthrof and Rimmon-Kenan, have not perceived the the existence of such a narrative situation: and, in referring to what has become known in accepted terminology as the omniscient or authorial narrative mode, have failed to recognise an important distinction as I see it between the so-called omniscient (authorial) third person narrative situation and that which I term the immanent narrative situation. (4) This is a distinction which my theoretical postulate of translational indices will allow me to draw. A further important consequence of this postulate is that it allows me, contra Ingarden, to relocate, radically, the logical space of the presented world allowing the reader/receiver an enriched perspective on ( or a stereoscopic vision of ) the presented world. Ingarden, together with other critics in the field, is, in fact, compelled by the logic of his model to accept only that world which is projected by the first person narrator.

Obviously, especially when the narrator's account is being received as tangibly unreliable in some fashion, such a position is untenable and I suggest that the postulation of an immanent narrative voice resolves a felt dilemma.

The notion of stereoscopic vision which I have mooted requires, I believe, some refinement. I have briefly presented a situation ( with regard to the Spark short story ) where the reader/receiver moves to a vantage point which allows for the correction on his/her part of subjective descriptions or accounts of events by the homodiegetic narrator. Translational indices in the text, provided by the author in the act of creation, permit - indeed coerce the reader/receiver towards - a corrected reading of the limited homodiegetic narrator's commentary. At first glance this claim may threaten to lead to some ontological confusion and it therefore requires clarification. The authorial realm is necessarily distinct from that of the mediator in fictional prose narratives of whatever kind ( even when the narrative exhibits the presence of an authorial mediator as in the authorial narrative situation ) and the author, Muriel Spark in the above instance, can by no stretch of the imagination inhabit the realm of the narrative, or for that matter of her narrator: such a feat is logically impossible. Even were she to adopt the guise of the authorial narrator no transition from one realm to another occurs - they remain ontologically discrete with Muriel Spark inhabiting the one domain, her

authorial narrator, another. In bringing into being the presented world of this narrative, however, Spark has selected a mediator of a particular kind: that is, homodiegetic, and limited. Now while the narrative details that comprise the presented world remain constant, subtle shifting of the focus can gradually be discerned so that emergent features are perceived by the reader as being inconsistent with the possible perceptions of the homodiegetic narrator. In this instance the reader is being drawn toward an overview by the careful and systematic guidance of a second discernible mediatory voice; and it is this 'voice' which I have designated 'immanent'.

The nature and complexity of this voice's status is clarified to some extent by an understanding on the part of the critic of the subtleties inherent in Ruthrof's neat distinction between, on the one hand, the presentational process and, on the other, the presented world (1981:22). His concepts are useful in that they are able to enhance our understanding of the ontological separation of author, narrator(s) and presented world. Narration ( the act of telling ) aligns itself pre-eminently with the presentational process, and is, thus, ontologically separate from the realm which is projected by the narrative. There are, however, certain precedents for a fusion or overlapping of these normally disparate realms in narrative which are of interest. Some of them are suggested below:

3.1. Presentational process and presented world: some instances of their merging in narrative situations

1. Autobiography provides, superficially, one of the more intriguing mergers of author and presented world. But the questions may be eliminated as they arise; for such a narrative as Down Second Avenue (Mphahlele, 1959) functions less as fiction than as quasi-factual record of real events. Ontological consistency is retained by an apparently autobiographical work such as David Copperfield where the homodiegetic narrator is a fictive persona; and no matter how similar ( and biographically verifiable ) his experiences, he can never be confounded with Dickens himself. Thus the realm of the author and that of the narrator remain separate.

2. The merging of presented world and presentational process occurs most tangibly, perhaps, in ostensibly authorial narratives such as Tom Jones or Don Quixote. Here there often occurs that temporal (if not spatial ) contiguity which permits of authorial commentary of the kind remarked upon earlier. In fact, as Stanzel points out, the deliberate attempt at the merging of these realms is a large feature of Fielding's virtuosity as an author:

...The picaresque adventures of Tom Jones...  
could not conceivably have captured the  
interest of adult readers for two centuries

if these readers were not concerned with observing the high intellectual play of the narrator in his attempt to make the rather coarse experiences of Tom Jones literarily presentable... In Tom Jones one can observe that the narrator in such a novel does not make merely autobiographical remarks about an otherwise very simple story, but rather he arouses the reader's interest above all in the narrator as the 'one who evaluates, senses, visualizes. He symbolizes the epistemological view held since Kant that we do not apprehend the world as it is in itself, but as it has passed through the medium of an observing mind.' [Quote from Friedemann, Kaete. 1910. Die Rolle des Erzaehlers in der Epik: p26]

(1971:p 50)

What Stanzel isolates here is one of the primary advantages of the authorial narrative situation, one which seems to gainsay any normative critique which would reject such a narrative situation because of its apparent simplicity or lack of sophistication. At its best, authorial narration, with its possibilities for the subtle interlocking of realms in a fictional work, can be extraordinarily evocative.

3. Overlapping of presentational process and presented world occurs most explicitly when the first person narrative



situation is the mediatory mode of a fictional work's presentation. Given the pressure on the novel ( during the last century particularly ) of verisimilitude - the profound and lasting legacy of 'realism' - it became necessary in first person narratives for the narrator, to some extent at least, to have participated in the narrated events. Problems of consistency arise even in a work such as Moby Dick when, with the changing emphasis of his vast landscape, Melville allows Ishmael, his initially central homodiegetic narrator, to occupy a more and more peripheral role, so that, when Ahab's consciousness is being explored ( in what has become an omniscient-authorial manner, externally focalised ) the splendour of the narrative must quell any niggling doubts as to Melville's technical control of the material. Ideally - our ideological underpinning derived from nineteenth century realism - we demand that the first person narrator must, minimally, have had some means of gaining access to the mind of a character whose thoughts he is mediating. In Wuthering Heights, for example, Emily Bronte is compelled, by the realist canons of consistency to which she adheres, despite her novel's palpably romantic generic affiliations, to resort to the rather clumsy technical device of the letter from the Grange in order to overcome a first person narrator's limitations where spatial and temporal discontinuity between narrator ( Nellie Dean ) and narrated events might call in question the 'validity' of the account. When, however, the narrator of a first person novel is

manifestly central to the events being recounted, fusion of the two realms occurs ( that is, the presentational process merges with the presented world.) In other words, the experiencing self becomes indistinguishable from the narrating self ( as in, amongst other examples, David Copperfield ).

If, then, it is possible for the normally distinct boundaries between apparently discrete realms ( those that comprise the matrix of fictional prose ) to become blurred or indeterminate at times, it seems possible to assume at least the possibility of a similar contiguity between limited first person narration and an 'authorial-type' presence such as the immanent voice. Precedents abound in literature. What might, perhaps, be argued is that, where the immanent voice is to be heard, the presentational process has assumed a degree of complexity and sophistication ( technically speaking ) of an order not unlike that which is possible in commentary made by the authorial narrator in a novel like Tom Jones. But narrative criticism such as is involved in the interpretation of texts, does not specifically concern me here: it is on the technique itself and not on the dividends it might pay for a metaphysical fifth stratum that I concentrate although I am certain that such an analysis would in other circumstances prove profitable to the business of criticism generally.

Contiguity of normally discrete ontological realms, then, is certainly potentially a possibility, given literary precedent, but if I am to proceed fruitfully with the discussion of the contiguity of immanent narration and homodiegetic narration in particular works of literature I believe it is necessary to set forth some of the gradations within the homodiegetic narrative situation which critics have already established and which form a part of our critical vocabulary. (5) Very broadly, then, these are as delineated in the ensuing section.

### 3.2 Types of homodiegetic narration: reliability and unreliability

1. A homodiegetic peripheral narrator whose vantage point is from the fringes of the presented world with, very often, only second-hand experience of the narrated events. The reader/receiver is made aware of his peripheral status by the deployment in the text of signifiers such as 'I assume' or 'I imagine' which serve to indicate that the narrator's relationship to the narrated events is a tenuous one ( Mr. Lockwood in Wuthering Heights exemplifies this peripheral stance of the first person narrator. )

2. A homodiegetic central narrator whose vantage point is patently from the centre of the narrated events; that is , he/she narrates, as David Copperfield does, from the centre of the presented world or from well within it. In this

instance, the narrator is the 'experiencing self' whose consciousness is responsible for the focalisation of the presented world; and through whose perceptions upon those events, the reader/receiver is able to apprehend what is being mediated by the narrator. (6)

3. A further possible subdivision first utilised with critical sophistication by Booth (1961) is that of the above homodiegetic narrators into reliable or unreliable. There are special consequences ( as Ruthrof, [1981:p 130] shows ) for the reader/receiver when the conventional relationship of superiority and reliability with regard to the emergent presented world is undermined and the narrator is revealed as having an unreliable, naive or limited consciousness. The receiver of the narrative transmission, normally the 'victim' in a presentational process where the narrator dominates, assumes a position of unwonted authority, and is able to challenge and reassess the narrative material being filtered through the mediator. In order for this perspective to be achieved and for the inversion of the conventional role ( of the reader/receiver ) to occur, not one, but two narrative situations must be present as part of the presentational process: the one, a (limited ) homodiegetic narrative situation; the other, an authorial-like narrative situation whereby the authorial mediator patently, though implicitly 'addresses' the reader/receiver, providing a warning about the unreliable status of the ostensible first person narrator.

However, a phrase such as 'authorial-like' above, requires further explication. While it must be acknowledged that the central work done within the field of unreliable narration has involved a focussing down upon what is termed the 'implied author', a concept utilized to grapple with the elusive control many critics correctly feel is at work in unreliable homodiegetic narration, my thesis engages with the same central area of concern but in a manner conceptually at odds with the traditional understanding of the control exerted by the so-called implied author. In addition, an attempt is made to argue for the control being realised neither as a construct nor as an 'anthropomorphic entity' (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:p86) but rather as an active mode of narrative transmission situated immanently in the text. A conceptual manoeuvre of this kind has its foundation in the typology advanced by Stanzel (1984) though it of course involves the postulation of a narrative situation, in short a new voice in narrative ( De Reuck, 1986 ) which augments his classificatory schema. To regard the concept of the immanent voice, though, as merely a renaming of a construct already current in narrative theory: that is, to view it as synonymous with the so-called 'implied author' would, I believe, be to miss the essential contribution to the field of narratology which this thesis attempts to make.

Whenever the question of reliability has been raised (and it has been in various forms and with differing emphases, either intra- or extra-textually, by Booth 1961;

Romberg, 1962; Chatman, 1978; Iser, 1974; Sternberg, 1978; Rimmon-Kenan, 1983; Stanzel, 1984; Yacobi, 1987; or Rabinowitz, 1987 ) the interpretative pull has been toward some area of authorial intention; toward an explanation that departs more or less radically from a text-immanent critical engagement with the modes of narrative transmission. While I intend to delineate fairly comprehensively the relevant features of the narratological terrain which have a bearing on the thesis being proposed here, it is ultimately with the intention of rejecting such a notion as the implied author that I am preoccupied, and my reasons for doing so will be elaborated shortly.

As is now fairly generally acknowledged, the concept of the implied author may be traced back to Wayne C. Booth who talks of 'the image [a writer] creates of himself, his implied author' (1961:p395). With Rimmon-Kenan ( 1983:p87) I agree that the identification of author and implied author in a loosely conceived anthropomorphic framework is fraught with epistemological dangers: merely to acknowledge the psychological complexity of the relationship of author to implied author on this model is to skirt a crucial critical area, one which with its intrinsic relativism and subjectivism must severely hamper objective, verifiable textual evaluation. Nevertheless, identification of author and implied author, despite the ontological blurring this entailed, has been a feature of the etiology of this concept.

Bertil Romberg (1962), like Booth, conceives of the implied author as an aspect or manifestation of the author's intentional act. In assessing a narrative which Booth would characterise as having an unreliable narrator, J.P. Marquand's novel, H.M. Pulham, Esquire, he states:

It must be emphasised once more that the narrator is not by any means presented as an empty or stupid medium; it is only that he draws quite different conclusions from the facts communicated than the conclusions the author intends the reader to draw.

... when the reader is given information over the narrator's head, so to speak, the narrator's role as medium is generally emphasised thereby. And then the author can be discerned behind the narrator...

(pp 119;123)

Although he does not explicitly refer to an 'implied author' it can readily be gauged that Romberg, here, relies upon a conception of authorial intention that aligns his theoretical position with that of Booth: in the refractory domain of psychological intention. This is true also of Iser (1974) who postulates a substitute or agent for the

author in the implied author. Meir Sternberg (1978), however, who talks of:

The author or..."implied author" - the omnipotent artistic figure behind the work, incessantly selecting, combining, and distributing information, and pulling various strings with a view to manipulating the reader into the desired responses - is the creator of the artwork as well as its meaning, of its rhetoric as well as its normative groundwork and thematic pattern.

(p254)

provides a more complex presentation of the concept of the implied author, noting that it is not identical with the author but is 'another figure [interposed] between [the author] and the reader, namely, the narrator - the person or persona that actually does the telling.' (1978:p 255). He, to my mind, rightly takes issue with the 'almost axiomatic presupposition of novel criticism since Lubbock that the omniscient narrator coincides with the author at all points or rather is the author' (pp 255-56) stating that such a blending of omniscient narrator and author 'fails to stand up to the facts':

the omniscient narrator is as much a



creation of the author's as are  
dramatized narrators that are obviously  
distant from him.

(p 256)

For Sternberg, the implied author must not be identified with the author except ( and again there is evidence of the characteristic anthropomorphism first encountered in Booth's analysis ) as 'a certain kind of narrator' (p 256). This position is challenged by Rimmon-Kenan who locates the debate about the implied author fairly specifically, suspending it between the polarities , on the one hand, of those accounts which imply psychological identity between author and implied author ( Booth, Romberg, Iser ), and on the other, accounts such as that offered by Sternberg which identify the implied author with the narrator. (Sternberg suggests, for example, that the omniscient narrator is the type that 'most closely approximates the implied author':p 256). Chatman, however, proposes a schema which, though problematic, involves an extended and provocative engagement with the concept of the implied author. His diagram of the communicative process provides Rimmon-Kenan with an arsenal of critical ammunition but it must be accorded recognition as a statement that goes some way towards unpacking the complexity of the term.

Rimmon-Kenan believes that if the implied author is only a construct ( as in Chatman's diagram ) having '...no voice,

no direct means of communicating' ( Chatman,1978: p148 ), then it seems 'a contradiction in terms to cast it in the role of the addresser in a communication situation' ( 1983:p 88) . She prefers to see the implied author 'considered as a set of implicit norms rather than as a speaker or a voice', entailing, she believes, its literal exclusion as a 'participant in the narrative communication situation' (p 88), where she considers the narrator and narratee as 'constitutive, not just optional, factors in narrative communication' (p 88). She defines the narrator, moreover, 'minimally, as the agent which at the very least narrates or engages in some activity serving the needs of narration' (p 88).

It is at this juncture, where the concept of the implied author is suspended between the twin polarities of 'anthropomorphic entity' and 'implicit norms', that the notion of an immanent narrative situation distinguishes itself from the notion of the implied author. Unlike the notion of the implied author outlined above, the immanent narrative situation is conceived of neither as a personified consciousness nor as a 'construct inferred and assembled by the reader from all the components of the text' ( p 87 ); rather, I argue, it is realised as a legitimate narrative situation, immanent in the text and fulfilling the role of the highest 'narratorial authority'.

In chapter 3 it will be incumbent upon me to provide a theory that will explain just how a silent addresser is able to disclose its meaning and secure its referential acts, which form of 'utterance' reveals its presence in the text as a logical presupposition. It will be argued that if referential acts are performed ( albeit, as will be seen, of a nondenotational kind ) and if meaning can be disclosed, then the source or promulgator of the transmission of reference must be a legitimate candidate for the role of addresser in a communicative situation.

An analogy for my enterprise here, drawn from recent developments in the semantics of metaphor, may make my point clearer. Donald Davidson ( 1978:p 43 ) argues that metaphorical sentences do not "say something" special, no matter how indirectly. For a metaphor says only what it shows on its face ... it is given in the literal meaning of the words.' The reason for this is to be found in the necessary univocality of words. Sentence meaning is generated from the meanings that its constituent words conventionally have. Searle ( 1986 ) develops this point further when he argues that a distinction must be drawn between sentence meaning and utterer's meaning. Utterer's meaning, then, can be revealed through the devices standardly made use of in disclosing speaker-intention.

Such distinctions carried across to narratology can expose the logical geography, so to speak, of the narrative

situation that comprises unreliable homodiegetic narratives. The judgements of the unreliable first person narrator, analogous to the metaphorical sentences above, mean just what their speaker intends them to mean. However, another meaning is disclosed in certain of these transmissions and when this occurs, we are obliged to ground this 'new' meaning in a more primary set of a different utterer's intentions. This parallels the requirement of positing the utterer's meaning in accounting for what is accomplished by metaphor. Corresponding to the case for a recognition of the utterer's intentions in metaphoric speech, the ensuing argument seeks to establish in cases of unreliable homodiegetic narration that the disclosed meaning of the text must be grounded in the mode of its narrative transmission, a mode which I term immanent.

The argument of this thesis then seeks to explain the dynamics of that special ambiguity manifest in unreliable homodiegetic narratives without following the conceptual research programmes suggested by either pole of the concept of the implied author. Instead, by suggesting an amendment to Stanzel's narrative typology, the thesis engages with the problem of unreliable homodiegetic narration, providing a theoretical account of the dominating control exerted by the immanent narrative situation.

### 3.3 'Showing' and 'telling': aspects of the immanent narrative mode

Revelation with regard to a homodiegetic narrator's unreliability may also occur in another less palpable fashion when the reader/receiver is made aware, by means of specific textual signals, of the presence in the narrative situation of an immanent voice. This is essentially a revelatory voice which 'shows' rather than 'tells'. Its technical virtuosity lies in the fact that it permits of a simultaneity in the presentation of the narrative situations rather than the consecutive progression of a homodiegetic/authorial kind. By virtue then of the unique stereoscopic vision which such a presentational process engenders, the reader/receiver is made to confront not one but two narrative situations simultaneously, whose superimposition, moreover, allows for the dramatic revelation of the first person narrator's psychic make-up. The presentational process as outlined above comprises two separate narrative voices but permits the reader/receiver the simultaneous apprehension of, on the one hand, details presented ('told') by the first person narrator and, at an impacting, therefore more sophisticated meta-level, on the other hand, the apprehension of details rendered ('shown') by the immanent voice. As I have indicated ( and to corroborate the 'telling/showing' distinction which I see as operating when this narrative situation applies), when the

immanent narrator's presence comes into focus, it is without any conscious activity of 'telling' on its part ( that is, its status must be regarded as being distinctly different from the modus operandi of conventional authorial narrators ), yet it bears a marked resemblance to the authorial narrator's function in that the activity of telling lies submerged - is implicit - in the act of revelation. I call this 'presence' immanent because of its omni-present qualities: it is pervasive and covert; and it must be a narrative voice in that only a narrative voice of some kind can mediate between the realm of the presented world and that of the reader/receiver.

