

NARRATIVE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LITERARY READER:
A STUDY OF NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES THROUGH A CONSIDERATION
OF THE WORKS OF JANE GARDAM

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION IN
THE CENTRE FOR EDUCATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

1984

*graduating
1985*

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INTRODUCTION

This study considers a range of the techniques of narrative used in modern literature for children. The central focus is on those aspects of narrative which present difficulty for the young reader. These include point of view, narrative structure, irony and the sense of ending, aspects which may, singly or in combination, be ignored by the teacher. In order to give a clear basis for the study of these aspects the fiction of Jane Gardam has been selected as a representative of current approaches to narrative in literature for the young. Her work is used as illustrative of both the range and difficulties of narrative in current children's literature. The analysis leads to a discussion of some of the ways in which a teacher can mediate a book with a child in order to help him become a more sensitive and discerning reader, one who can both add to a reading repertoire and select from it wisely, so that he is neither a victim of the story nor a destructive critic unappreciative of the storyteller's art or the issues embedded in a narrative; a reader with aesthetic appreciation and critical discrimination in a balance that allows him conscious freedom; a reader who is able to understand more fully how he makes sense of both fiction and life.

CHAPTER 1

THE IMPORTANCE OF NARRATIVE FOR TEACHERS AND LEARNERS

Intention of the Study

It is my intention in this study to investigate some of the demands that narrative technique places on young readers, particularly those readers who have got beyond simple story pattern and are ready for something more complex. This development, if it occurs, for most children typically begins in the late primary school and continues through their secondary schooling. I want to suggest some methods which the teacher could use to help the children enter books with complex narratives and to be able to do the kind of reading the books require. The kind of reading required is affected by aspects of form, genre and narrative techniques. To engage with a text, to gain meaning from it and to interpret it adequately requires of the reader some understanding of the narrative technique used. Without such understanding the reader cannot co-operate with the text and enter the story. More importantly, he cannot become the type of literary reader demanded by the text.

There have been considerable changes in the ways that authors writing for the late primary and early adolescent readers structure their narratives. There may be any number of reasons for this but an examination of the prize winning authors in Britain, the United States of America and Australia in the last twenty years will confirm this claim. One of the authors who has used a wide range of narrative techniques in writing books for young readers is Jane Gardam. While she may not use all the recently evolved narrative techniques, her work provides a representative sample. I have chosen to focus my discussion of narrative

technique and the difficulty it poses for young readers on an examination of Jane Gardam's work.

Most children can be helped to engage with complex narratives which require them to stay alert to language, events, character, plot and enigmatic endings. The novels of Alan Garner, for example, require the reader to be highly attentive, aware of the nuances of language, social experience, shared human expectations and the interaction of human fears, hopes and desire for fulfilled love. The reader of this kind of work must be willing to review, in an ongoing manner, his interpretation of the story as he reads. He needs to proceed by making meanings, which he can accept or reject as he reads.

The young reader needs to enter into the 'dynamic process of self-correction' all good readers go through constantly as they read, becoming open to the way 'meaning gathers meaning' like a giant snow ball. Good readers at any age live their way through a novel moment by moment, each moment correcting all previous moments and shaping the way for each moment that follows.

(Evans, 1981)

In order to be able to enter into the process of self-correction so important in reading, the young reader usually needs help to cope with the narrative techniques used by an author. This help must be given with care and sensitivity. To describe the narrative techniques and expect the child to learn them abstractly is not what is required. The act of reading is a complex activity because the reader must know how to organize his memory, reason, emotions, imagination, indeed, his consciousness, in order to interpret a story. He must also be able to disengage from the story so that his powers of aesthetic appreciation and critical discrimination are developed. It is not a matter of the young reader

knowing about narrative techniques, it is much more a matter of him being able to combine with the works in using the narrative techniques to recreate the story and the implied values and meanings embedded in it.

The main aspects of narrative upon which I intend to focus are point of view, structure, irony and the endings because these are some of the major aspects which appear to be perplexing to many readers. The complex use of these aspects leaves gaps which the reader has to fill in order to make an intelligible coherence of the story. Developing the ability to cope with such demands imposed by the narrative is an important intellectual development which needs the challenge of a complex story for its growth.

Complicated Narrative and the Growth of Self-Awareness

An increased ability to engage with authors who use complicated narrative techniques helps the children to make more complex stories about their own living. This should provide coherent models for further personal understanding. Coping with the complex demands of story not only increases the reader's enjoyment of literature, it also aids in intellectual and interpretative development. Not that the story and the way that it is told can be easily separated, so intimately are they inter-connected, but for the purposes of this study it is important to look at some of the devices the authors deliberately use to convey their stories and to engage the reader's attention.

In 1975 the importance of literature in the education of the child was stated, however briefly, in A Language for Life.