The origin of such a distinction in literary criticism between the function performed by a limited homodiegetic narrator ( or, as the case may be, an authorial narrator ) and an immanent narrator can of course be traced back to E.M. Forster's differentiation between 'telling' and 'showing' (1927) or between what Stanzel calls 'reportlike narration' or 'scenic presentation' (1971). In his adaptation of the concept for his more recent publications, Stanzel uses the terms 'teller-characters and reflector-characters' (1978; 1984). A teller-character, for Stanzel, is the speaker of the narrative words while the reflector-character is the knower of the narrative (1984). There are obvious conceptual parallels, too, with Rimmon-Kenan's focalisers ( external and internal ): her notion, derived from Genette (1980), will receive further

critical attention in the explicatory chapters ( 4,5 and 6 ) of the second half of this thesis. Stanzel, by confining his distinction to concretizable characters within the presentational process or the presented world seems to me to preclude the undertaking of a fundamental examination of at least this narrative possibility. That is, his schema ( as it is presently conceived ) seems to deny the critic the means by which the perspective on the presented world of the reader/receiver is made to blend with that of the hypostatized reader (projected by means of a matrix of text-based signals); and calls in question the credibility of the first person narrator when there is apparently no mediator in either domain to whom can be ascribed responsibility for any adjustment of the perspective to encompass and surpass that of the homodiegetic narrator. In other words, Stanzel's concretized 'person' does not allow for the accomodation by the reader of such a stereoscopic vision as is warranted by the immanent narrative mode, and his theoretical account, I suggest, suffers accordingly.

#### 3.4 Analysis of 'You Should Have Seen the Mess!': an example of immanent narration

The selection of Muriel Spark's short story, 'You Should Have Seen the Mess!' (1972), was occasioned not by any sense of its aesthetic worth but rather by its seeming to provide pre-eminently, an example of the immanent narrative situation. In addition, it is by no means familiar to

critics in the field who tend to select primarily from the Great Tradition of literary works, according their narrative situations a status that it is difficult to assess without particular, and often distorting, colouration. A relatively obscure narrative such as Spark's presents no preconceptions that might necessitate elimination and provides the narratologist with a wholly uncharted domain through which to move, unhampered by any earlier, reified topographical pointers.

Spark's narrator in this short story is Lorna Merrifield. She is the 'experiencing self' whose perceptions draw the receiver into the fictional world. The ostensible narrative situation is, thus, first person, or homodiegetic, central:

I am now more than glad that I did  
not pass into the grammar school  
five years ago, although it was a  
disappointment at the time.

(p.301)

In these opening lines Spark establishes Lorna Merrifield's distinctive voice and we are given some indication that this narrator will evolve towards a stance somewhat remote from that of quasi-detached objectivity which, conventionally, governs the relationship of narrator to the events he/she narrates. (7) An early-warning signal is provided by her idiosyncratic use of the adverbial phrase, 'more than glad' which, when coupled with her unvaried use of simple sentence



structures, and the repetition of whole linguistic units with very little by way of qualifying embellishment, indicates that her perceptions, conveyed as they are by a constricted linguistic ability, are bound to be, at best subjective and in general severely limited. In short, her powers of description are markedly curtailed by her linguistic inadequacies, the latter forcing the receiver into an awareness of the ironic tension in the narrative between her own utterances and her comment that she was 'always good at English, but not so good at the other subjects!!' (p301).

In addition to these linguistically based character signals Spark further delineates her narrator, stylistically, by means of what may be referred to as a pre-phonetic ( Ruthrof, 1981:p 51 ) pointer; that is, the double exclamation mark. The emphatic nature, for example of the exclamation, '...not so good at the other subjects!!', allows the reader/receiver an insight into one component of the narrator's psyche which places the reader/receiver in a position to encompass the discourse of Lorna Merrifield, the homodiegetic narrator, and perceive a state of mind which her own utterance merely implies. She does not state that she is embarrassed by her inability to 'pass into the grammar school'; in fact, given in the text is the diametrically opposite view that she is 'more than glad!!' that she did not. The reader/receiver, however, shifts position in the conventional relationship of inferiority to

the unfolding of the events by the mediator. This conventional relationship is wholly inverted, so that by the conclusion of the opening paragraph, reception takes place from a vantage point that is superior, vis-a-vis the narrated events, to that of the mediator. The inference which the reader/receiver draws is that Lorna Merrifield is perhaps unconsciously mortified by her failure, her veneer of gratitude being merely a defensive rationalisation. In short, the interpretation of the presented world filtered through the consciousness of a highly subjective and fallible mediator is not to be trusted: the hypostatized reader's perspective, enhanced by its having the added stereoscopic dimension, coerces the reader/ receiver towards a 'three-dimensional' corrected vision of the whole. What, though, is the mechanism that underlies this process and which Spark has employed to produce this dual perspective for her hypostatized reader? It is a method that involves the positioning in the discourse of a number of signals which I call 'translational indices' and which direct the hypostatized reader towards the reception of the homodiegetic narrator's discourse as fallible. The gain, for the author of the narrative is the important one of a subtle revelation of character: the emergent indices permitting the author to 'show' rather than 'tell' as she develops the character of her mediator in the narrative situation.

In arriving at a decision about Lorna Merrifield's limitations, the receiver has been confronted by a number of

such indices. As outlined above, they are, firstly, the initial manifestation of her distinctive narrative voice, emerging in the presentational process via such textual signals as the double exclamation mark, her repetitive use of simple sentence constructions, her idiosyncratic use of adverbial phrases ( 'far from', 'more than' ) and a characteristic prissiness made manifest in her use of evasive linguistic formulations ( lavatories are termed 'facilities' and she says of Willy Morley, for instance that 'he did not attempt to go to the full extent': p306 ).

The deployment in the narrative of these signals sharpens our focus ( at the micro level ) upon the mediatory character of Lorna Merrifield. The result is that at the macro level we reach conclusions about the narrator which derive directly from the immanent narrative situation. For example, the reader concludes that the narration is highly subjective and unreliable and that this unreliability stems from her superficial, materialistic focus upon external data and impressions. In the following excerpt,

I am glad that I went to the secondary modern school, because it was only constructed the year before. Therefore, it was much more hygienic than the grammar school. The secondary modern was light and airy ... the grammar

school ... you should have seen  
the mess!

(p 301)

a subtle and ironic counterpoint to the narrator's perceptions is provided by the hypostatized reader's projected value stance where secondary modern and grammar schools are concerned. For the narrative to have any ironic point the hypostatized reader must align him/herself with grammar school education and not with secondary modern schooling if the ironic thrust of the story is to be adequately received. Any other orientation by the hypostatized reader would entail a reduced reading - on its own terms - of the narrative: failure to respond adequately to the strictures determined by the translational indices would entail a uni-dimensional perspective upon the presented world which would preclude the recognition of the narrow base of the homodiegetic narrator's discourse. The receiver would not, in short, be alerted to the presence of the immanent voice in the unfolding presentational process of this particular narrative situation.

Lorna Merrifield's gimlet-eyed focus upon walls, floors and window-sills is at its best a metaphoric revelation of her superficiality. At its worst, technically speaking, it is a somewhat heavy-handed ramming home of a point creditably ( and humorously ) established the moment the reader/receiver adapts him/herself to the framework of

reception generated by the text for the hypostatized reader. In repetitions such as those in this excerpt, 'He was a good-looking boy, I will say that ... To look at he was quite clean in appearance!' (p 304) one senses though the intrusion ( that is if Spark's oeuvre as a whole provides the interpretative abstractions with their context. ) of authorial values which undermine, even obscure, the more subtle balance created between the homodiegetic and immanent narrators. (8) The reader/receiver, moreover, discovers that the narrator's limitations of consciousness extend to her perceptions of other, related spheres, but that they all have their source in the central characteristic, that of superficiality, which Spark is at pains to establish. For example, once the Darbys have befriended her, Lorna reveals her lower-middle class (Fussell,1984) values in her shocked response to their chaotic household:

I had to wait in their living  
room, and you should have seen  
the state it was in! There  
were broken toys on the carpet,  
and the ashtrays were full up.

(p 303)

However the implied reader ( as opposed to the hypostatized reader ) may respond in reality to untidiness, grubbiness, or injunctions to 'Shut your gob, you little bastard!' or not to 'pee over the cabbages ... [but] on the lawn' (p302),

there is little doubt at this juncture in the narrative that the Darbys are meant to receive a positive evaluation, merely because the negative judgements are Lorna's, her credentials by this time, having been firmly eroded. Neat juxtapositioning of narrative details such as 'She was very nice to me' (p 303), followed by a remarkably unsympathetic description of the Darby's home and immediate environment point us away from Lorna Merrifield as a reliable centre of orientation for the narrative, and towards the Darbys with their cluttered, untidy, but apparently unrestrained life-style. Lorna's values, in themselves by no means unworthy, but as she reveals them, hopelessly limiting and limited, are further elaborated upon in the incident with old Mrs Darby. Her revulsion at Mrs Darby's being housed in such a 'tumble down cottage' serves a two-fold function:

1. It reveals Lorna's genuine sympathy for and sense of responsibility towards other people.
2. But it is overlaid by the limitations set on her by her class-affiliations. What she sees as a place unfit for human habitation is, in fact, a fourteenth century cottage which she compares unfavourably with the Council house she and her Mum and Dad occupy.

Thus, the hypostatized reader is required to re-interpret Lorna Merrifield's commentary here and subsequently ( when she describes her hopeless relationship with Willy Morley ) in order to arrive at an accurate reading of the presented

world; a reading which is manifestly at variance with that which would be encountered were the mediatory presence of Lorna Merrifield the sole means of access to the data of the presented world. To make sense of this corrective element in the presentational process, and to maintain ontological consistency, it becomes necessary to postulate a contiguous narrative situation operating in conjunction with that of the first person but which is responsible for relaying to the receiver, the presented world as it is, and not as Lorna Merrifield sees it. It is by being alerted to such an occurrence in the presentational process that one will arrive at an accurate description of the technique employed by authors in narratives of this nature.

The immanent voice, then ( or to maintain Stanzel's terminology, the immanent narrative situation ), is responsible for the receiver's reception of the presented world in its entirety. It cannot be countered that this is a matter merely of authorial manipulation, as this would be to commit the inadmissible error of blurring ontological realms: the realm of the author is logically separate from that of a chosen mediator or narrator. Spark, in order to achieve certain narrative goals, has employed - simultaneously - not one, but two narrative situations so that the receiver of the narrative can arrive at a reading of the text that encompasses that of the first person narrator. The presence of this voice is ascertained by means of translational indices ( a narratological concept to be

elaborated in chapter 3 ) which allow the reader to correct the given details, accomodating in the process the astigmatic perspective of the first person narrator so that the 'true' reading is obtained. These indices may be of many kinds, it seems, ranging from the micro- to the macro-level in textual analysis ( as will be demonstrated in chapter 4, particularly ), and involving the minutiae of punctuation and typography at their most basic level: however, at their most subtle, they call upon the reader/receiver to respond to a complex interweaving of values and mores which coerce a re-reading of what is tangibly 'there' in the narrative.

Two kinds of translational indices which I have omitted to point to above but which it seems to me are central to the narrative's success or failure derive from comedy. Such comic conventions as repetition - of phrases, whole sentences, even situations - with its cumulative and rather predictable effects; and in this short story, alienation, are effectively deployed. In chapters 3 and 6 Goodman's (1979) notions of exemplification and expression are introduced as technical terms to explicate the kind and nature of the translational indices in selected unreliable, homodiegetic narratives. Spark's use of the conventions from comedy may be placed, effectively, against the interpretive grid provided by Goodman. She manipulates the conventional notion of alienation in a most interesting fashion so that a peculiar reversal occurs in the final paragraph of the story, drawing the reader/receiver inexorably away from



his/her recently established centre of orientation with the immanent narrator and back again towards Lorna Merrifield. This violent pendulum swing of the mood of the narrative allows Spark to achieve a complex poignancy which derives its quality from the recognition by the reader/receiver of the nature and effectiveness of the alienation from the homodiegetic narrator: the distance compounded of translational indices which succeed in eroding the reader/receiver's sympathy for the apparently superficial homodiegetic narrator. It is a gulf which narrows alarmingly when a glimpse is permitted of Lorna's desperate unhappiness. Against the apparent resolve of the last lines of the narrative:

I agree to equality, but as to me  
marrying Willy, as I said to Mavis,  
when I recall his place, and the good  
carpet gone greasy, not to mention  
the paint oozing out of the tubes, I  
think it would break my heart to sink  
so low.

(p.307)

is set the almost parenthetical 'I was upset as usual' (p 306) which hints at levels of experience that Lorna's account has not, until then, permitted the reader to deem possible. The strength of the short story lies in the effect this conclusion has on the ( by this point in the narrative )

alienated receiver, and its roots lie in the contiguous co-existence of the two narrative situations. ✓

#### 4. Conclusion

Two sets of perceptions, then, can be seen to light the presented world of this narrative: those of Lorna Merrifield, the homodiegetic and limited narrator, and those of the immanent narrator ( whose corresponding position, narratologically speaking, can be described as extra-diegetic.) It is the presence of the latter which determines how we receive Lorna's decision not to marry Willy Morley. By her own lights, her resolution is a positive one ( 'It would break my heart to sink so low.' ) but for the immanent narrator, it is a negative decision. Willy Morley's potential has never been fully appreciated by Lorna who, despite the hint we are given of the struggle underlying her decision about her future, allows her first thoughts about him ( 'He was young, dark, with a dark shirt, so one could not see right away if he was clean.' : pp 305-306 ) to remain fundamentally her last.

The presence in a narrative of the immanent voice is one of the components of irony, and its isolation for criticism constitutes an important addition to the analysis of the mode. I stress this to avoid what would be a confounding and unilluminating identification of the ironic mode with the immanent voice. This voice in itself is not ironic but its

presence and the contrasting world that it reveals provide the tension that constitutes the ironic mode. Further, in order to anticipate such criticism, I can vindicate the description of such a phenomenon as a narrative situation because it meets what are the requirements for it to be a narrative voice, namely that it mediate between a reader/receiver and the presented world and that the reader/receiver arrive at his/her grasp of the presented world as a consequence of a presentational process which has, as its source, this phenomenon. This should circumvent, I feel, any inclination to identify the voice in question with a loosely conceived ironic mode.

To conclude let me add that while Muriel Spark's ostensible subject, deriving from the first-person narrative situation might be conceived of as an exploration of the experiences of Lorna Merrifield, the deployment of an immanent narrator allows her to reveal her narrator's inner landscape ( here, a comparison might be drawn between the perspectives permitted by the dual narrative situations in this tale and those of standard internal/external focalisation ) so that the reader has the advantage of a superior centre of orientation which would not be immediately accessible to the unsophisticated reader and without which, reception of the short story would be severely circumscribed.

That the presented worlds of these narratives arise out of a process that is fundamentally mimetic is perhaps more clearly to be understood when once the scope and nature of the construct which I term the translational index is aired. That the reader/receiver apprehends more than is contained in the mere utterance or discourse of a narrator such as Lorna Merrifield in a narrative of this kind, bears testimony to the existence of an immanent voice, whose presence, once experienced in the reading process, may be ascertained by those elements in the discourse which prompt reception - in stereoscopic vision - of an augmented presented world; one whose being presupposes the reader/receiver's ideological and creative alignment with the grid provided by the text for the hypostatized reader. In chapter 3, the world(s) thus created are placed under observation and their mode of existence analysed.

#### NOTES

1. See for example Stanzel (1971,1984) whose terminology and typology provide the framework within which the argument of this thesis is to be located. Booth (1961), Scholes and Kellogg (1968), Cohn (1978), Chatman (1978), Iser (1978), Genette (1980), Prince (1982), and Rimmon-Kenan (1983) have all contributed, conceptually, to the theory of narrative and provide this thesis with its context.

2. Although H.G. Ruthrof, The reader's construction of

narrative, extends and expands his model. ( See particularly chapter 4 pp.65ff. )

3. It is, perhaps, worth mentioning here that there are possibilities for an author inherent in the phonetic stratum which are 'set into a function' (Ingarden, 1973:p 65 ) when the reader/receiver apprehends the determinate word sounds. There exists, moreover ( and the significance is examined in detail in chapter 3 ), the possibility of, in addition to the construct of a pre-phonetic stratum, what may perhaps be termed a para-phonetic stratum, so that a poet such as George Herbert, in 'Easter Wings' or 'The Alter', for example, may arrange the physical lines of print in such a way as to coerce the perceiver to gestalt an image that has semantic value, but which is not, in an acceptable sense, phonetically based. Normally, however, the phonetic stratum is registered only fleetingly and the receiver transcends this level almost as it is admitted to consciousness, arriving instantly at the level of word and sentence meanings in the literary work. If, as Ingarden says, the semantic stratum can be defined as 'everything bound to a word sound which, in conjunction with the sound forms a work' ( 1973:p 63), then it appears that his schema does not accommodate the semantic contribution made typographically by the creative manipulation, on an author's part, of either the 'para-' or the 'pre-phonetic' stratum - the visual dimension of a literary work. They are both, undoubtedly, strata that must be accorded consideration in any inclusive

account of the literary work of art, and they are the source - as will be demonstrated - of a number of significant translational indices.

4. In her assessment of his most recent work, Theorie des Erzaehlens (1981), Dorrit Cohn has vindicated Stanzel's theoretical investigations, after the less than enthusiastic reception of his Narrative Situations in the Novel (1971). My terminology is drawn largely from Stanzel's rather than Genette's whose analytic specificity has an attraction somewhat different from Stanzel's more 'synthetic' (Cohn, 1981:159) approach; the latter's being more suitable to my undertaking.

5. See Bertil Romberg's exhaustive account of this type of narrative (1962). He does not, however, isolate an immanent narrative situation.

6. I think it pertinent to return, at this juncture - briefly - to Stanzel's remark about the significance for fiction of Kant's epistemological view with regard to the apprehension of the presented world by the reader/receiver (1971: p 22). The context in which the comment was made was a chapter on the authorial narrative situation, but first person narrative also permits the aesthetic deployment of such a mediator ( that is, a highly 'conscious' narrator, such as Zeitblom in Mann's Dr Faustus ) who provides a remarkably sensitive perspective.

7. This is not to deny that first person narrators very often reveal idiosyncratic quirks and character traits. These I regard as affecting the narrative more or less effectively when measured against the 'norm' of conventional ( apparently detached ) objectivity. (David Copperfield would provide an instance of such apparently impartial narration.)

8. It should be noted that reception of this narrative ( as with other 'unreliable' narratives ) can vary: a knowledge of the other writings of Muriel Spark can elicit a sense of the distastefulness of this story. What some receivers would regard as the humour of the piece could be experienced as an unpleasant, satirical quality by others. I think, however, that despite momentary 'lapses' in narrative consistency, one could argue for a tonal quality, in the narrative, far removed from patronage and more closely aligned with empathy for the narrator. These are finer points of analysis, and are not of direct concern to me here. It is perhaps the comic undertow that causes an adverse reaction in some readers. Reception is then coloured by a mocking and patronizing quality in the humour and fails, fully, to encompass the revelation that the story aims for.

### Chapter 3: Translational Indices

Using Ingarden's notion of the  
Literary Work of Art as a  
stratified intentional object;  
and Goodman's concepts of exem-  
plification and expression, a  
typology of translational indices  
is offered.

#### 1. Introduction

Having argued in the previous chapter for, among other things, the necessary presence in the text of a covert sign-system that would enable the reader to justify the establishment of the success/failure conditions that must apply to the referential acts of the unreliable narrator, in this chapter, an attempt is made to provide an argument for the systematic classification of the differing kinds of translational indices. In addition, those areas of the text where such translational indices could be encoded will be provisionally identified.

What is needed in order to avoid relying solely upon anything as vague as a generalised sensitivity on the part of the reader to the presence in the text of such signs as are indicated above is a theoretical account of the ontology of the literary work of art which will allow the 'logical geography' of the text to be surveyed comprehensively. The



demand on such a theory would be two-fold: not only must it identify those discrete areas of the text available to the author for encoding the necessary sign-system, but it must also give an account of the kinds of signs that can sensibly be employed in these previously identified areas of textual discourse. A point of departure would seem, therefore, to be best served by the theoretical account of the literary work of art given by Roman Ingarden (1973a and b) and amplified by Wolfgang Iser of the Geneva School (1974, 1978), as well as H.G. Ruthrof (1981); all of whom offer accounts of the literary work of art that are essentially phenomenological.

As has been established, the translational indices in question cannot be found within the discourse of the unreliable first person narrator. To all intents and purposes the meaning of this discourse is co-extensive with the explicit intentions of the narrator who is only perceived as being 'unreliable' from a meta-critical vantage point: a point which only becomes available to the critical receiver once the covert sign-system has been identified (the immanent voice being predicated upon this system.) This appears, initially, to have extremely damaging consequences for a thesis that demands the identification of translational indices which govern an interpretative act on the part of the reader: in some sense, it can be argued, the entire discourse is nothing but a sustained conjunction of the unreliable narrator's speech acts, apparently having as a consequence the impossibility of the text, thus

understood, providing any vehicle for the encoding of the required covert sign-system. However, such an understanding of the ontological status of the literary work of art is a severely limited one and, moreover, is one which renders nonsensical any attempted coherent reading of homodiegetic narratives of the kind in question here.

## 2. The location of the translational indices: Ingarden's strata amplified

My argument essentially seeks to establish the existence of three separate ontological realms, all outside the overt discourse of the first person narrator. The first of these ( or what I term 'realm 1') is to be found in an amendment to Ingarden's ontological strata, first attempted by Ruthrof in his identification of a 'pre-phonetic' stratum ( 1981). What he designates pre-phonetic might perhaps more usefully be termed 'para-phonetic' ( as I suggested in chapter 2, note 3 ), taking into account such typographical pointers as the exclamation mark used to signify meaning in the discourse of the immanent narrator in the Spark short story discussed in chapter 2. I would add to this stratum those meaning units such as the features of the product itself ( that it is a book, with a title, by an author unknown or of some renown, are all pre- or para-phonetic signals which contribute to our fullest understanding of the meaning of the text.) The second realm ( 'realm 2' ), explicated utilizing Nelson Goodman's analysis of exemplification (1978) finds the

necessary realisation of translational indices situated within two 'areas' of the literary work. These are as follows:

1. Firstly, they are to be found in the tension that exists between the properties exemplified by the presented world ( itself derived from the first person narrator's referential acts ) and the first person narrator's misperception of these exemplifications. A threatening interpretative asymmetry, running throughout certain first person narratives, finds its resolution in the establishment of a dominant epistemological order, which renders suspect the first person narrator's interpretation of the world he/she is describing. What is being identified here, in fact, are the grounds for the necessary introduction of the success/failure conditions for the referential acts of the first person narrator.

2. Secondly, the indices are locatable in the dramatic role played in the unfolding of the novel by both the exemplified property mentioned above, on the one hand, and the misperception of it entertained by the unreliable narrator, on the other.

The final ontological realm ( 'realm 3' ) exists between the unconscious exemplification of values that the first person narrator's interpretative acts reveal and the value structure of the hypostatized reader, controlled by the indices contained in the second realm.

The placement of translational indices in these three distinct realms constitutes the emergence of a second and epistemologically primary presentational process whose function is revealed as a reconstituting of the reader/receiver's understanding of the presented world. This world was previously given by the mediation of the first person narrator; and this reconstituted presented world becomes the evidential base for the reader's encompassing experience of the first person narrator's unreliability. This primary presentational process is the mode of mediation of the immanent voice, which reveals the presented world as it is, and not as it appears to the first person narrator.

In his seminal phenomenological exercise, The Literary Work of Art (1973a), Ingarden argues that any literary work of art contains a minimum of four ontological 'layers' (and though they were presented in chapter 2, they bear repeating at this juncture.) They are:

1. The stratum of verbal sounds and phonetic formations
2. The stratum of semantic units
3. The stratum of schematized aspects where states of various kinds portrayed in the work come into appearance.
4. The stratum of the objectivities portrayed in the intentional states of affairs projected by the sentences (1)

A typology that allows for reception of the literary work of art as a layered entity has the undeniable advantage of a precedent in a comprehensive explication such as Ingarden undertakes, and of being apprehended as a logical ontological progression. Both Ingarden and Ruthrof (1973a; 1981) initiate narratological investigation, but have themselves not refined, adequately, the sequential progression in the activity of reading that forms part of the reader's experience of, in particular, unreliable texts. Implicit rather than explicit, the encoded signalling they explicate in their works requires further exegesis and refinement if its contribution to interpretation is to be understood by readers of homodiegetic narration of this specific type.

As I argued in chapter 2, in opposition to Ruthrof for whom it appears unproblematic (1981:p 51) the second stratum of a literary work requires theoretical amplification. For Ingarden, the semantic stratum is of central significance, since it is required for the other three and yet determines them so that they have their ontic bases in it:

...the stratum of meaning units ...  
provides the structural framework for  
the whole work. By its very essence it  
requires all the other strata and determines  
them in such a way that they ...are dependent  
in their content on its qualities. As

elements of the literary work they are thus inseparable from this central stratum.

(1973a:p 29)

The entry of sentences into the literary work is governed by the linguistic sound formations of the first stratum, but in addition, this 'external, fixed shell' ( Ingarden,1973a: p59) of the first stratum is amplified by such elements as Ruthrof details: ' typographic aspects of words and larger linguistic units [which] for the reader ... are indispensable aspects and [which] ... have a potentially significant role to play in the total polyphony of aesthetic value qualities.' ( 1981:p 51 ). In keeping with a phenomenological 'layering' of the process of apprehension on the part of the reader/receiver, I prefer to regard this as a pre-phonetic stratum, one which bears significantly upon the process of presentation as I shall subsequently demonstrate.

In chapter 2 we saw how with the introduction of sentences into the schema, a number of issues - their source to be found in the problematical area of semantics - were raised. In the transition from sentences taken as mere sentences, to sentences asserted by speakers ( that is, to judgements ) the postulation of a fictive speaker or voice was shown to be logically inevitable if sense was to be made - in the semantic stratum - of asserted sentences in the fictional work. The fictive voice may be apparent and

tangible ( as in conventional homodiegetic narration such as that of Great Expectations ) or, as I have demonstrated it may be immanent ( as in 'You Should Have Seen the Mess!'). Whichever of these two states of affairs pertains, it is a necessary condition of their ontological existence that they form part of the presentational process: in other words that they contribute to reception on the part of the reader/receiver by setting into function the process whereby the presented world is signified.

Recalling the assertion in chapter 2, that for reference to be activated, a speaker must be introduced into the semantic schema, it can be reiterated that Strawson's distinction (1959) between asserted and non-asserted sentences applies when we examine the semantic stratum of the literary work of art. In other words, when the reader confronts a 'judgement' - where questions of truth or falsity come into play - as opposed to a mere sentence, a concomitant ontological feature of the process is the fictive speaker of that sentence: such a speaker being presupposed by the judgement thus described. By this means it becomes apparent that an enriched notion of the semantic stratum is required if the full nature of reception such as is involved in the complex production of the immanent narrative situation is to be understood.

To return, though, to the pre-phonetic or para-phonetic stratum ( as I have designated it ) and in the light of

Ingarden's statement that all the levels he discerns in the literary work of art have their ontic bases in the second stratum and are determined by it ( 1973a:p 60), let us examine how facets of a pre-phonetic level in the literary work of art contribute to a semantic dimension and, more importantly, see how they can be said to suggest the existence of an immanent narrator. In short, let us argue for their possible function in the narrative as translational indices in what I have termed realm 1, that is, encompassing Ingarden's first stratum.

## 2.1 Realm 1: indices in the pre- or para-phonetic stratum

In the short story, 'You Should Have Seen the Mess!' Lorna Merrifield is the ostensible - homodiegetic - narrator from whom emanates the discourse that comprises the narrative. As I argued in chapter 2 the reader/receiver of the discourse rapidly moves to an encompassing position which presents a clear disjunction between the narrator's perceptions and those of the receiver. The argument there demonstrated that it was logically necessary to postulate the existence of the immanent narrator in that specific narrative situation. At a very fundamental level ( that is, on Ingarden's -augmented- schema ) I am suggesting that there operates in this narrative a cue to the presence of the immanent voice. This is in fact the exclamation mark of the para-phonetic level which serves the function of alerting the reader to:

### 1. Lorna's characteristic vehemence



and

2. An 'absence' which is nevertheless  
and, perhaps, paradoxically, responsible  
for bringing into being in the text the  
reader's cognizance of its 'presence'.

Why the existence of such a typographical feature as the exclamation mark cannot be attributed to Lorna Merrifield is clear: she is the utterer of the apparent discourse, but not its scribe. ( We need to be clear here about ontological occupancy - the narrator and the author must not be confounded. This is not to say that such narratives cannot be scripted by their narrators: they would then take the form, say, of diary entries, letters, or manuscripts. ) This suggests the existence of the immanent narrator; and it is to the existence of such a construct, and its accessibility via a feature of the pre-phonetic stratum, that I must now argue more fully: in short that it is, as I shall demonstrate, an index to the existence of the immanent voice.

The question arises, when once the receiver has become aware of the existence of a multiplicity of discourses ( where there is apparently only the one ) as to how they become features of the presentational process. The more obvious of these features, indicating the existence of the discourses, are the typographical ones, such as the exclamation mark or - in the case of more radical

typographical manipulation - the asterisks ( as in Robert Coover's Pricksongs and Descants: 1969 ) and black pages, graphics and ellipses which comprise much of the meaning of, for example, Sterne's Tristram Shandy. It can certainly be argued that the narrator in the latter is the self-conscious scribe of his story, but it becomes less evidently possible to equate the teller of the story with its writer when one confronts, for example the para-phonetic exclamation mark of the presentational process in 'You Should Have Seen the Mess!' Lorna's is a discourse that has an obvious orality ( when compared, say, with Tristram's more overtly written discourse: 'As my life and opinions are likely to make some noise in the world, and, if I conjecture right, will take in all ranks, professions, and denominations of men whatever, - be no less read than the Pilgrim's Progress itself ...' [Vol 1 Chapter 4: p 38] ) which militates against the reader's ready acceptance of the typographical markers as intended by the narrator herself. A subtle interplay between the narrator's discourse and that of another - subliminally recognised in the first instance, but of significance to the decoding of the textually based signals of the narrative - begins to come into existence. What we are witnessing is the emergence of a set of referential acts of an agent whose communications do not function within the immanent discourse of the unreliable narrator; that is, whose referential acts are not a form of denotation. This notion of

non-denotational reference will be expanded and defended in the ensuing section.

The reader is gradually initiated into the realisation that he/she is becoming committed to a constructionalist epistemology where the world that is apprehended is built up out of just such non-denotational referential acts. This emergent - silent - discourse reveals itself as a primary presentational process through whose referential acts the presented world is given as it is and not as it is perceived by the ostensible narrator. It is to the semantics of this silent discourse - constituting realm 2 - that I will now address myself ( and in doing so I shall inevitably augment Ingarden's second stratum.)

## 2.2 Realm 2: indices in the semantic stratum

Fortunately there exists for my purposes something of a trail-blazer in the conceptual schema propounded by Nelson Goodman (1978). His analysis of non-denotational referential modes provides my enterprise in this section with a legitimate terminology; but, more importantly, it allows me to explicate and to refine to a greater degree the function of translational indices at this level of apprehension by the reader. Goodman maintains that:

The worlds of fiction, poetry, painting, music, dance, and the other arts are built largely by such nonliteral devices

as metaphor, by such nondenotational means as exemplification and expression, and often by use of pictures or sounds or gestures or other symbols of nonlinguistic systems.

(1978: p 102)

His provocative account of fictional ( and other ) 'worldmaking' yields for my purposes two concepts that are particularly useful, namely the 'nondenotational' exemplifications and/or expressions that, nevertheless, activate reference. As Goodman puts it:

Works of art, though, characteristically illustrate rather than name or describe relevant kinds [ of things ]. Even where the ranges of application - the things described or depicted - coincide, the features or kinds exemplified or expressed may be very different .... a poem with no words for sadness and no mention of a sad person may in the quality of its language be sad and poignantly express sadness. The distinction between saying or representing on the one hand and showing or exemplifying on the other becomes even more evident in the case of abstract painting and music and dance that have no subject-matter but nevertheless manifest - exemplify or express-

forms and feelings. Exemplification and expression, though running in the opposite direction from denotation ... are no less symbolic referential functions and instruments of worldmaking.

(1978: pp 11-12)

The terms that provide this section with profound illumination are Goodman's 'exemplification' and 'expression'. There are obvious parallels to be drawn between the point he is making and that which Stanzel makes in his article (Novel, 1978) where, drawing on the much earlier distinction made by E.M. Forster (1927), he establishes as one of his narrative 'oppositions', that between telling and reflecting (2). Stanzel's intuitive recognition of a particular oppositional mode can be amplified to the overall advantage of the concept by admitting into the framework of the typology Goodman's rigorously argued concepts. The latter's terminology lends credibility to the perhaps somewhat limited concept of 'showing': Goodman, in fact, provides us with an account of the type and kind of concept that 'showing' is.

Exemplifications and expressions, then, serve a significant referential function which is of particular interest when we are confronted by the unreliable homodiegetic narrative situation. In these narratives it

becomes apparent very quickly that the projected states of affairs exemplify properties which the narrator systematically misreads.

In unreliable narratives of the kind I have in mind a fundamental opposition is set up between denotative reference ( activated by the ostensible modes of depiction and description ) and non-denotative reference ( as indicated above, those of exemplification and expression ). The denotative domain of reference will be located primarily in the discourse of the first person narrator. However, as we have clearly seen, another, parallel and epistemologically primary, discourse exists in the immanent narrative situation and it does so as a result of a mode of reference, specific not only to works of art, but to any action that conveys meaning in a manner that may be described in this fashion. Such an opposition between denotative and non-denotative modes of reference, especially as it applies to the literary or other work of art, provides a basis for understanding the ontological status of the immanent voice. Exemplification and expression are, I believe, the primary translational indices of the immanent narrative situation.

Granted the fecundity of Goodman's model for explaining the mechanics of unreliable homodiegetic narration, a number of his concepts can be imported into the typology being developed here. Like Goodman, my concern is with 'certain

relationships among worlds' and with 'how... particular worlds are made from others' ( 1978: p 7 ). The processes, then, that occur when worlds (on Goodman's model) are made, are those such as:

1. Composition and Decomposition, by which is meant taking apart and putting together again, or the division of wholes into parts, then back into wholes again.
2. Weighting, or, as Goodman puts it, emphasis - which yields 'hierarchies rather than dichotomies' (p 12) - is capable of producing a world or worlds by means of a distribution of the stress pattern which might otherwise yield merely a uniform, one-dimensional and constrained 'world'
3. Ordering, upon which Goodman claims all measurement is based, is another means of worldmaking. Constructions of any kind involve this process, and as in the measurement of time are 'built into a world' rather than 'found in it' (p 14).
4. Deletion and Supplememntation, which Goodman paraphrases as 'weeding out and filling - actual excision of some old and supply of some new material' (p.14)
5. Deformation, or distortion which involves a process that goes beyond mere weighting, creating ( as caricaturists are inclined to ) a world that stems from a variation that extends the imaginative bounds 'magical[ly]'. (p 16)

Most of these processes ( examples of them which have particular significance for literary criticism will be elaborated below ) can be seen in operation when the immanent voice is active; they function, at the broadest level, as translational indices to the existence of the 'world' projected not by the first person narrator but by the immanent narrator. In chapters 4,5 and 6 the exact process of this indexical function will be charted by way of selected textual examples.

Contained within these categories, though, are those of 'expression' and 'exemplification' as described above. Goodman discusses them briefly under the section on 'weighting' (p 12 ) as 'symbolic referential functions and instruments of worldmaking'. In this latter sense, a world is exemplified, for instance when the narrator in a homodiegetic narrative describes a situation 'A' but does not see, and therefore does not describe the situation 'B' which the receiver of the narrative is nevertheless able to discern in the very description of 'A'. This act of reference has, thus, been achieved non-denotatively.

### 2.3 Realm 3: controlled imputations as indices

The presentational process by means of which the immanent narrative situation is generated is an extremely complex one, resting as it does upon a kind of control of the hypostatized reader's imputations. These imputations on the reader/receiver's part become part of the endeavour to



produce a concretization of the presented world (B) that derives from the non-denotational ( non-linguistic, even ) referential 'acts' of the immanent narrator. Nicholas Wolterstorff (1980) points out that what is exemplified for Goodman is nevertheless always a property:

... And he [Goodman] says that an entity exemplifies a certain property just in case it possesses that property and also refers to it. Mere possession is not enough, nor is mere reference enough. What is required is possession plus reference.

(p345)

Wolterstorff then proceeds to quote Goodman as stating that: 'To have without symbolizing is merely to possess, while to symbolize without having is to refer in some other way than by exemplifying' (Goodman:1978, p 53; Wolterstorff:1980, p 345 ). This section of Wolterstorff's critique of Goodman is somewhat densely presented, but its significance for my thesis at this juncture lies in its explication of the nature and extent of the exemplification or expression. The properties in the second-order narrative that are concretized by the reader in the act of reception are exemplifications of the states of affairs ( Ingarden's fourth stratum ) of the narrative. However, they are not merely properties of these projected states of affairs but

constitute exemplifications by dint (in Goodman's sense) of reference being made to them, albeit obliquely, via the expressed contrast set up between the perceptions of the homodiegetic narrator in the first-order narrative and those of the immanent narrator of the second-order narrative. It is the recognition of this tension between the first-person's perception of the presented world and the reader/receiver's encompassing perception of the totality of this world ( which includes as an object within the presented world the homodiegetic narrator him/herself plus his/her attitudes and beliefs, both appropriate and inappropriate, both true and false ) that constitutes the justification for talking about the presence of the immanent voice. The generated tension structured by this complex interplay of perceptions becomes in fact one of the main locations for the realisation of translational indices in the second realm referred to above.

The false beliefs and inappropriate attitudes of the first-person narrator often form a dramatic matrix whose subsequent participation in the unfolding drama of the narrative provides the other area of realm 2 where translational indices are realised. With the recognition of the original matrix of flawed characteristics entitling the reader/receiver to postulate the presence of immanent narration, the discovery of this matrix itself entering into the patterning of a new world contributes further evidence for the justification of the postulation of the presence of

immanent narration. At the same time it underscores the validity of the original recognition of the flawed matrix. Thus, what is at first advanced as a hypothesis, on the basis of a descried exemplification, becomes established retrospectively just as the new 'reading' - based upon this hypothesis - systematically deepens both the significance and the coherence of the narrative. This amounts to a form of 'Popperian tentativeness' (Popper:1959), whereby the reader first conjectures that he/she might be confronting an immanent narrative situation. The first apparent index encountered does not render the conjecture ( that the immanent narrative situation is present ) a fact: that is, the conjecture is not immediately verifiable. Rather, the first apparent index constitutes the initial test of a series of attempted falsifications that ultimately provide the reader/receiver with the epistemic warrant required by his/her conjecture for its validation.