Literature brings the child into an encounter with language in its most complex forms. Through these complexities are presented the thoughts, experiences and feelings of people who exist outside and beyond the reader's daily awareness. The process of bringing them within that circle of consciousness is where the greatest value of literature lies.

(Bullock, 1975, 125)

To be able to cope with the narrative form demands much of the child and the more complex the narrative the more demanding it is.

Being able to follow a story requires a sense of logical sequences of causality, problem solving, analysing events and situations, forming hypotheses, and reformulating them in the light of further knowledge and so on. Learning the conventions of increasingly sophisticated story forms is learning such intellectual skills.

(Egan, 1979, 192)

Not only is the child's gradual mastery of complex and sophisticated story forms an indication of his literary and intellectual development however, his interest in story is much more basic than that. The ability to make and to receive stories is one of the most important aspects of the human mind. We are all by nature story tellers, and children are no exception.

In her emphasis on the importance of story, Barbara Hardy says, '... narrative is a primary act of mind transferred to art from life.

The novel merely heightens, isolates and analyses the narrative motions of the human consciousness' (Hardy, 1977, 12). She argues that narrative is a basic way of organizing human experience and that the art of the novelist or story teller is to select and heighten those aspects of human life considered worth attention. More importantly the art of the story teller arises out of what most of us do all the time as we remember, observe, dream or plan. The stories we tell ourselves are not usually,

or not obviously, complex. The satisfaction we gain can come from the selection of those events from the past whose contemplation can help alleviate anxiety or give us pleasure to ponder. Through story we can link future to the past. The stories we tell ourselves can give coherence to our world of human and social relationships, so too can the stories we hear. The oral world of infancy is a limited one which relies to a great extent on the use of clichés.

An oral culture does not put its knowledge into mnemonic patterns: it thinks its thoughts in mnemonic patterns. There is no other way for it to proceed effectively. An oral culture does not merely have a quaint liking for proverbs or "sayings" of all sorts: it is absolutely dependent on them. Cliches constitute its thought. Constant repetition of the known is the major poetic exercise. Narrative, poetic or prose, tells old stories and tells them in formulaic style. The closer orators are to the purely oral tradition, the more their style, too, will be like the poets' and prose narrators' style, filled with common-places or formulas.

(Ong, 1967, 57-58)

It is through the increasing ability to tell and receive more complex stories that the human mind can develop the capacity to hold several viewpoints, to escape clichés of thought and culture, and, in a sense, to gain freedom of consciousness.

The stories we tell ourselves, the stories we hear and those we see have most important effects on the way we view ourselves and the world we live in. So, too, do the stories we read. Studies of children's reading interests (Whitehead, 1977) have suggested that children's favourite stories at different ages reflect the emotional conflicts and fantasies which concern them at the time. 'The child gets most enjoyment from those stories which say something to his condition and help him

resolve these inner conflicts' (Bullock, 1975, 125). For many of us, but especially for the child, life can be disjointed, incomprehensible and unpredicable. Literary fiction can provide insight into what another person is thinking and feeling. It can offer the opportunity to contemplate possible human experiences. It allows the reader to test his interpretative skill. And, despite the limiting patterns of some fictions, which may suggest expectations which cannot be fulfilled, or which restrict seriously the range of fulfilment which one can seek, for most of us there is something inherently satisfying in discovering that there are other people like oneself with the same joys, fears and preoccupations. Stories of all types can modulate one's conception of oneself and one's relationship to other people. They can modulate one's judgement about the physical world and about the goals and values of life. They influence the way one construes reality and thus, the development of 'self construal' (Ross, 1982, 167). They give one the models for making possible life narratives for one's own life.

Narrative and Awareness of Irony

To engage with a text which uses any or all of the methods of irony gives the young reader opportunities to notice the acts of interpretation. To interpret irony the skill of holding several defensible interpretations at once and the ability to be able to adjudicate among the interpretations is crucial. The ironic text can also provide practice in seeking, examining and judging the interpretations of others in a mode of discourse which can be literary and moral. The play of irony, while being something which requires alertness and background on the reader's part, depends upon the reader knowing that there is yet another level of human

engagement and to be aware how it is signalled in speech and print. After all, skilled readers may miss these signals or see signals where none exist. To be aware of the possibility of irony is to be changed in some crucial way, one listens, reads and realizes in a way which recognizes that the world or events may not be what they appear. One becomes more sensitive, imaginatively seeking to know the kinds of atmosphere, character and situation one is interpreting. One becomes more aware of the instability, the insecurity of one's interpretations. One becomes accustomed to reviewing one's judgements. However, to be aware of irony is to risk the danger of disengagement from commitment or from life itself. The author's judgement is always present no matter how much he tries to disguise it. Even where there is no omniscient author there is created 'an implicit picture of an author who stands behind the scenes, whether as stage manager, as puppeteer, or as an indifferent God, silently paring his finger nails' (Booth, 1975, 151). This author is the implied author, the person who controls the presentation of the events of the story and who implicitly invites the reader to share his judgements.