### 3. The function of the hypostatized reader in the transmission

The location or placement of translational indices in the immanent narrative situation can be seen, then, to range through all the strata designated by Ingarden as fundamental to the existence of the literary work of art. But of paramount importance in the entire schema, is the active participation of an alert reader/receiver. The relationship between Author and Reader, moving as it inevitably must

across ontological boundaries, once mediation has been activated, is tangibly more complex, demanding concretization not only of the projected states of affairs of a presented world, but of a presentational process and a corresponding, second-order world that gains ontological precedence; even correcting the perceptions we may have arrived at via the referential acts of the homodiegetic narrator of the first-order narrative situation.

Reception, then, or what I explore under the rubric of my realm 3, is fundamental to the notion of a translational index such as exemplification or expression, and will often involve, in the activity of concretization, the revelation of attributes, say, of the unreliable narrator's psychic structures that are, on any other model, narratologically inexplicable. This is not to dispute that such assessments are an aspect of any 'sensitive' reading of the text, but it is an attempt to explain the operational mode of such a dimension of unreliable homodiegetic narration.

It can be argued, moreover, that a hypostatized reader, as the idealised limit to which the reader/receiver must aspire, exists in fact only in narratives of the above kind: that is, those that exhibit some form of unreliability as outlined above. The reason for claiming this lies in the fact that a clearly delineated relationship between reader/receiver and mediator is fundamental to the existence of the immanent narrative situation. The non-linguistic,

non-denotational reference that underpins this narrative situation requires an agent ( the hypostatized reader ) who is capable of constituting the presentational process and the projected world which is exemplified by the utterances of the first person narrator's discourse. A receiver, thus, in order to constitute accurately the process and world being generated by this discourse, must bring to bear often a prescribed set of socio-cultural determinants, in order that the exemplifications or expressions might refer properly: in other words, 'the schematic guiding system' ( Ruthrof,1981: p 57 ) comes into existence in order to propel us toward the meaning determined by the author, but only as a result of a reciprocal, socially and psychologically determined stockpile of 'intertextual and everyday typifications of both process and world which guarantees the possibility of ... approximation [to the author's meaning intention]' (Ruthrof,1981: p 57.)

By his term, exemplification, Goodman could be seen to mean the possession by an entity or state of affairs of a property which has itself been singled out by its encompassing sign-system. Wolterstorff quotes Goodman's example of exemplifying as '... that of a tailor's sample [which exemplifies] various properties of the cloth from which it is cut' ( 1980: p 345 ). Goodman's other way of worldmaking ( in a non-denotative sense ) and the concept which I employ here as a second indexical type, is that of expression. As it pertains to narratives of the kind being

considered, it involves radical involvement on the part of the hypostatized reader in an approximation towards the author's 'meaning intention' in order that allowance be made for the intersubjective availability of the narrative's 'full' meaning.

Where the entity that exemplifies or expresses one of its properties is itself a knowing subject, certain interesting consequences for the presented world follow. These are clustered around the possibility that arises where the knowing subject could him/herself be unaware of certain properties that he/she exemplifies. It is important to stress that it need not only be the case that the agent remain unaware that a property he/she exemplifies counts as an exemplification ( within the logical framework generated by the narrative situation he/she could not, in fact, 'know' ): it is also possible for the agent or knowing subject to remain ignorant of the very possession of the property itself. This 'betrayal' of aspects of the agent's psychic make-up through his/her unwitting expression of its components can reveal to the reader details of the presented world of the narrative of which the homodiegetic narrator must necessarily be unaware. Such knowledge as the reader receives is, of course, mediated through the presentational process of the immanent voice. It is this second-order presentational process that by rendering the particular property of the homodiegetic narrator an instance of exemplification begins to integrate these selected data of

the presented world into the 'master narrative'. Here the final stratum of Ingarden's schema is articulated, but with a degree of complexity made possible by the activation of non-denotational and non-linguistic referential modes which operate at the meta-level of presentation.

Wittgenstein's 'showing/telling' distinction aligns itself quite neatly with the above (1961 [1921]: 4.022). It also has the advantage of revealing to the receiver the inner world of the unreliable homodiegetic narrator. Thus through controlled foregrounding of exemplifications, the second-order presentational process cohering around the immanent mediator transmits the presented world as it is to the reader, while concomitantly constituting the stereoscopic vision explored in chapter 2. The final support for the presence of immanent narration in a particular homodiegetic narrative will be found in the networking of translational indices which mutually underwrite the significance and coherence of the master-narrative.

#### 4. Conclusion

Until this point blanket reference has been made to the 'unreliability' of the homodiegetic narrator in narrative situations of the kind under observation. In chapter 4 I will discuss a typology of limitations that have been, until now, subsumed under the broad generic concept of unreliable

homodiegetic narration. By applying the theoretical model which has been developed above to selected types of this particular narrative situation, I shall refine by way of exegesis a typology of the limitations to which I have drawn attention. The application of the typology to selected examples, given the fecundity of its insights for critical exegesis, provides a persuasive vindication of the theoretical position which, thus far, it has been the object of this dissertation to construct.

#### NOTES

1. See the summary offered at the beginning of The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art (1973b).
2. My underlining. See, also, Wittgenstein (1961 [1921]: p 20.)



## Chapter 4: The Concept of 'Unreliability'

In an attempt to vindicate by praxis the theoretical claims made in chapters 2 and 3, a typology of limitations is offered under the generic concept of unreliability. An extreme example of unreliability of this kind, where insanity is used as a limiting device ( in a short story, 'X', by Malachi Whitaker), is critically evaluated in the light of the theory.

### 1. Introduction

In this chapter an attempt will be made to outline some of the parameters within which the major theoretical thrust is being undertaken. A concept such as unreliability has been a part of narrative form as long as tales have been told, but for the sake of clarity, it seems necessary to establish in what light I presently regard the concept; and to what specific ends I shall put it. A brief history of the term's evolution in criticism is therefore warranted and the reiteration of my position as critic within an augmented structuralist framework is also necessary if the moves I make are to be accurately construed.

As part of their ideological commitment ( where the nature of critical activity is concerned ) both F.R. Leavis and the New Critics elevated texts that evinced the cardinal literary virtue of irony to the ranks of the 'Great Tradition'. My interest in irony ( though I acknowledge that my critical practice is informed with its own theoretical bias, be it construed as either materialist or structuralist ) stems from a concern to establish what the narrative mechanism in fact is in certain narrative situations which have thus far been treated - broadly and somewhat 'loosely' - as aspects of a kind of first-person narrative; involving such disparate elements of the spectrum of narrative transmission as what Booth (1961) calls the unreliable narrator, and Rimmon-Kenan (1984) refers to as the implied author. Recent critics such as Chatman (1978), Rimmon-Kenan, Stanzel (1984), Iser (1978) and Fokkema (1984), for example, have all implicitly recognised the limitations of objective ( text-based ) descriptions of the narrative process and their approaches reveal the fecundity of an augmented approach; one that incorporates both the domain of the author and that of the reader/receiver in a comprehensive analysis of the relationships in the narrative act. However, too heavy a reliance on the the autonomy of reception ( and its multiplicity of receivers ) or, conversely, upon the the autonomy of authorial intention, can lead to the distortion of the necessarily careful (objective ) focus of narratological investigation.

Something that requires - certainly - activation by a reader/receiver but which is ( after the creative act ) intentionally text-based, is present in narratives; and when they are of the kind that form the objects of my investigation, their particular mechanism requires very close analysis if critics are not to slide into the somewhat murky realm of cultural or social 'relativity' in attempting to explain a product's 'meaning'.

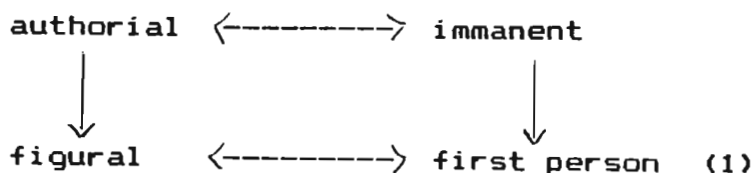
If the basic narrative situations are, as I believe ( contra Stanzel ) merely two:

1. first person
2. third person

with figural narration the result of a narrowing of the focus of authorial narration, and immanent narration a broadening of the focus of first person narration so that a satisfying symmetry is discernible in the relationships of the types of narrative focalisation generally possible:

Third Person

First Person



KEY TO ARROWS:

↓ a narrowing of the perspective

<----->      an equivalence of the range of  
perspective

then my theoretical enterprise can be extended and no doubt expanded to encompass those instances of third person narrative which exhibit unreliability of their particular kind. This undertaking is, however, not a part of the present enterprise, though it may prove a profitable area to explore in the light of the model being developed here. By 'unreliable first-person ( homodiegetic ) narration', here however, is meant the anthropomorphised persona, qualified by the adjective unreliable, which functions as the mediatory presence, and which filters the presented world before transmitting it to the receiver. Unlike third person ( omniscient/heterodiegetic ) narration, where the functions of the narrator are less anthropomorphically delineated, and the mediator occupies either the presented world or the presentational process, the unreliable homodiegetic narrator, as was suggested in chapter 2, functions in the ontological realms of both process and world.

The unreliable narrators of homodiegetically transmitted fiction can be arranged, initially, according to their degree of what James called 'inconscience' along a continuum ( although, as I argue at the end of this chapter, the inconscient narrator is only a sub-class of unreliable narration ), providing the critic with a sense of the

accretion of complexity possible in the use of the technique. At one end of the continuum could be placed a manifestly unreliable narrator such as that of Malachi Whitaker in 'X' ( whom we discover is insane ): at the other, could be placed the self-deceived narrators of Henry James's The Aspern Papers or The Ambassadors. Conscient but deceiving narrators will conclude the continuum of unreliability. (2).

## 2. Unreliability: a survey of the concept's literary etiology

In focussing now on the concept of unreliability and charting its evolution as a critical term ( a manoeuvre necessary to the location of my position in the debate ) perhaps the best definitional point of departure is Wayne C. Booth's: he has devoted a sizable component of his seminal work, The Rhetoric of Fiction (1961 ) to the notion of unreliability, and from his mapping of the terrain I shall move on to more contemporary discussions of the notion, including those of Stanzel (Theory of Narrative 1979, transl.1984) and Rimmon-Kenan ( Contemporary Poetics 1984). The theoretical refinement of this particular mode of narration, given the level at which I am operating, however, moves beyond the broader demarcation of the territory that these narratologists have attempted and goes some way towards resolving a problem that Stanzel recognises, but for reasons of economy, no doubt, subsequently does not engage

with (1984: p 151 ); that is, against what framework - Stanzel talks of the norms of the implied author - such a notion as 'unreliability' is to be measured. In chapter 3 I attempted to provide the theoretical underpinning for such an undertaking ( identifying the 'norms' in the text of which Stanzel speaks and which establish the existence of the immanent narrative voice ) and in Chapters 5 and 6, analyses of representative narratives will provide a further endorsement by praxis of the ontological claims of an immanent narrative mode.

Booth's focus in his section of the Rhetoric of fiction which deals with unreliability is upon the short stories of Henry James who, perhaps, pre-eminently among writers in the realist mode, sought to project in his fiction a world whose parameters were often clouded by the doubtful observations of a narrator who could, in the final analysis, not be trusted to tell the truth. As Booth makes clear, this is a deliberate technical manoeuvre on James's part, reflecting 'a desire for "gradations and superpositions of effect" that will produce "a certain fullness of truth"' (1961: p.339), but which will be grounded in the '"troubled vision"' of an unreliable narrator that has a reflector quality (Stanzel's term). (3) Booth then demarcates further, while commenting critically on James's failure to grapple theoretically with 'one large segment of his own work' (1961:p 340), narrative territory that involves 'stories narrated, whether in the first or third person, by

a profoundly confused, basically self-deceived, or even wrong-headed or vicious reflector' (p 340). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a comprehensive assessment of the basis for such a choice on the part of James, in particular ( possibly, his stated intention to create worlds within a realist framework would be a point of departure for such an enterprise): however, that he worked in this mode, and was aware, as Booth puts it, of the 'dramatic role of inconscience itself' ( though he never articulated it with any fullness ) is born testimony to by several works in the James canon, notably The Aspern Papers, The Turn of the Screw, The Ambassadors, What Maisie Knew and the short story which Booth, himself, undertakes to analyse, 'The Liar'. James was palpably aware of the potential effect of this line of approach to the narrative situation: in the entries he makes in his Notebook for a tale entitled 'The Next Time', James comments:

. . .say it's a woman [set up in contrast to the main protagonist]  
She succeeds - and she thinks  
she's fine! Mightn't she be the  
narrator, with a fine grotesque  
inconscience? So that the whole  
thing becomes a masterpiece of close  
and finished irony?

(Quoted, Booth, 1961: pp342-3)

James's 'inconscient' narrator, here, is what Booth and others have termed, subsequently, unreliable: and one of the goals of my undertaking is to establish more fully what is to be understood by the 'dramatic' or revelatory role played by the deployment of an unreliable narrator in a narrative act that normally assumes the submission of the reader/receiver vis-a-vis the mediator as regards the events narrated in the text. To do this requires a more inclusive notion of unreliability than that exemplified in such works as those of James listed above.

In applying his teller-character/ reflector-character distinction to the unreliable narrative situation and producing an argument for reliability as a criterion useful only if limited to teller-characters, Stanzel minimises the role of the reader/receiver ( Chatman's narratee ) in those narratives ( like Benjy's in The Sound and the Fury ) where the conventional tyranny of the narrator is deliberately undermined. Reception, albeit relatively unstable critical terrain at present, must be accorded status of paramount importance to the narrative act in such narratives and is determined exactly by the level of 'inconscience' of the mediator. Contrary to Stanzel's stated position (1984: p 152)

the question of unreliability in narratives of the above kind becomes a central, indeed pivotal, one for 'meaningful interpretation' (Stanzel, 1984: p152). Booth perceived ( and elaborated incisively upon ) the 'double focus' prevalent in some of James's tales ( notably The Turn of the Screw and



'The Liar': Booth, 1961: pp 347-354; 364-371 ), but in attributing the effect to 'an incomplete fusion of original subject with the new subject that develops once a flawed narrator has been created to reflect the original' (1961: p 346), he begs the critical question, which is: What precisely is the encoded technique that is being employed in such narrative situations?

Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan's discussion of unreliability as a narrative device (1983: pp 100-103) takes careful cognizance of the positions of both Booth and Seymour Chatman. However, her criteria for unreliability ( a narrator's 'limited knowledge, his personal involvement, and his problematic value-scheme': p 100 ) are by no means inclusive and she, like Booth before her, concedes finally that 'even a passage [ from Ambrose Bierce's 'Oil of Dog' ] with so many markers of unreliability is problematic' (1983:p 102).

Susan Sniader Lanser, on the other hand (1981:p 170), regards the granting of what she terms 'mimetic authority' to the narrator, as quintessential to the narrative act:

Whenever possible ... some degree of mimetic authority is granted to the narrating voice even if it is granted skeptically; readers conventionally try to "make sense" of ( infer felicity in ) the most frustrating instances of narrative incompetence.

Like Rimmon-Kenan, Lanser resists a direct encounter with the pressure on the text of post-modernist techniques which deprive the reader of the narrator's mimetic authority (4) which would validate the orientation of the reader/receiver vis-a-vis the mediator. And it is precisely because the reader's reception of 'incompletely fused' narratives presents problems that the underlying technique requires exposition and explication. With Lanser, I agree that the primary impulse in the engagement of a mind with a literary ( or other ) work of art is towards coherence; towards the establishment of 'a relation between minds' ( 1981: p 174 ) that presupposes order, and it is to the nature of the underlying order, the narrative and textual markers ( indices ) that provide a structure for coherence, that the theory must now address itself. If, as Christopher Butler argues (1984: p 2) interpretation has its base 'in a number of principles that underly all communicative exchanges', then there are serious implications for a less than rigorous examination of the fundamental or informing structures upon which the discourse in question is predicated. Such formulations of the nature of this particular narrative process as that it is a product of the 'norms' of the real author, or that it is a construct reified by the reader on the basis of a discrepancy between the values ( of the implied author ) projected in the text and those of the receiver of the narrative transmission, slide over such

complex narratological concepts as the position and nature of the hypostatized reader or the narratee and the 'real' receiver ( to restrict the problem for the moment solely to the area of reception. ) Implicit in approaches of the kind that diminish the complexity of the matrix of relationships in the narrative act, and impossibly problematic for criticism generally, is a kind of cultural and societal relativism which would seriously undermine a work's intersubjectively available meaning. As William Ray argues in his introduction:

Literary studies qua discipline might best be defined both as an accumulated system of rules and codes within which every instance of interpretation ... must occur, and as an ongoing collective act, each utterance of which is necessarily different and in a sense in opposition to all others. No two readings can be said to be exactly the same, just as no critic can claim to have seized absolutely the author's meaning.

(1984: p 2)

It is somewhere within this almost irresolvable tension - between the 'instance and the system' (Ray, 1984: p 2) of meaning - that the locus of analysis is to be found. Thus the minutiae of textual relationships, finely graded along

the continuum that comprises the act of narrative transmission, require our observation and understanding. In this regard, Whitaker's short story, 'X', occupying as it does, a space at one end of the continuum that comprises unreliable homodiegetic narratives, is especially fecund for the corroboration by example of the theoretical position outlined in chapters 2 and 3.

### 3. 'X': an example of unreliable homodiegetic narration

Malachi Whitaker, 'the Bradford Chekhov', as she was hailed in the thirties, contrived narratives very much in the realist mode, dealing with the apparently trivial, but fundamentally significant, events ( usually in the domestic situation ) affecting working class families in England just prior to the Depression. She contributed to the Adelphi among other periodicals and journals, and describes, somewhat whimsically, in an essay entitled Beginnings included in the Paladin collection, her meeting with John Middleton Murry who subsequently, during the thirties, published her stories to consistently positive reviews. Culled from her four volumes of short stories, a selection has been recently collected by Joan Hart (5), from which 'X' has been selected because of its paradigmatic representation of a narrative mode which can be called 'immanent'.

The homodiegetic narrator of the story situates her discourse 'presently' in the past: that is, she casts her

narrative back from the temporal vantage point of the present:

I have never seen my harp since. I have an idea that my sister cut the strings with a linoleum knife some time before she died. I know now that I could have had it repaired, but I did not think of that at the time. I have not yet found x. The world seems to have closed in, and there are not many places left in which I can look for it.

(p 114)

The shift in the tense of the verbs that occurs in this, the final paragraph of the narrative is from the past to the present. The entire utterance, therefore, is informed by the flash-back technique, coercing the reader/receiver of the narrative along a temporal continuum that leads from the narrator's recollected past to the constraints of her experienced present. The opening sentence of the narrative, 'I slept in the same room as my sister until she died' (p 110 ), successfully foregrounds both the climax of the tale - and in this respect the teller of the story reveals a sophisticated control of structure and the build-up of tension - and introduces the motif of 'inconscious' proximity which is to lead to murder. Moreover, a linguistic assessment of the surface structures of her discourse

reveals the dominance of simple sentence construction, and immature lexical choice. ( It is largely monosyllabic. )

Within a very short span, then, the analyst is alerted to a number of potential discrepancies that must bear upon reception of this text. There is, for example, a clear disjunction to be found in, on the one hand, the subtlety of the narrative act of transmission - foregrounding, tension, the introduction of motifs - and the linguistic simplicity of the discourse on the other. As the receiver orientates her/himself to each successive utterance, the semantic implicatures demand interpretations that can, by no narratological sleight of hand, be traced to a source in the homodiegetic discourse. As the first-order epistemological ground of the apparent discourse is eroded, a second-order epistemological discourse ( which is dominant because it amplifies the meaning of the narrative as it corrects it ) becomes discernible: the immanent narrative situation appears to be functioning.

Several translational indices which reinforce such a conclusion are scattered throughout the various levels of this story; and Whitaker presents the narratologist with all three of the ontological realms, defined in chapter 4 as lying outside the overt discourse of the homodiegetic narrator. The receiver is left in no doubt that this is a narrative of an exceedingly limited consciousness ( the narrator, imagining herself to be a flying black pig, rips

out her sister's throat at the climax of the story ) and by implication, the entire narrative is projected from a spatial domain concretized in the last paragraphs as - we infer - an institution of some kind: in short, the narrator is mad. We are not, however, permitted access to this conclusion via the first person discourse: her discourse contains the indices to the second-order epistemic system which she is unable to perceive. We reach the conclusion that she is insane only in the light of several markers which she herself cannot comprehend.

Incomprehension is fundamental to the narrator's perceptions about herself ( a pattern of observations which throws light upon the degree to which she can be defined as 'reliable'). At first glance, the statement that '...my heart began to move all about my body ... into my calf. I thought, How shall I get home with my heart in my leg?' (p 110) is disturbing, but the hypostatized reader, not yet in a position to jettison ( or qualify ) the statements being made by the homodiegetic narrator; and orientated by an apparently realistic discourse and context ( 'I slept in the same room as my sister until she died', being the deceptively banal opening sentence of this narrative ), finds him/herself suspending judgement until further accretions have annealed reception of the narrator's discourse, enforcing a modification upon it. That this narrator's sensory integrative functions are aberrant is corroborated by her own avowals:

I did not like the throaty sound of  
the water... (p 110)

her oddly variant aural response ( for one thing )  
reinforced by the further statement:

... I would sometimes run my hands  
over the strings [ of her harp ], from  
the bass where they said gubble bub  
bub gubble up to the highest notes  
which just went pee ting.

(p. 111)

Olfactory functions, too, play a role in alerting the reader  
to this narrator's deviance:

The smell of hen-food used to make my heart  
move about my body. Once, I know, it nearly  
got out of the tip of my left ear. (p 111)

(Even when she herself questions the validity or accuracy of  
such an observation: 'How can that happen when the heart is  
so large and the ear so small?' she continues, p. 111.)

Extending and enhancing the pattern of sensory  
integrative dysfunction, touch can be seen to function as a  
pointer to the narrator's unusual sensitivity: she describes  
her face as having '...no cheekbones at all', and continues:

I have looked in the mirror, and felt  
for them, and not found them, and



thought 'When I am a skeleton, I shall  
be quite unlike all the other skeletons'.  
But I have only patted my cheeks lightly,  
very lightly. Perhaps they are underneath.

(p. 111)

Her claim that she 'wanted to do so many things' ( p.111)  
and the juxtaposition of her desire to learn algebra ( hence  
the variable 'X' of the title, the symbolism of which will  
be explored further below ) with an equivalent desire to  
'fly without wings, just by moving [her] elbows backwards  
and forwards, and dropping from a cliff or a high window'  
(p. 111), sounds the first clear alarm that the signals  
which project the states of affairs in this narrative, are  
not entirely trustworthy. Undermining the matter-of-fact  
tone of the narrator's utterance, and projecting in the  
process a second-order epistemic system which enforces for  
the receiver a stereoscopic perspective on the presented  
world, is her unreliability. Ironically, her sister's first  
utterance, embedded in the context of the narrator's  
homodiegetic discourse, carries a weight of insight into the  
psycho-pathology of this mediator which we, as receivers of  
this narrative transmission, will only be able to  
corroborate entirely once the climax has been reached. In  
describing how her sister had interrupted ( by 'roughly'  
grabbing her hair ) her singing to her harp, the mediator  
recalls the direct speech as: 'Shut up! Do you want

everybody to think you are mad?' (p. 111). Shifting perceptions now become an integral feature of the mediator's discourse, and accurate reception of the events becomes a challenge for the reader, even as its achievement is undermined. The narrator comments, for example, that contrary to her sister's perception that she is mad, she herself had '...begun to think [her] sister was mad' (p 111).

Unlike Muriel Spark's narrative, discussed in the earlier chapters, translational indices are confined largely to the semantic stratum of 'X' and then, when the exemplifications begin to become apparent, to the strata of portrayed objectivities and states of affairs. There may be a suggestion of a pre-phonetic pointer in the title of the story - 'X' gestalting a mathematical variable as it simultaneously suggests a blank at a metaphoric level - but this is not a particularly fruitful line of investigation in this narrative. However, the second-order epistemic system becomes clear to the reader/receiver, as a result of the exemplification process engendered in the other strata that Ingarden defines. If, by way of reminder, we recall Goodman's assertion that

...exemplification involves reference  
by what possesses to the property possessed,  
and thus that exemplification  
though obviously different from denotation

( or description or representation ) is  
no less a species of reference.

(1978: p.32)

then the symbolic reference that is fundamental to the process of exemplification can be seen to be occurring in the process that enforces on the reader/receiver a re-alignment of his/her orientation: that is, when the narrator's unreliability has been established ( up to page 111 by dint of the accretions of perverse sensory descriptions and incipiently deviant avowals of the kind outlined above ) and the presented world of the first person mediator finds its epistemic position being superseded by another 'world'.

It is naturally possible to arrange the indices and the projected ( second-order ) 'worlds' in a number of suggestive patterns, but allowing for translational signals of a linguistic and/or lexical kind to remain - for the present - unexplicated (6), the world ( in Goodman's sense ) that is projected as an alternative one to that which the ostensible narrator presents, and which derives from the framing context of the immanent narrative situation, can be determined by arranging the utterances of the homodiegetic narrator ( whose semantic units, alone, are responsible for the text's meaning potentialities ) against the implicatures which have as their fundamental source the immanent voice.

To suggest merely three such possibilities for patterned grouping, exemplification could be examined as it affects:

- 1. the relation between the sisters
- 2. the narrative's climax
- 3. the narrator's perceptions about herself

Correction of the first person narrator's utterance or observation ( Column A ) is provided by the exemplificatory process of the immanent voice ( Column B ) in the following comparative analysis:

(i). The Relation Between the Sisters

A First Person Narrator

B Immanent Narrator

'I am sure my sister did not like me.' (p.110)

True. But reasons for her dislike are to be found in the narrator's insensitivity which borders on lunacy.

'If there was anything to organize, ... anyone's feelings to be trampled on, she would volunteer for the job.' (p111)

She has friends and is popular, so the 'tramp-ling]' is reserved for her sister, the narrator.

'She would pull things together that had almost fallen to

She was constructive and/or socially sensitive

pieces' (p. 111)

'In some ways she was like a horse.' (p 112)

'My sister began following me around in a way I did not like'. (p.112)

'...I would sing a great deal to my harp. I know I sang very loudly, but I did not think it

and aware.

The sister is athletic, blonde, the 'norm'. She has physical strength (plays tennis and rows) but the animal qualities of a horse are the dubious projection of the narrator.

Her sister becomes increasingly perturbed by her aberrant behaviour. The singing to the harp, particularly, reveals the fear of public exposure of the derangement of the narrator. ( This could be self-serving, but might also be construed as a protective measure: she continues to sleep with and watch over the narrator.)

The noise, tuneless and incessant, by the narrator's own admission,

mattered.' (p.111)

must be regarded as a severe strain on the nerves of the older sister.

'This was strange to me, as I had begun to think my sister was mad'. (p 111)

A lack of personal insight on the part of this narrator precludes her recognition of the signals that denote aberrant behaviour.

'[My sister] would sleep though the light went off and on a hundred times, and though I turned back the sheet to see if she had turned into a horse as many more.' (p.113)

Sleep, for her sister is severely hampered. They share a bed, and she manifestly wants to inhibit the narrator's destructive potential. But she is subjected to her darker sibling's obsessive, repetitive behaviour night after night.

## (ii). The Narrative's Climax

### A The First Person Narrator

'I looked up and saw a sort of

### B The Immanent Narrator

The narrator distances

pig flying about. It was a thin black pig, and it kept smiling at me, and it had teeth just like mine.' (p 113)

'All at once [the pig] swooped down to my sister's neck and began to bite and make horrible growling noises.' (p.113)

'... [I] ran about trying to catch the flying pig in [the drawer].' (p.113)

### (iii). The Narrator's Perceptions about Herself

#### A The First Person Narrator

.'... it seemed to me that my heart began to move all about my body. Sometimes it even got into my calf. I thought, How shall I get home with my heart in my leg?' (p.110)

herself from her action by objectifying her behaviour, and making it that of an imaginary flying pig.

The narrator herself is, in fact, the 'pig' that bites into the neck of her sleeping sister and kills her.

There is nothing flying about the room: the pig is a psychotic figment of the narrator's imagination.

#### B The Immanent Narrator

The bizarre physical and anatomical distortions experienced subjectively by the narrator ( and given the 'realist' overlay of the presented world ) suggest, early in

the narrative that the judgements of the narrator are suspect.

'I did not like the throaty sound of the water nor the dank smell of it...' (p.110)

and

'Now, I have no cheekbones at all.' (p.111)

'When I am a skeleton, I shall be quite unlike all the other skeletons' (p.111)

'I wanted to learn algebra, and, like many other people, I wanted to fly without wings.' (p.111)

Utterances of this kind must be read as surface signals of the narrator's sensory integrative dysfunction, that is of her psychotic disorder.

At a superficial level the narrator reveals a number of physical deficiencies which, however, mask the nature of her mental deficiencies.

The cognitive slippage evinced by this type of sequence reveals her disconnection from the 'world' projected by her narrative.



In keeping with the essentially 'constructionist' methodology utilised in this dissertation, the patternings and juxtapositionings suggested above demonstrate that the exemplifications are ( as must be the case ) entirely missed by the ostensible homodiegetic narrator: the aspects of the world that they indicate, derived from Ingarden's 'states of affairs' (stratum 3 ) and 'portrayed objectivities' ( stratum 4 ), remain outside the cognitive sphere of the homodiegetic narrator. But they are nevertheless exemplified via the attention drawn to them by the fact of the homodiegetic narrator's blindness to so obvious a set of properties of situations which she herself has described. These and similar indices establish the existence of the covert discourse of the immanent narrator.

The translational indices in this short story ( notably the exemplifications ) constrain the implications and/or inferences within a relatively narrow band of potential meanings; and I would suggest that a recognition of this delimitation is of paramount significance for interpretation, and would subvert the kind of dilemma expressed by Booth ( 1961:pp 353-354 ) who feels that interpretations of narratives of this kind must, inevitably, reveal large areas of indeterminacy as regards meaning. The immanent voice in 'X' in fact coerces the receiver of the narrative transmission into concretizing the lacunae very specifically: the entire utterance of the homodiegetic narrator requiring recasting in the light of the second

order epistemological perceptions that her unreliability is a function of her madness.

#### 4. A typology of unreliable homodiegetic narrators

##### A Inconscient:

(i) Insane. ( The narrator in 'X'; Benjy, in The Sound and the Fury )

(ii) Childish. ( Huckleberry Finn )

(iii) Naive. ( Lorna Merrifield )

(iv) Self-deceived: straddling categories.

( The narrators of 'Haircut'  
The Aspern Papers or The Good Soldier )

##### B Conscient

(v) Deceiving. ( The Duke in 'My Last Duchess':  
although he exhibits marked  
elements of self-deception as  
well. )

(vi) Manipulative. ( Lucy Snowe in Villette )

To conclude the discussion of unreliability which has provided this chapter with its focus, a typology such as the

one above indicates the range of degrees of unreliability available to writers who wish to deploy the immanent narrative situation. The typology includes the case of self-deception, a category of unreliable narration which I explore in chapters 5 and 6: self-deceived narrators are inconscient in virtue of their being deceived, conscient in virtue of their active participation in the deception to which they willingly fall victims.

In an attempt further to elaborate the subtleties of unreliable homodiegetic narration, I shall in chapters 5 and 6 provide narratological exegeses of instances of both self-deception and deception, the latter falling outside of the Jamesian category of 'inconscience' but still within the category of unreliability. James's concept refers to the narrator's knowledge of his own inner states, while the concept of unreliability refers to the epistemological barriers that stand between the reader/receiver and the narrator. One of those barriers is often the inconscience of the narrator him/herself. The fully conscient, deceiving narrator can on these grounds be regarded by the reader/receiver as unreliable.

## NOTES:

1. Authorial and figural narrators on the one hand, and immanent and first person narrators on the other, correspond to Genette's external and internal focalisers in this graphic depiction of the relationships between the types of narrative situation. Like immanent and first person narration, authorial and figural exhibit ontological similarities, with figural being, in effect, merely a conventional narrowing via the imposition of limiting strictures upon the range of authorial 'omniscience'.

2. In answer to the question: Why is the corrective in these narratives not a feature or function of an implied authorial stance ( Iser, Rimmon-Kenan, Yacobi ) against which or from which receivers of the text re-orientate themselves vis-a-vis the narrated events, I must reply that the answer lies in the logic underpinning narrative transmission itself; its mediatory generic point of departure which implies a 'speaker', either literally ( a teller-character ) or metaphorically ( showing or exemplifying).

3. Booth's source here is footnoted as 'Preface to "The Pupil"' in The Art of the Novel ed. R.P. Blackmur ( New York, 1947), pp 153, 154; and is to be found in The Rhetoric of Fiction:1961, p.339.

4. Coover's 'The Babysitter' ( Pricksongs and Descants: 1969 ), for example, deprives the reader of a satisfying construction of the presentational process, not to mention the presented world; drawing into both the process and presented world, the elements of incoherence that distinguish the plot of this narrative. Each paragraph suggests another vantage point - for the receiver - from which to view the presented world.

5. The Crystal Fountain and Other Stories: 1984. London: Paladin

6. Although I have not attempted an extended analysis of a novel such as Huckleberry Finn, such elements of the second order discourse of the homodiegetic narrator as linguistic choice and idiolect are readily perceived to function as important features of the exemplification process in texts of this kind. See also the analysis in chapter 6 of the idiolect of Whitey in Lardner's 'Haircut'.

Chapter 5: A Critical Exploration  
of 'Haircut' by Ring Lardner and  
'My Last Duchess' by Robert Browning.

An analysis of two modes of narrative transmission which involve narrators who modulate between positions of deception and self-deception.

1. Introduction

The discourses provided by Robert Browning and Ring Lardner in their narratives, 'My Last Duchess' and 'Haircut' respectively, share a generic feature: they are both monologues, uttered by narrators in the first person, both of whom may be deemed unreliable, but to varying degrees. Lardner's Whitey, a barber in a small town in the U.S.A., rapidly emerges as deficient in his observations upon the events that suffuse his utterances, while the Duke of Ferrara, subject, the reader imputes, to massive delusions, comes to be regarded as unreliable insofar as his judgements about the actions of the duchess are concerned; which inference on the part of the reader/receiver radically undermines the conventional relationship between receiver and mediator. As has been suggested in the previous chapters, the apparent first-order discourse of the homodiegetic narrator is superseded in the reading process

by a second-order ( epistemologically primary ) discourse that derives from the stereoscopic perspective afforded by the textual signals comprising the immanent narrative situation.

## 2. 'Haircut'

These signals ( the translational indices ) are theoretically locatable at all levels of the literary work. In 'Haircut', however, they are to be found primarily in the semantic stratum, in that of the portrayed objectivities, as well as in the states of affairs projected by the work. Their nature inheres in the disjunction or tension that arises between the properties ( of characters, actions and events ) exemplified in the discourse and the homodiegetic narrator's misperception of them. The unconscious exemplification of values revealed by Whitey's character and the value structure of the hypostatized reader, controlled, however, by the intersubjectively available meaning units of the second stratum, offer another field in which the receiver may locate the indices suggesting the presence of the immanent mode of narration. In his account of Jim's actions, the narrator's peculiar remoteness ( not to say pathological insensitivity ) becomes a device of some potency in colouring the projected states of affairs, with the narrator's misreading of Jim's behaviour assuming itself the dramatic role of properties exemplified, so that the 'real' nature of this small-town comedian can be ascertained

with relative ease by the receivers in the reading process ( no less - we assume - than must be the experience of the ostensible narratee, who though he remains a silent auditor of Whitey's rambling monologue is nevertheless the text-based receiver of the discourse ).(1)

While Lardner's story ultimately defies easy categorization it does, initially, present as a heavy-handed, almost clumsy attempt in the black-comic mode. It lacks, comparatively, the subtle veneer of 'My Last Duchess'. However, interpretation ( aided by an awareness of the range of the indices ) suggests a progression in the narrative from the ostensible simplicity of its surface-structure ( a bigoted, insensitive lout relates the cruel escapades of the town joker ) toward a realisation - on the receiver's part - that a complex fusion of identities between the narrator and the protagonist of his tale has occurred at the deep structural level. The apparent slightness is thus re-evaluated in the light of the pointers to the second-order presented world, providing the discourse with its ballast. As an instance of unreliable homodiegetic narration, this short story ( like the Browning monologue I shall also examine ) is superbly suited to explication of the kind offered by the theoretical position outlined and argued for in the the previous chapters.

Within a few paragraphs the receiver of this narrative ( distinct from the narratee or hypostatized receiver whose



existence is inferred from Whitey's 'You're a newcomer, ain't you?': p 392 ) has been alerted to the potentially unreliable nature of the discourse. Deriving from the idiolect which characterizes the narrator's utterance ( linguistic formations such as 'ain't', deviant formations such as 'set everybody to laughin'', and the use of the double negative, 'I ain't had nothin' to drink', as well as idiosyncratic pronunciations such as 'theayter' pepper his speech ) is the awareness that the mediator is meant to be realised as occupying a specific social stratum within the presented world; and once the fact of unreliability is established - by the translational indices which will be outlined below - the idiolect can be judged by the receiver to have been an ideologically biased, but nevertheless significant, pointer toward the limitations that the narrator subsequently demonstrates. The linguistic deviations are signifiers or markers of variations from a conventionally accepted norm: in this narrative, the deviation indicates a lower-order discourse ( and by extension existence ) in both the presentational process and the presented world. But this is to anticipate somewhat the conclusions that I must argue for.

The narrator's unreliability emerges though not so much through his idiolect ( although this is obviously an indicator ) but through its revelatory semantic dimension. Whitey's focus is - from the outset - upon the superficial relations between individuals in his community, and the

degree of his own superficiality is measured by his readiness to offer details of their community life that have been come by through gossip. His discourse refers to over twenty characters all of whom are alluded to in a similarly prying fashion and in a quite unabashed tone during the course of his narration .

The crux of the first-order narrative ( Whitey's ) concerns the 'antics' - for the amusement of the barber and other cronies - of Jim Kendall, whom we discover shortly after the story's opening in medias res ( a conventional device of this kind of monologue whether in poetry, drama or narrative ) has 'got killed' (p 392). As with 'X', this certainty deprives the ostensible discourse of a potential climax, but what is achieved, technically ( or structurally ) is the heightening of the receiver's interest in the manner or mode of his death. The garrulous barber delays, by means of a number of narrative detours, the revelation of the manner in which he died, thereby ensuring interest in the rising action of the short story, even as his magpie approach to what counts as germane threatens to undermine his core narration. The receiver and the auditor of Whitey's narrative must reconcile themselves to a revelation, in the narrator's own time, of the mode of Jim Kendall's death rather than the fact of it happening. This framing structure is by no means unique to this short story, but Lardner achieves another end via such formal patterning which

demonstrably illustrates the versatility of the immanent narrative situation.

Whitey's unreliability as narrator ( or focaliser ) is not, however, a function merely of his linguistic deviations. The receiver is more impressed by the moral failure his judgements suggest. Several incidents in the first-order narrative force the receiver into a position of antagonism vis-a-vis Whitey, notably his regaling of the reader with the episodes involving the letters ( sent anonymously, and at random, by Jim to husbands whose names he would read off bill-boards he passed in his travels as a canned-goods salesman ):

For instance, they'd be a sign, "Henry Smith, Dry Goods." Well Jim would write down the name and the name of the town and when he got to wherever he was goin' he'd mail back a postal card to Henry Smith at Benton and not sign no name to it, but he'd write ... "Ask your wife about that book agent that spent the afternoon last week,"...

(p 394)

The gratuitous malice of this act on Jim's part is glossed over as ' ...a great trick'; the behaviour of a real 'card' (p 394). The account, moreover, of Jim Kendall's 'outfox[ing of] his missus' (p 395) - projected by Whitey as the actions

of a 'caution!' (p 395) - assumes a progressively more serious quality which is, however, by no means intended by the narrator whose own reading of Jim's corrupt vengeance upon his wife and children suggests his amusement at the whole episode. As he indicates in his ability to gloss over Jim's attempted rape of Julie ( 'He finally seen he wasn't gettin' nowheres with his usual line so he decided to try the rough stuff.':p 398 ); and his apparent accomodatory approach to the vengeful duping of Julie subsequent to her rejection of him ( not to mention the narrator's insensitivity to the cruel delight Jim Kendall apparently took in tormenting Paul Dickson, the brain-damaged boy whom Jim referred to as 'cuckoo': p 396 ), several episodes combine to suggest an orientation by the reader toward a position radically antagonistic to the reception implied by the judgements of the narrator. There is no fusion of the perspectives of mediator and receiver so that what the mediator projects as amusing or funny is received, rather, as malicious, corrupt or depraved and the flashpoint of humour ( a function of this perspectival fusion [De Reuck:1987a] ) is undermined. While the focalised, that is, Jim Kendall, is the apparent object of revelation in this discourse, several of its qualities point to and reveal the workings of the psychic make-up of the focaliser ( Dick Whitey ) and it is to these that the indices now point the receiver who becomes embroiled in a dramatic revelation of an intricate nature.

The world that Whitey occupies ( and presents in his narrative ) is one that is opposed, diametrically, by that presented by the immanent narrative situation. Whitey's limited perceptions exemplify, at the level of the portrayed objectivities and that of the states of affairs, a number of features of the presented world of the second-order narrative situation. By means of this exemplificatory process the reader/receiver re-assesses Jim Kendall, the 'card' and the 'caution', and finds in him despicable, even repellent qualities. Insofar as character-relationships are concerned, Whitey's supportive cronyism ( the alignment with Jim, Hod Meyers and the rest ) is opposed, structurally and at the level of the projected states of affairs, morally, by the outsider grouping which comprises Doc Stair, Julie and poor crazy Paul. Several translational indices point to the narrator's rendering of their characters as fundamentally suspect; undermined by the exemplification process which his own character-attributes imply . Reference is secured by means of this process to the second-order narrative; that is, the immanent narrative situation. Where Whitey and his judgements upon Jim Kendall are central as epistemic touchstones to the first-order narrative, Doc Stair, Julie and Paul are central to the second-order narrative. Similarly, the narratee who remains silent in the face of Whitey's relentless monologue can also be construed as an outsider-figure ( and thereby be aligned with the touchstones of the second-order narrative ); one whose

tacitly judgemental attitude in no way stems the flood of Whitey's discourse but, seemingly, serves as the catalyst for the accounts of the episodes in the small town's recent history. As an outsider-figure, the narratee joins and swells the ranks of those elements of the presented world which provide Whitey's discourse with its fundamental opposition.

As was demonstrated in the analysis of 'X', a table of opposing qualities may be set up so that the exemplificatory process is clearly discernible, with reference being activated by the judgements of the homodiegetic narrator and achieved in the 'judgements' of the immanent narrator. Take, for example the following:

Whitey's Perception of Jim Kendall: pp 395; 397

A. First Person Narrator

[Jim] told it all around town, how he had outfoxed his Missus. He certainly was a caution.  
(p 395)

Now Jim Kendall, besides bein' a jokesmith and a pretty good drinker, well

B Immanent Narrator

He lacks any quality of family loyalty and his actions are malicious rather than amusing.

Jim Kendall's jokes are at the expense of others and are often vicious; his

Jim was quite a ladykiller.

(p 397)

drunken behaviour is des-  
picable, and far from  
being a 'ladykiller' in  
any positive sense of the  
term, he is ( the irony is  
missed by the homodiegetic  
narrator ) capable of rape  
in order to have his will  
with women.

This is to take merely two examples of the narrator's  
(mis)perceptions about Jim which the immanent narrator  
relocates in their proper place. The significant feature,  
from the technical point of view, is that these  
'misperceptions' themselves serve to illuminate ( by means  
of the non-denotational referential function they perform in  
the narrative transmission ) the psychic composition of the  
ostensible narrator.

Lardner has, however, an additional deceptive ploy in  
mind which forms the crux ( that is, interpretatively ) of  
the entire presentational process. To re-orientate reception  
so that it encompasses the limited homodiegetic narrator's  
discourse and encapsulates moreover the epistemically prior  
discourse of the immanent narrator is merely one of the  
aspects of the tale's structure. An additional dimension is  
given to this short story ( an enhancement, that is, of the  
projected states of affairs ) by the gradual accretion to

the ingenuous barber of the more corrupt ( and corrupting ) qualities of Jim Kendall. This transition receives its clearest markers in the narrowing of the distance which the narrator has been at some pains, initially, to establish between his own and Jim Kendall's diction:

Jim Kendall used to call him cuckoo;  
that's a name Jim had for anybody that  
was off their head, only he called people's  
head their bean. That was another of his  
gags, callin' head bean and callin' crazy  
people cuckoo. Only poor Paul ain't crazy,  
but just silly.

(p 396)

At this juncture Whitey explicitly does not want to acknowledge as his own the malicious edge that characterises Jim's diction. Later, however, Whitey begins the subtle but, for all that no less unambiguous linguistic slide into Jim's forms of perception as manifested in his descriptive phrases. Initially, in order to maintain the deception, Whitey restrains himself by first uttering, then disowning, Jim's distinguishing phrases:

Well, Jim's habits and his jokes didn't  
appeal to Julie and of course he  
was a married man, so he didn't have no  
more chance than, well, than a rabbit.  
That's an expression of Jim's himself.



When somebody didn't have no chance to  
get elected or somethin', Jim would  
always say they didn't have no more chance  
than a rabbit.

(p 398)

When the linguistic gap between Whitey and Jim has been  
eradicated and Whitey has revealed his secret ( but total )  
identification with Jim's warped perceptions, he is capable  
of donning fully the linguistic mantle he was at such pains  
to deploy as a device for the separation of their  
identities: 'Well, it was a couple days later when Jim was  
here in the shop again, and so was the cuckoo' ( p 400 ).  
Here there is no linguistic gap mirroring the separation of  
their identities. The darker chords of this narrative are  
sounded ( indices themselves, locatable in Ingarden's fifth  
metaphysical stratum ) as the receiver realises the true  
nature of the 'ingenuous' narrator. No longer speaking with  
the innocence of his slow-witted ( pre-corruption ) self, he  
becomes Jim Kendall incarnate:

Jim was a sucker to leave a new beginner  
have his gun, let alone a half-wit. It  
probably served Jim right, what he got.

( p401)

Whitey's reversion, in the penultimate sentence of the  
short story, to his comic characterisation of Jim ( 'He

certainly was a card!' ) no longer has the ring of an unreflective, limited consciousness. Whitey, the receiver now realises, must, from the outset, consciously have chosen, though in an ostensibly unreflective fashion, a path of evil. The choice is prefigured in the only two lapses in his comic narrative where, with insight that surprises the receiver, he has spoken of Jim's 'tricks' and 'jokes' as instances of Jim '...always [getting] even' ( p 398) and '...[going] after revenge' ( p 399).

As will be demonstrated in the analysis of The Aspern Papers, there are levels of deception inherent in the narrative situations which the location of translational indices render less opaque. The narratee in 'Haircut' does not apparently apprehend what is transparent - by the end of this discourse - to the hypostatized reader. Deception in James's novella involves the narrator's self-deceit as well. Such an 'interpretative abstraction' ( Ruthrof, 1981:p 156 ) provides this short story with a darker core of strength which a more superficial reading of the narrator as merely limited - not evil - denies the receiver. What is apparently 'clumsy' technically speaking can now be seen to be imbued with both sophistication and subtlety. Browning's technique in 'My Last Duchess' similarly rewards explication against the framework provided by this theoretical model.

### 3. 'My Last Duchess'

Critics from Robert Langbaum (1957) to Warwick Slinn (1982 ) have generally found agreement about one facet of the dramatic monologue: that it serves, in part, a revelatory function. Though they express the position somewhat differently, Langbaum's critical stance:

The willingness of the reader to understand the duke, even to sympathize with him as a necessary condition of reading the poem, is the key to the poem's form. It alone is responsible for a meaning not inherent in the content itself but determined peculiarly by the treatment.

( 1957:p 80)

is echoed by Slinn's more than a quarter of a century later:

Browning seems to me to be a psychological dramatist who used monologues to explore man as the product of a self-reflexive use of language. Consequently my concern is with the nature of the histrionic in his poetry, with the way characters are engaged in verbal acts which dramatise themselves, and with the way Browning considers the multiplicity and complexity of human personality...

(1982: p ix)

These observations are no doubt accurate as far as they go, but they do not go far enough, for they fail to engage with the problem ( as I see it ) of the technical achievement of the dramatic monologue whose bi-focal perspective - on the 'form' and 'content' on the one hand, and verbal acts which 'dramatise' on the other - permits of the curious simultaneity in the receiver's orientation vis-a-vis the speaker ( what Langbaum refers to as 'sympathy and judgement', pp 69-103 ) in which omniscience is granted even as the restrictive nature of the data-base is recognised.

As is the case in unreliable narratives of the kind already analysed, the dramatic monologue presents the receiver with a mediatory voice or speaker, ostensibly responsible for conveying the details ( of whatever kind ) of the presented world. Because of the homodiegetic nature of this voice or discourse, it occupies, paradoxically, the normally discrete ontological realms of process and world. But the factor that Langbaum, for instance, cannot accommodate on a model that fails to include all the variables in the narrative act of transmission ( between author, text and receiver ) is exactly how, given the ostensible discourse of a single narrator/mediator, there can be a discrepancy between 'sympathy' ( for the speaker ) on the one hand, and 'judgement' ( of the speaker ) on the

other. He is driven, perforce, to vague formulations that border on the affective fallacy in their subjective lack of precision:

Not only can the speaker of the dramatic monologue dramatize a position to which the poet is not ready to commit himself intellectually, but the sympathy which we give the speaker for the sake of the poem and apart from judgement makes it possible for the reader to participate in a position, to see what it feels like to believe that way, without having finally to agree. There is, in other words, ...[a] split between sympathy and judgement.

( 1957:p 100 )

The mechanisms of reception operating here can be explained more precisely on a model such as that developed in this dissertation than the intuitive response of Langbaum, above, suggests.

In a manner unique to itself, the dramatic monologue presents a situation which nevertheless parallels unreliable homodiegetic narration, and the question that confronts and initially ( perhaps ) confounds the receiver, is: How, with only a single mediatory presence one arrives at a

perspective on the fictional world that is in contradistinction to that of the narrator when the only tangible evidence for judgement would appear to derive - solely - from the discourse of the first person mediator? It is not, as has been shown, enough to postulate an 'implied author's' value stance or norms and 'factors in the text [which] indicate a gap between the norms of the implied author and those of the narrator' ( Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: p 101), for, inevitably, these formulations omit the notion of an immanent discourse, responsible for directing the reader's responses away from the ostensible, homodiegetic narrator's discourse and towards a more encompassing perspective that permits of 'judgements' even as the mediator ( arguably ) attracts the receiver's sympathy. Such a corrective function is served by the immanent voice which, as in the narratives already discussed, enables the receiver to experience a stereoscopic perspective in his/her orientation toward the presented world, one which . simultaneously permits the assimilation of information about the 'two-dimensional' presented world of the homodiegetic narrator's discourse, and the fully 'three-dimensional' world that derives from the complex construct of the complementary narrative situations.

Browning's poem, 'My Last Duchess', exhibits in almost paradigmatic form, the stereoscopic perspective of the immanent narrative situation, the poem's effect deriving from the tension between the duke's narrative ( an act of

'telling'), on the one hand, and, on the other, what is revealed indirectly ( an act of 'showing' ) about the duke's relationship with his last duchess. In other words, the receiver is given data that have an overtly subjective bias but which are not accepted - by the alert reader - at face value. A less subjective and, hence, more detached assessment of the duke's behaviour is arrived at by means of the immanent voice which establishes a number of translational indices which will coerce the receiver towards a more embracing position ( narratologically speaking ) than that of the biased homodiegetic narrator; receiving the duke's apparent frankness for example as contrivance: a deception of the envoy that serves a Machiavellian ulterior motive.

As has been demonstrated, translational indices may occur in all the strata of the literary work but are not compelled to be present in all four strata for the immanent voice to be manifest. In both 'You Should Have Seen the Mess!' and 'X' the para- or pre-phonetic stratum exhibited their presence, although by far the most complex and suggestive signals occurred in strata 4 and 5 ( of Ingarden's augmented schema ), that is, in the realms of the portrayed objectivities and the projected states of affairs. Here we observed how by means of implicatures ( their ontic bases in the semantic third stratum ) and exemplifications ( those properties of the states of affairs that have had attention drawn to themselves by features of the over-riding

sign-system ), the second, more complex presented worlds of the narratives in question were constructed in the process of co-creativity that forms the quintessence of reception.

The primary translational index in Browning's monologue, however, is provided by the emergent character of the duchess: the others cohere around her exemplificatory function in the narrative. She provides the focal point for the attention of both the duke and - by extension - the envoy for the major part of the poem; and it is the translational index that her character embodies, revealing, as it does, the finer points of the gradations in the duke's relationship to her, and culminating in the not-so-veiled innuendo '...I gave commands;/ Then all smiles stopped together.' that ensures our fascination with her, even as our attention is diverted to the prospective duchess in the closing lines of the poem. The exemplificatory function of the character of the duchess in the presented world of this monologue thus both defines and determines our full understanding of the character of the duke.

What is 'told' by the duke, is apparently unequivocal: the duchess was beautiful, kind and generous with 'a heart ...too soon made glad'. Her vitality has been immortalized in the painting by Fra Pandolf and commands the admiration of the duke; but in the second line of the poem there is awoken in the reader's mind, a burgeoning sense of the duke's limitations ( both as narrator and man ) with the



framing hypothetical construction, 'as if she were alive.'

(2) His conflation of a person with an art-object - reducing the animate to the inanimate however exquisitely wrought - resonates significantly through the poem, ( and has a retrospective impact when the hypothetical construction recurs, subsequently ), providing the reader with a confirmatory pointer to the existence of the immanent voice. Like the envoy, the receiver is confronted by a shocking disjunction that implies another reading of the data emerging in the duke's activity of telling than is explicit. This is not to deny the character of the duke a degree of manipulateness: he is by no means limited in the sense that Lorna Merrifield and the mediator of the narrative, 'X', are.

Intriguingly, the duke makes no attempt to disguise the virtuous qualities of his last duchess. His egoism, monstrous in its unquestioning elimination of a life which failed - on his terms - to accommodate itself to a desire unexpressed on his part, precludes him from dissembling. He is thus oblivious of the impression being made upon the envoy ( though an element of low cunning provides the action of the duke with its impetus, no doubt ) by the deliberate juxtapositioning of his last duchess's gentler qualities with his aggressive, but unreflecting, amorality. The force of the impact of the poem upon the reader/receiver derives exactly from the disjunction between what is 'told' and what is 'shown'; between the exemplificatory function his

character now assumes in the ostensible narrative transmission and his unwitting projection of the same, thereby signalling the transmission by the immanent narrative voice.

As the duke's account of his relationship with the duchess unfolds, culminating with the implication that he murdered her, his character is brought, by degrees, into sharper focus. The nature of the duke's unreliability is then more accurately assessed as self-deceived, for not in question are such factors as his aristocracy, his wealth, his power - even his cordiality ( he waives precedence as he and the envoy prepare to rejoin the 'company below') and, initially, frankness in his dealings with the envoy. These features of the duke's character are, in fact, capable of textual corroboration in the homodiegetic discourse of the poem and are, moreover, accepted with complacency by the duke as being of his very nature and status. But, as a term such as 'complacency' is introduced into the analysis, the receiver of the monologue has, in fact, acknowledged the presence of the immanent narrative mode; for a judgement of the duke, such as the epithet 'complacent' entails, is not a given in the ostensible narrative discourse. It is an interpretative abstraction or construct which ensues from the corrective perspective permitted by the immanent narrative situation. Another such interpretative response gives rise to the emotion of outrage ( to take merely one, possible reaction ) when the reader/receiver registers the

nature of the structural juxtapositioning of the duke's oblique account of the fate of his last duchess with his subsequent ( disingenuous ) focussing of attention upon the dowry of his future duchess:

...There she stands

As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet

The company below, then. I repeat,

The Count your master's known munificence

Is ample warrant that no just pretence

Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;

To the extent that the duke's unreliability as a narrator stems from his self-deception, a subtler and more combinative narrative technique than is usually the case in such situations is made possible. The cruder (from a structural point of view ) technique of utilising a narrator who is socially limited ( Lorna Merrifield), or alternatively one who is insane ( the narrator in 'X') is supplanted, here, by the subtleties that accrue when the inner psychic make-up of a character, itself, is an unknown factor in the narrative transmission. It is this quality which contributes to the exemplificatory process and indexically establishes the existence of the immanent narrative mode. Such easy dismissal of the homodiegetic narrator as 'unsympathetic' ( Langbaum, 1957:p 101 ) is complicated by the stereoscopic perspective that the reader

is forced to adopt vis-a-vis the '...loose-structured, transient-natured forms of one-sided talk' (Slinn,1982:p 2) that comprise the monologue form.

A response, then, say, of outrage, stems from the careful deployment in the poem of revelatory juxtapositions which, together with the emergent character of the duchess, serve as significant translational indices and account for a dual reading of the duke's character as both aristocratic and malign; courteous and hypocritical ( contrasted with his interest in the dowry, the duke's subsequent qualification, 'though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed / At starting, is my object', rings rather hollow ); powerful and Machiavellian; a connoisseur of beautiful objects and a destroyer of beauty. These variables are not, obviously, mutually exclusive, but at one of their poles they would chime with the homodiegetic narrator's self-deceived perception of himself ( and, as a result, be strikingly limited ) whereas, at the other pole, and incorporating features of the first, they would exhibit the complexity of the immanent narrator's perception of the duke. Much the same chart as was used to explore the parameters bounding the worlds of the homodiegetic and immanent narrators in 'X' could be attempted here: exemplification being the translational index that underwrites the relocation of the presented world.

Throughout the poem the receiver of the transmission, though apparently confined to a single homodiegetic narrator, is yet able to apprehend such paradoxical characteristics as the above by implication and with no apparent textual justification for doing so. This activity is only explicable given a model that accounts, in some fashion, for the 'implicatures' (Grice, in Pratt, 1977:pp 199ff) that lead to an interpretation which is not immediately accounted for by the data base inherent in the ostensible narrative situation. Given the fact that narrative, by definition, is a mediatory process, the only access to the presented world which is permitted the receiver is that supplied by narrator(s) who mediate between the realm of the author and that of the receiver. As I have demonstrated in the previous chapters, it becomes necessary to posit the presence of the immanent voice ( its existence corroborated by the translational indices generated by the text ) and thereby to accomplish, in the act of reception, a comprehensive, more broadly-based perspective on the fictional world, admitting of fewer inexplicable lacunae such as a more limited critique of narrative technique must, inevitably, impose upon the reader.

The dramatic monologue, with its roots very firmly in the narrative mode, becomes paradigmatic of the immanent narrative situation, forcing the reader to assimilate both perspectives upon the narrated events: that of the speaker and that of the immanent voice; and it is their simultaneous

presence in the literary construct that allows the narrative, as told, to operate additionally as revelation. A comment such as David Daiches's captures succinctly ( if unoriginally ), the effect of a dramatic monologue such as 'My Last Duchess', when he states that the poem is but the 'visible part of the iceberg' (1960:p1003). The entire object, narratologically speaking, becomes visible only with the directing intervention of the immanent narrator and the realisation of the parallel narrative situations that comprise the mediatory process in this narrative situation.

Because of the guidance provided by the translational indices we are predisposed to question the duke's judgement, say, and not to characterise his last duchess as sexually naive or incipiently promiscuous. The basis for these assertions is derived, largely, from the implications and juxtapositionings that ensure reception of the duke as Machiavellian, destructive, and hypocritical even though the more tangible ( because ostensible ) reading should be his own: that he is aristocratic, powerful and aesthetically discerning. Even the implicit warning he gives the envoy (that behaviour of this kind in his future duchess will be dealt the same treatment as that extended to his last duchess ) is carried by the duke's sense of his inviolable feudal status. His cordiality in waiving precedence as they prepare to rejoin the 'company below' is radically undermined by the hypocrisy evinced in his attempt at the reassurance, directly after a comment on her dowry, that it

is the Count's 'fair daughter's self' and not her wealth that attracts him. The implicit ranking of his duchess with another of his objets d'art ('Neptune .../ taming a sea-horse,.../ Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!' ) functions as a revelatory pointer to the depravity of the speaker, and bodes ill for the future duchess whose fate has been sealed in the lines immediately preceding their descent.

Slinn's comment that by

...writing monologues Browning dramatises experience in this sense of being the conscious subject of an event, and his art is to portray the subtleties of interacting levels and facets of consciousness in the midst of such experience.

(1982: p 151)

takes into account only one 'level' in the complex interaction that occurs between the author, the text and the receiver of the narrative transmission. In this monologue, the subtleties inherent in the presentational process ( a composite of both the homodiegetic and the immanent narrative situation ) allow the reader to access both 'levels and facets of consciousness' in the duke and 'levels and facets' of narrative transmission that will more brilliantly illuminate the dramatic situation of the

monologue. In Henry James's novella, The Aspern Papers, we move ( critically speaking ) to the point on the continuum of unreliability initiated in the discussion of 'X' which interfaces with 'conscience' on the narrator's part, as the theory of immanent narration is applied to a sustained exercise in self-deception.

#### NOTES

1. Here as in 'My Last Duchess' a useful distinction may be drawn between the hypostatized and the implied reader, where the former refers to the construct which arises from the textual signals - the narratee (Chatman:1978) - and the latter refers to the receiver of the narrative whose existence is to be found beyond the realms of the presented world and the presentational process.

2. My emphasis.



## Chapter 6: A Critical Explication of 'The Aspern Papers'

An analysis of a mode of narrative transmission where the narrator modulates between positions of full self-awareness and self-deceit.

### 1. Introduction

Henry James, as we saw in chapter 4, was at pains to achieve complexity in his narrative transmissions, and to this end, developed inconscient narrators which, nevertheless, as actors in the presented world, created the illusion expectancy for the receiver of reliability. Tamar Yacobi (1987:39) accuses James of disrupting an 'ideal balance', as she sees it, between 'excessive guidance' of the kind exhibited in for example eighteenth century novels (Fielding's Tom Jones, say), and 'overoriginal guidance, which results in loss of control and interpretative darkness'. This seems to me a failure not so much of James's control of his 'signals', but rather of the reader's receptivity to their presence in the text. That we can judge as inaccurate the interpretation by his contemporaries of Daisy Miller would appear to indicate our approximation toward a 'truer' interpretation of the novel; one which has its foundation in the greater attention paid to the signals

( the translational indices ) in the text that suggest circumspection on the part of receivers when attempting to evaluate the reliability - or otherwise - of a Jamesian character. As in Ford Madox Ford's The Good Soldier ( which is briefly touched on in the conclusion ), the choice of a narrator who, ostensibly reliable in his judgements, is nevertheless perceived to be fraught with self-deception which must render him - ultimately - unreliable, is a key factor in the ironic patterning of many of James's tales and longer narratives; and an ( enhanced ) objective critical approach (Abrams,1953) appears to me to illuminate the narrative strategies employed by writers who elect as mediators narrators with the observer status of Frederick Winterbourne, Dowell, or the unnamed editor in search of Jeffrey Aspern's papers. They provide adequate guidance for the receiver only up to a point ( and herein lies the trap for the reader not alert to this possibility ); but where their judgements about themselves are concerned, we find them crucially wanting, so that we reinterpret their utterances at such junctures, recasting the presented world to incorporate elements of their inner ( psychic ) makeup which, precisely because of this limitation on personal insight, they are incapable of delivering as part of their presentational process. The immanent narrative situation must be invoked, and the translational indices which point to the existence of this second-order presentational process, isolated, so that the underlying mechanism can be

determined in order to assist the receiver in the complex interpretative abstractions that form a part of the reception of these unique narrative situations. On a continuum of unreliability that might have the insane narrator of 'X' at one of its poles, the narrator of The Aspern Papers is to be located at the furthest for, as Yacobi notes, the limitations of this type of narrator are by no means as clear as those, say, of Whitaker's short story or even of Lardner's Whitey: they lie hidden beneath a veneer of reliability that provides pitfalls for interpretation of the kind experienced by James's contemporary readership which "found" the familiar pattern typical of the [older James] novel' in Daisy Miller, missing the fact that the centre of orientation of the presented world has been shifted from 'Daisy's sensational story ... into [Frederick Winterbourne's] "discovery plot"' (Yacobi, 1987: 39).

## 2. 'The Aspern Papers'

The link exhibited between The Aspern Papers and the homodiegetic narratives discussed in previous chapters is, at first sight perhaps, not at all clear. Yet there emerges as reception is completed an awareness of this narrator's kinship with the Duke of Ferrara of the Browning monologue. The relationship between the two discourses has no generic basis (as was seen to inhere in that between 'Haircut' and 'My Last Duchess') but is, rather, a feature of the similar

patterns of self-deception each narrator displays. Their link, therefore, is structural and not generic. It seems pertinent to digress briefly, at this point, into a discussion of deception as a quality in narrative transformations other than those presently in focus. Again it is necessary to decide what kind of deception is being practised: is it, for example, a deliberate aspect of the homodiegetic narrative situation such as occurs in Charlotte Bronte's Villette? Here the narrator, Lucy Snow, tyrannically manipulates the disclosure of elements comprising the presented world, withholding information, so that the receiver's position of inferiority vis-a-vis the presented world is maintained. This relationship of dominance ( on the part of the mediator ) and submission ( on the part of the receiver ) is clearly manifest in those acts of narrative transmission which permit the reader no re-orientation vis-a-vis the presented world; no recasting of the events so that the submissive relationship may be subverted. In Villette Lucy Snowe's unreliability remains the distinguishing feature of the presentational process: no immanent voice, for example, redirects the reception of Lucy's judgements. We learn only in chapter 16, and long after the narrator has recognised the fact (in chapter 10), that the 'frank tread' which she would have followed 'through continual night, to the world's end' (p 125) that first night in Villette was that of Dr. John Graham who rescues her from the brink of death in chapter 15, 'The Long

Vacation'. Lucy Snowe at no point in the presentational process permits the reader an encompassing perspective upon the presented world. The disclosures are climactically timed for maximum dramatic impact as in the revelation that occurs in chapter 16:

For, reader, this tall young man - this darling son - this host of mine - this Graham Bretton, was Dr. John: he, and no other; and, what is more, I ascertained this identity scarcely with surprise. What is more, when I heard Graham's step on the stairs, I knew what manner of figure would enter, and for whose aspect to prepare my eyes. The discovery was not of to-day, its dawn had penetrated my perceptions long since.... I found him out soon. I first recognized him on that occasion, noted several chapters back, when my unguardedly-fixed attention had drawn on me the mortification of an implied rebuke.

(1979:pp 247-8)

In narratives of this kind it is true that the receiver 'cannot count on an alternative representation' (Yacobi,1987:23 ) for the tyrannical nature of the mediatory process here precludes the receiver's contradiction of the first-hand report of the homodiegetic narrator. However when the receiver is able to distinguish

unreliability of the kind inherent in Bronte's novel from the kind that is evinced in conjunction with the immanent narrative situation, it can be seen that not only is a complex narrative transmission discernible, but, moreover, a conventional perception about the relationship between receiver and mediator ( that it is one that comprises inferiority on the part of the reader ) can be seen to require re-assessment.

The Aspern Papers exhibits initially qualities of presentation not unlike those of Villette. Unreliability manifests itself as a feature of the mediatory process only gradually and the receiver must be alert ( in the James short story ) to the existence of translational indices which are deceptively concealed. The 'Popperian tentativeness', broached as providing the core-structure of the methodological underpinning in the previous chapter, appears to be almost paradigmatically a feature of reception here, as conjecture supersedes conjecture as to the existence of the immanent narrative situation; and only in the closing sections of the narrative does it appear that an epistemic warrant confirming the presence of the immanent voice in the narrative as a whole has been given.

The reader's illusion expectancy of reliability is created by means of the narrator's apparently conscient narration. He is to be trusted in his role as the juggler/articulator of the presentational process, we

assume, because of his depth of personal insight. His apparent consciousness of his motives in pursuing the old women in Venice in order to obtain the cherished papers that link Jeffrey Aspern to the last person alive who had known him, the 'divine Juliana' ( p 168) of 'Aspern's most exquisite and most renowned lyrics' ( p 167 ) deflects attention away from any early recognition of the narrator's limitations, so that the resolution or anagnorisis that occurs in the reception of this discourse may be all the more impressive. Certainly, in his selection of a narrator as complex and intelligent - not to say immoral - as the deliberately unnamed mediator of this discourse appears to be, James has set himself a fascinating challenge for his exploration of the self-deceiving mind.

Goodman's categories for exemplification and/or expression may be subpoenaed in order to validate the critical commentary which comprises this chapter. They derive from the visual arts, largely, but have their almost synonomous counterparts in the terminology already in use in narratological exegesis. Thus, Goodman's analysis of 'how... particular worlds are made from others' (1979:pp 7-17 ) utilising such concepts as the following, which I shall use heuristically to examine the kind and extent of the 'worlds' being presented in this story:

1. composition and decomposition
2. weighting

3. ordering

4. deletion and supplementation

5. deformation

( which were referred to, and explained briefly in chapter 3 ) may be translated, broadly, as:

1.1. construction and deconstruction ( the assembly of parts into their composite wholes; their division into classes or sub-sets of one another. Such activity on the part of the critic may, naturally, affect all or any of the 'strata' of the literary work.)

2.1. foreshadowing/prefiguring/emphasis, which would contribute to the structural patterning of a given narrative whether in the presentational process or in the presented world.

3.1. plot, or the causal connection linking the sequence of events. This could also be extended to include the 'plotting' of character; that is, its unfolding during the course of the discourse.

4.1. editing: implying the elimination or inclusion of variables for greater conciseness of expression at whatever level of the literary work.

5.1. distortion, as in, say, fantasy, the grotesque or burlesque, where an impact upon the reader is achieved by



means of some measure of excess in the presentation of the literary world.

Goodman does not offer this classification as in any way conclusive, but it can readily be appreciated that, as literature ( at one level ) is concerned precisely with the creation of worlds, such elements as are typologised above, might be a part of the process. It is hardly surprising then to discover that his (incomplete) list has been a part of narrative criticism for some time. The useful insight is that of exemplification ( as I argued in chapter 3 ) which, by dint of the deployment of some or all of the above processes of worldmaking, explains theoretically the functioning of the immanent narrative situation. Using Goodman's model it is thus possible to explain how a world which is not apparently represented nonetheless is reconstituted so that it competes for - and achieves - ontic precedence in the act of interpretation. The analysis of The Aspern Papers will include in its strategem some of the 'ways of worldmaking' suggested above, but only as they apply ( obviously ) to the 'making' of the second-order 'world' which has, as its generator, the immanent narrative voice.

The narrator of this tale is established from the outset as cultivated, erudite and aware: also not in question are his fundamentally immoral attitude toward the acquisition of the papers and his mercenary cast of mind. He

is a literary editor of some standing and, together with a co-editor, John Cunnor, is bent upon extracting Aspern's private correspondence with her ( the only area of Aspern's life not yet publicly documented ) from the now aged Miss Bordereau despite her rejection of Cunnor's earlier suits:

...No notice whatever had been taken of his first letter, and the second had been answered very sharply, in six lines, by the niece. "Miss Bordereau requested her to say that she could not imagine what he meant by troubling them. They had none of Mr. Aspern's papers, and if they had should never think of showing them to anyone on any account whatever. She didn't know what he was talking about and begged he would let her alone."

(p 159)

The point however lies not so much in the fact of his persistence, but in his consciousness of the degree to which he will go in order to manipulate events to his perceived advantage:

...I can arrive at the papers only by putting her off her guard, and I can put her off her guard only by ingratiating diplomatic practices. Hypocrisy, duplicity are my only chance.

(p 159)

Quite apart from his somewhat cynical notions of diplomacy, the narrator/editor's discourse projects a clear image of a consciousness fully aware of the immorality of his actions: to get the documents he is prepared even "To make love to the niece" (p 161), he informs Mrs. Prest. Part 1 concludes on this dramatically heightened note but it has established more than merely a climactic moment in the exposition of the tale.

A significant index to the receiver's subsequent understanding of the limitations of this apparently reliable narrator lies partially obscured in his comments on Aspern and women ( including Juliana ). They serve to validate later interpretative abstractions on the part of the receiver, in that they are instances of foreshadowing ( implicit emphasis) or, in Goodman's terms, 'weighting'. Several markers in this discussion of Aspern prove, in the end, to have prefigured our ultimate reconstruction of the mediator as unreliable insofar as his knowledge about himself is concerned. Aspern's treatment of Juliana, as recounted by the mediator, is glossed over as "...an impression about 1825 that he had "treated her badly" and the poet's relationship with other ladies is described as "serv[ing]"... several other ladies in the same way". ( p 156) The narrator's selection of this 'impression' from Aspern's past, coloured as it is by the dismissive,

contemptuous tone he employs, diminishes not only himself, but the Romantic hero for whom he is prepared to do 'worse still' ( p 159). This is an early index suggesting his lack of personal insight because the immanent voice directs the receiver towards the construction of an identity relationship between the editor and Aspern; but where the editor regards Aspern as nobly Romantic ( '"Orpheus and the Maenads!":p 156 ) in his relationships with women; and himself as wanting when compared with Aspern ( '... he was kinder, more considerate than, in his place ... I should have been': p. 156 ), the receiver, in fact, identifies them because of their equal lack of consideration for the sensibilities they encounter. The editor/narrator's limitations are thus signalled early; prefigured in this crucial exchange between him and Mrs. Prest.

Perhaps the most obvious deflective move made in this transmission ( that is, away from the recognition of the narrator as an unreliable mediator ) arises in those elements of his discourse that signal, unequivocally, his insight into his motives in attempting to take up occupancy in the crumbling Venetian villa that the Misses Bordereau live in: the editor/mediator's acquisitiveness. In his exchange with Mrs Prest (pp 153-161) there occurs an accretion of pointers to his mercenary and manipulative nature, all of which serve to weight our reception of him in a manner apparently explicitly contrived:

The other idea that had come into my head was connected with a high blank wall which appeared to confine an expanse of ground on one side of the house. ... a few thin trees, with the poles of certain rickety trellises, ...visible over the top. ...It suddenly occurred to me that if it did belong to the house I had my pretext.

(pp 158 - 159)

His imagery now - as at other times in his assault on the privacy of Juliana Bordereau - is infused with a probably conscious martial quality ('...I was afraid to meet failure, for it would leave me, as I remarked to my companion, without another arrow for my bow.' :p 159) and his strategy for gaining access to the Bordereau villa is crudely articulated:

The old woman won't have the documents spoken of; they are personal, delicate, intimate, and she hasn't modern notions, God bless her! If I should sound that note [offer to buy them, directly] first I should certainly spoil the game. I can arrive at the papers only by putting her off her guard, and I can put her off her guard only by ingratiating diplomatic practices.

Hypocrisy, duplicity are my only chance. I am sorry for it, but for Jeffrey Aspern's sake I would do worse still.

(p 159)

The mediator, in a sense, wants it both ways. His apparently disarming forthrightness, coupled to the fact that this activity is being pursued in the noble interests of completing - for posterity - the documentation of the life of a recognised literary figure ( 'The multitude, today, flocked to his temple, but of that temple [John Cumnor] and I regarded ourselves as the ministers':p 155 ) barely conceals the attempt to diminish the more immoral dimension of his enterprise by justifying it as knowledge necessary to the fuller comprehension of Aspern the poet. Nevertheless, the narrator's personal insight seems clear in the first part, his 'plan of campaign' (p 154) culminating in a decision to "...make love to the niece" (p 161), made in the apparent consciousness of its fullest implications.

Goodman's notion of 'ordering' which I regard as more or less synonymous with the arrangement in sequence of the elements of the plot of a narrative can be seen to be the construct at work as the first part of The Aspern Papers draws to its climactic close. In the ensuing sections ( 11 - 1X ) the narrator's attempt to win Miss Tita to his side, thereby ensuring her complicity in gaining from

Juliana the correspondence he desires so obsessively, will provide the narrative with much of its ballast. More important, still, her character - and those aspects of it which his discourse will fail to account for, but which the receiver will gradually come to discern as fundamental to her nature - will function as a translational index, revealing, in its relation to that of the urbane narrator, several facets of the discourse of the immanent narrator. In this, the 'little one, as Mrs Prest called the niece' (p 154) plays a role ( narratologically speaking ) not unlike that of the duchess in Browning's 'My Last Duchess': her emergence referring, in an essentially non-denotational manner, to the homodiegetic narrator's submerged limitations.

The matter of reception is complicated for the reader in his/her attempt to concretize Miss Tita ( or for that matter, Miss Juliana ) by the fact that the homodiegetic narrator's observations about them appear to be both subtle and comprehensive. His first description of the niece presents her in her superficial aspect, though naturally - but not at all disturbingly, for the present - 'coloured' by subjective impressionism on his part:

She was a long, lean, pale person, habited apparently in a dull-colored dressing gown, and she spoke with a kind of mild literalness... Her face was not young, but it was

simple; it was not fresh, but it was mild.  
She had large eyes which were not bright,  
and a great deal of hair which was not  
"dressed", and long fine hands which were  
- possibly - not clean.

(p 163)

Her response to his affected enthusiasm for their garden  
( 'I must have a garden - upon my honour I must':p 163 ) is  
recounted by the editor/narrator with consummate  
discernment:

She clasped [her hands] almost convulsively as, with a confused, alarmed look, she broke out, "Oh, don't take it away from us; we like it ourselves!"

"You have the use of it then?"

"Oh, yes. If it wasn't for that!" And she gave a shy, melancholy smile.

(p 163)

The narrator's powers of observation are manifestly acute, ranging as they do from the surfaces of the characters with whom he interacts to their inner beings: this is especially true of his exchanges with, and analyses of, Miss Tita Bordereau. Despite the overt nature ( in the eyes of the receivers of this discourse ) of his hypocritical



relationship with her ( perhaps indeed because of it ), the narrator's reliability remains largely unchallenged, thereby achieving James's apparent aim of a more complex reversal in the reception of this focaliser at the closure of the narrative. Until this juncture is reached, the expository nature of parts I and II contributes to an impression of the narrator as capable of accuracy in his judgements of others as well as himself. He speaks, incisively, about 'contradictions like this in Tita Bordereau which, as [he] observed later, contributed to make her an odd and affecting person'; and of the impression ( he conveys it as a conclusion ) that 'In Tita at any rate a grateful susceptibility to human contact had not died out' (pp 165 - 66).

If Tita's emergent character is to function as a translational index, indicating the epistemically primary 'discourse' of the immanent narrator, Juliana's exchanges with the narrator ( though of a different kind ) likewise provide access to another order. Suggesting ways that the receiver might take in order to reach the complex level of interpretative abstractions, implicatures are locatable at the levels of the portrayed objectivities and of the projected states of affairs. Miss Juliana's appearance is described by the narrator when he first encounters her in a manner redolent of subjective impressionism ( and may be significantly contrasted with his earlier, more dispassionate description of the niece ). Clearly, more is

revealed about the focaliser/narrator himself than about  
Juliana:

I was really face to face with  
the Juliana of some of Aspern's  
most exquisite and most renowned lyrics.  
I grew used to her afterward, though never  
completely; but as she sat there before  
me my heart beat as fast as if the  
miracle of resurrection had taken  
place for my benefit. Her presence  
seemed somehow to contain his, and  
I felt nearer to him at that first  
moment of seeing her than I ever had  
been before or ever have been since.

(p 167)

Only when once he has established his responses to the  
'ideal' Juliana of the poems, does the narrator recognise in  
the actual figure before him 'the terrible relic' who  
appears 'too strange, too literally resurgent' (p 167). In  
his presentation of Miss Bordereau his judgements, for the  
first time, appear hesitant, stopping short of the fuller,  
more incisive analyses he was capable of in his treatment of  
her niece. This instance of weighting in the presentational  
process or prefiguring a subsequent, more fully realised  
'limitation' on the judgements of the narrator, is carefully  
controlled so that the reader/receiver's sense of an index

( one which refers to the second-order presented world, or at least suggests the process whereby such a world will be seen to come into existence ) is modified by the apparent penetration of the almost epigraphic phrasing of such judgements as : 'The divine Juliana as a grinning skull' (p 168). Retrospectively, with the reading process completed, this phrase of the mediator carries a degree of metaphoric weight that unpacks for the reader/receiver at the meta-level of this narrative, signifying meanings caught up in the complex matrix of life and death imagery; of the ideal and the actual, or the Romantic and the objective. Though the narrator describes her as a grinning death's head, he in fact ( for all his penetrative qualities ) fails to grasp that his pursuit of an ideal object ( the Juliana of the lyric poems ) is doomed from the outset, in that the ideal, by its very nature, must remain essentially unattainable. Corrupt and mercenary as he is, his quest ( certainly, within the parameters laid down for the stereoscopically rendered presented world ) must be futile.

The narrator's earlier air of complacency gives way, in the discussion they have about the rental of the rooms, to a feeling of disquiet. Coupled to his perhaps guilty sense that the 'old woman ... had a fuller vision of [him] than [he] had of her' (pp 169-70) is a reluctance to recognise in Miss Bordereau a mind as mercenary as his own. He remains, in a way, a victim of his Romantic illusions about her so that it would appear ' odious ... to me to stand chaffering

with Aspern's Juliana. It was queer enough to have a question of money with her at all' (p 171). This apparently conscient quality of the narrator stops short, however, of a recognition of the force of the discrepancy or disjunction between his perceived interests and his real ones: the 'divine Juliana' whose 'presence seemed somehow to contain his [Aspern's], making the narrator feel 'nearer to him at that first moment of seeing her than [he] ever had been before or ever [has] been since' (p 167) being merely a chimera, the pursuit of which allows the narrator an identity relationship with Jeffrey Aspern. Reinforced in this component of the narrative is a burgeoning awareness on the part of the reader that this mediator, for all his urbanity and ostensible penetration into the motives and/or psychic make-up of his 'interlocutresses' or, for that matter, himself, decidedly lacks self-knowledge. To the degree that such knowledge is wanting on his part, it is supplied by the indices which signal the epistemically primary 'world'; that which endows the reader/receiver with a position of supremacy vis-a-vis the characters and events of the ( immanent ) second-order narrative transmission.

Several of Goodman's 'ways of worldmaking' combine in the interlocking of the mercenary and Romantic motifs in this narrative. In that they comprise structurally the relationship of parts to a whole, they can be seen to provide evidence for his composition and decomposition. As motifs, the elements that they comprise are indeed

weighted, providing the narrator with moments of emphasis and foreshadowing that will play a significant part in the structure of the entire narrative transmission. Their ordering, too, as component parts of the story's plot can be seen to contribute to the making not only of the homodiegetic narrator's world, but also that of the immanent narrator. Disjunctions in the reception of these motifs that suggest one 'reading' by the homodiegetic narrator, and another by the immanent narrator, and by extension, entail therefore the existence of two discrete narrative situations, occur frequently once the ostensible narrator as a touchstone for the judgements in his discourse is perceived to be fallible. His apparent 'self-knowledge' is particularly vulnerable to a radical recasting by the immanent narrator in the resolution of the Romantic motif with translational indices scattered through the various strata of the narrative transmission but deriving chiefly from their coalescing around the interaction between the characters.

When the editor/mediator has gained, by such devious means as he deemed it necessary to deploy, access to the garden and the rooms which might make it possible for him to wrest by deception the papers that provide his quest with its grail, and has, moreover, attempted to ingratiate himself with the niece in his efforts to achieve his goal, there is a return to a contemplation of the raison d'être for his presence. In one respect he remains consistent and

to a degree, at least, 'honourable': he fulfils his promise to 'smother the house in flowers': p 182 ( the martial imagery emerging - significantly - in this section of the discourse in such phrases as: 'batter the old women with lilies' and ' bombard their citadel with roses':p 182.) It is especially illuminating in that at this point in the narrative, having placed it in the Romantic motif, the indices of earlier episodes find a resolution that had earlier been prefigured. What keeps him patient in his long drawn-out seige of the Bordereau 'citadel' is Aspern's 'spirit':

... the revived immortal face - in which all his genius shone - of the great poet who was my prompter. I had invoked him and he had come; he hovered before me half the time; it was as if his bright ghost had returned to earth to tell me that he regarded the affair as his own no less than mine and that we should see it fraternally, cheerfully to a conclusion.

(pp 180-181)

Certainly, the point of the presentation in this extract is to establish the 'fraternity' of the narrator and Aspern. He regards

...his eccentric private errand [as] a

part of the general romance and the general glory - I felt even a mystic companionship, a moral fraternity with all those who in the past had been in the service of art. They had worked for beauty, for a devotion; and what else was I doing?

(p 181)

Their identity-relationship is subjectively experienced by the editor/narrator, but that it is a moral one must be seriously questioned by the reader/receiver. By his own admission, the narrator has practised deception on the two old ladies, and moreover, has cynically embarked upon a path that will win him the trust and confidence of the vulnerable niece ( he describes her, himself, as 'of a yielding nature and capable of doing almost anything to please a person who was kind to her' : p 208 ). In his treatment of Miss Tita there is an obvious parallel with the way Aspern had "served" Juliana: the discrepancy lies in the narrator's judgement of himself as - like Aspern and the Romantic poets with whom he is aligned - 'work[ing] for beauty, for a devotion'. The 'moral fraternity' to which he aspires is rendered suspect by the disjunctions in his observations upon his own actions which he would elevate to the level of the sublime, and the immanent narrator's projection of his judgements as reprehensibly self-serving. In moral terms, the immanent narrator makes it clear, the mediator can not

claim that the end justifies the means. A corollary to this 'judgement' which emanates from the second-order discourse, is that the question of Romanticism with its egocentric focus upon the individual, is highlighted. The discourse of the homodiegetic mediator is thus reconstituted as emanating from a second-order narrative situation, but one which - as we have seen - has epistemic precedence permitting, as it does, an encompassing vantage point for the reader/receiver.

The reliability question does not of course end there: indeed the Romantic motif raises another problem. The mediator's attempt at a fusion of the identities of himself and Aspern in their pursuit of beauty is undermined at that point in the narrative where he presents an account of Aspern which places him in the tradition of the American Adam; of a time and place

when our native land was nude and crude  
and provincial, when the famous "atmos-  
phere" it is supposed to lack was not  
even missed, when literature was lonely  
there and art and form almost impossible,  
he had found means to live and write  
like one of the first; to be free and general  
and not at all afraid; to feel, understand,  
and express everything.

(p 186)



The gulf that separates Aspern and his biographer is unequivocally there. In the matter of their treatment of women, they exhibit similarities but in the profounder realm of morality and art and the relationship of the one to the other, the narrator seems confused and is manifestly wrong in his judgement that their 'fraternal' link is a shared moral enterprise. The means that he employs to gain the Aspern papers from Juliana can in no way, as I indicated above, find moral justification. The narrator of this discourse, for all his apparent sophisticated urbanity and penetrating insight, is severely limited, and it is this full realisation on the part of the reader/receiver of the extent and depth of his self-deception ( which James's narrative patterning has kept partially concealed from the tale's inception ) that is to be found in the resolution of the discourse(s) that emanate contrapuntally from the editor and the immanent narrator. The extent and nature of his self-deception becomes especially clear in the conclusion of the mercenary motif which has, at its emotional ( and indexical ) centre, the emergent character of Miss Tita.

After he has established himself in the villa of the Misses Bordereau, three months elapse without any contact with them, time spent by the narrator, consciously, even voyeuristically watching for the two old ladies who appear just as consciously to be avoiding him: 'In these windows no sign of life ever appeared; it was as if, for fear of my catching a glimpse of them, the two ladies passed their days

in the dark.' (p.182). Determined that they must therefore have something 'to conceal', and supremely inconscient of the index this provides to his own behaviour ( which he does not judge harshly, but merely rationalises as an editor's need to discover 'esoteric knowledge': p 181 ), the narrator presents his experience of the peculiar absence of the women, using images that play with the artful linking of structural features ( the windows ) and 'seeing' in a manner that foregrounds, again, the mediator's ability to discern and assess acutely:

          Their motionless shutters became as expressive as eyes consciously closed, and I took comfort in thinking that at all events though invisible themselves they saw me between the lashes.

(p 182)

He comes across Miss Tita in his bower one summer night in July and sets in motion the full force of his charm in order to win her to his side. The subsequent encounters between them mark a gradual, but inevitable re-alignment on her part with his interests, although she experiences a great deal of distress ( noted by the mediator but ignored as he serves his own interests ). A curiously disingenuous comment from him provides a pointer to his capacity for self-deception, though, and comes after he has requested her 'to have faith':

I could not say more, though I should have liked to, as I saw that I only mystified her; for I had no wish to have it on my conscience that I might pass for having made love to her. Nothing less should I have seemed to do had I continued to beg a lady to "believe in me" in an Italian garden on a midsummer night. There was some merit in my scruples, for Miss Tita lingered and lingered:

(p 194)

To some extent the narrator's crudely manipulative intention to 'make love to the niece' (p 161) is modified by this apparent sensitivity to her feelings, but his grand plan to acquire the documents with Tita's assistance is better served by this discretion: he can, in fact deceive himself ( which he does ) into believing that his conscience is clear, by just such a hesitation, carefully planned and executed in the broader interests of his campaign. His manipulative approach to this woman ( whose 'simple solemnity': p 194 and 'shy impatience [ like that ] of a child': p 204, reinforce reception of her character as vulnerable in the extreme ) is consciously contrived: however, the excessive cruelty of his behaviour toward her is not a given in the first-order discourse but is, rather, an exemplification, arising out of those indices which suggest a recasting of the homodiegetic narrator's

judgements in a mould shaped by the immanent narrative situation.

What the narrator regards as 'this last indiscretion. I think it was the worst thing I did' (p 231), that is his attempt to burgle Miss Bordereau's secretary on the night she is taken deathly ill, reveals his appalling insensitivity. In the moral universe projected by the dual narrative process of this story, his manipulation and rejection, finally, of Tita Bordereau is the 'worst thing' he does. His peculiarly impressionistic subjectivism is capable - briefly - of transfiguring her, but by this juncture in the narrative, his perceptions are being wholly reconstituted by the translational indices, so that the epiphany-like experience he goes through after her proposal of marriage ( her own strategem to permit her a morally acceptable way of giving him the Aspern papers - 'Anything that is mine - would be yours, and you could do what you like. I couldn't prevent you - and you would have no responsibility': p 244 ) is reworked by the reader/receiver as just one further rationalisation on his part of his modus operandi in acquiring the papers:

...as I came into the room I saw that she had drawn this inference [ that he declined her proposal of marriage], but I also saw something which had not been in my forecast. Poor Miss Tita's sense of her failure had

produced an extraordinary alteration in her, but I had been too full of my literary concupiscence to think of that. Now I perceived it; I can scarcely tell how it startled me. She stood in the middle of the room with a face of mildness bent upon me, and her look of forgiveness, of absolution, made her angelic. It beautified her; she was younger; she was not a ridiculous old woman. This optical trick gave her a sort of phantasmagoric brightness, and while I was still the victim of it I heard a whisper somewhere in the depths of my conscience: "Why not, after all - why not?" It seemed to me I was ready to pay the price.

(p 250)

His powers of self-deception reach hallucinatory levels with the prize so nearly within his grasp. However, the reader/receiver is by this stage fully aware ( as a result of the accretion of indices that corroborate a reading of this narrator as the victim of his subjectively biased or distorted impressions ) that the attempt to objectify his experience in no way alters its nature. The second-order discourse reconstitutes his actions as those of a cruel man, his almost beatific experience in his last encounter with her as, rather, a subjective extension of his obsessive

greed to acquire the Aspern papers. The editor/mediator exits from his discourse in the ostensibly mercenary mode he ( consciously ) established in part 1, but his attempt to assuage his conscience by means of a financial transaction - which works for him - leaves the reader further attuned to his loss of epistemic status in this narrative; for he is unaware that his consciousness carries the strictures and limitations of unreliability, extending from the presentational process, where, in the final analysis, he performs only a limited act of narrative transmission, to the presented world, where his perceptions and observations, so apparently astute in the opening pages of the story, are gradually eroded in the process that reveals the authoritative emergence of the second-order discourse, that is, the immanent narrative situation.

The final utterance of the editor/mediator reveals his shallow insensitivity in that, having destroyed the hopes of Miss Tita Bordereau, and indeed her existence as a woman, his own concerns remain the limited and obsessive ones of our earliest encounter with him ( now revealed in all their tawdriness ):

I wrote to her that I had sold the picture, but I admitted to Mrs Prest, at the time ( I met her in London, in the autumn ), that it hangs above my writing table. When I look at it my chagrin at the loss of the letters becomes

almost intolerable.

(p 251)

The depth of insight of which he seemed manifestly capable in part 1 of this novella is clearly absent in these final paragraphs. The editor-narrator's judgements are superseded by those of the immanent narrator, with the emergence as a structural feature of the former's ignorance of his motive functioning as a complex index to the existence of the second-order, epistemically primary, 'world'. Henry James, in his endeavour to render fictional 'reality' in the modernist mode, has written a narrative which, pre-eminently, achieves the implicit goal of the immanent mode: the subtle evocation, by means of the inversion of the conventional relationship between the mediator and the hypostatized reader, of not one presented world, but two: a technique which, as has been demonstrated in the last three chapters, may form one of the most fascinating means of rendering irony in narrative. In the conclusion I suggest something of the potential of this technique - as I have explicated it in this thesis - for achieving a fuller understanding of the structures of irony: and I relate the insights drawn from the analysis of immanent narration to some of the other primary modes of narration that Stanzel (1955) discerned in his earliest work in the field.

## CONCLUSION

Henry James, despite his masterful control of the heights of ironic subtlety, was by no means the only writer of stature to experiment with the immanent mode. A similar degree of profundity and technical sophistication is to be found, for example, in Ford Madox Ford's The Good Soldier (1915). Like the editor-narrator of The Aspern Papers, the narrator here presents in the first instance as insightful, sensitive and deeply moral. However, fissures in this carefully constructed, apparent urbanity appear, in retrospect, to the alert reader/receiver as early as p 69 where, speaking of his wife, he says:

For I hate Florence. I hate Florence with such a hatred that I would not spare her an eternity of loneliness.

Later, however, on p 113, he comments:

From that day to this I have never given her another thought; I have not bestowed upon her so much as a sigh. ...She just went completely out of existence, like yesterday's paper.



It is in telling ( and ironic ) juxtapositions of this kind, though placed 44 pages apart, that indices to a deeper personal corruption than he is aware of are to be found. When the intelligent mind is shown to be deceiving itself - as Ford Madox Ford makes clear - the reader/receiver is treated to the experience of the full complexity of the stratagems employed in a man's attempt to hide from his own gaze.

Narratives which bear testimony to the presence of an immanent voice are to be found experiencing their hey-day in the so-called modernist period. It is certainly no accident that novels and short stories that focussed upon the opacities and ambiguities of experience should be written just when critical debate in the domain of the Anglo-American ( objective ) New Criticism should itself be addressing the questions raised by concepts such as irony, and constructs inherent in the internal patternings of literary works. Their approach, however, was usually merely descriptive, though they often used the concept of irony as a term central to their technical vocabulary. They did not really explore ( or indeed adequately account for ) the complex mechanics that underly its affective achievement. Perhaps in a community where unanimity of sensibility obtains, such mere pointers to ironic structures as form the core of so many of the analyses undertaken within the ambit of New Criticism may suffice. In an age, though, of both

greater cultural disintegration and diversity more than such pointers is required. Finally, a more analytic audience demands that, under pressure, the arguments that support the postulation of an ironic presence be advanced.

Although I have been concerned with homodiegetic narrative here, tempting possibilities exist for the application of my theoretical model to other forms of narrative transmission. Some third person ( figural ) narrative situations ( What Maisie Knew springs to mind), especially where the focaliser is a child or one that suffers from some intellectual or social limitation like those explored in chapters 4,5 and 6, may also benefit from explication of their internal structures in terms of the theory of the immanent voice.

Finally, if my research over the last few years has revealed anything, it is that literary criticism can no longer in conscience ignore the profound advances made in the philosophy of language. The re-emergence of such an attractive figure as Renaissance man seems to be the concomitant of what academic bureaucracy refers to as the need for greater inter-disciplinary co-operation. The solipsism that threatened to engulf the Cartesian mind of modern man has transpired in the twentieth century's realisation that the human life form, itself, is an essentially solipsistic one. If, however, we recall the classical assertion that 'man is the measure of all things',

surely, then, the relativism of the age may be regarded as profoundly less disturbing to the degree that we recognise our essential community.

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