The Sense of Ending and the Reader's Expectations

Children report (Whitehead, 1977, 214) that they like novels which give them the satisfaction of contemplating possible human experiences. The stories they enjoy are those which allow them to enter imaginatively and recreate the world offered by the author, at times observing that world as a spectator and at other times, to be involved intellectually and emotionally within that world. Young children, perhaps for longer than many teachers think, seem to enjoy novels where the storyline is obvious, 'the presentation vivid and dramatic, the characters relatively unsubtle

and [where] virtue triumphs in an ending which places everyone where he should be' (Bullock, 1975, 125). For most children, indeed for many adults, it is important that the story orders itself coherently and ends appropriately. The author by 'provision of an end makes possible a satisfying consonance with the origins with the middle'. (Kermode, 1977, 17).

Some fictions offer more complex possibilities than a 'happily ever after' ending. All stories must stop but the point at which they stop may suggest something far more profound than a simple stopping. It is important to reflect on why an author stops where he does. The significance of the ending must be considered, for any ending indicates something of the author's view of reality, of art, of the reader. Like literary irony, the sequencing of events and the way the story ends distances the reader from the action, while at the same time it engages him at the reflective level. Because both require the reader to reflect on human life and human action, perhaps aesthetic appreciation and critical discrimination may not be so widely apart.

It may be that most people show a preference for stories with clear, simple and unsubtle methods of story telling. However, increasingly complex stories offer the opportunity for intellectual, aesthetic and emotional development in the young reader. In their responses to story children show a pattern of development. (Applebee, 1978). This development can be seen both in their response to the stories they hear and see and in the type of stories they create for and about themselves. Obviously there is a connection between the two, though children are capable of understanding stories much more complex than those they are capable of telling and writing. They are also capable of

intelligently enjoying stories much more complex than they might select to read on their own.

Children's Early Competence with Narrative

I am interested in the growth and development in the engagement with, and the response to, the stories the children read in order to help them experience the intelligent pleasure of interpreting a complicated text. Learning to read is a developmental process and the role of the teacher in assisting the development of a literary reader is a crucial one. All children need help to read responsively and intelligently. They need to be encouraged to ask questions of the text and to use their framework of experience to interpret the text and judge those interpretations. Most children need help to engage actively in the text, to project, anticipate, make suppositions and perhaps speculate on alternative outcomes. While the role of the teacher is crucial for the child's growth in reading, it is particularly significant in helping a child learn how to read complicated narratives from which he may develop new capacities in interpretation and judgement. The teacher can also provide for the children practice in the performance of literature.

One fact which becomes increasingly evident is the very great extent to which success lies in the contribution of the teacher. It is true in the initial acquisition of reading; it is true in the development of the reading habit; it is true in the growth of discernment.

(Bullock, 1975, 126)

And it is the growth of discernment which must be one of the chief characteristics of the literary reader.

Reader Engagement, Response and Narrative Technique

If the teacher's role is so important in mediating literature for the child, then, because of the delicate nature of the operation, his skill and knowledge play an extremely important part. The teacher needs to have 'an extensive knowledge of fiction appropriate for the various needs and levels of reading ability of his pupil' (Bullock, 1975, 126). The way the teacher mediates the book for the child exerts a considerable influence both on what is read and how it is read. 'Teacher influence and book provision' (Bullock, 1975, 126) are the two key factors in the improvement in reading in both the junior and secondary years of schooling.

If a young reader finds that he cannot interpret a book in such a way that his sympathies are engaged and his antipathies aroused, he will not be able to engage in the text in an active way. If he is unable to work out what is happening at the literal level of the story then he will be unable to project and anticipate, 'to propound a number of suppositions' (Holloway, 1979, 3). He will not become aware of possible ironies and humour in language and story or speculate with enjoyment on possible outcomes. If he does not ask himself questions, if he does not speculate on consequence or expect certain outcomes or conclusions then a great deal of the sources of full satisfaction will be denied him.

In order to explore the relation of fiction, interpretation and the nature of reality, there has been a trend in recent literature to tell stories in increasingly complex and subtle ways. The adult novels of John Fowles, Saul Bellow, Iris Murdoch, David Lodge and David Malouf for instance admirably illustrate this trend. The complex narrative

techniques of their novels reflect the complexity of the reality they are attempting to convey. Similar techniques are also being used by many of the children's novelists. Helen Cresswell, William Mayne, Ivan Southall and Jane Gardam all use a range of narrative techniques which convey a complex and questioning view of reality. Engagement with such literature provides a means of learning the subtleties and complexities of reality. Such complex literature places great demands on the agility and the tenacity of the reader. Most young readers need help to enter these books and to understand what is demanded of them if they are to be the sort of reader the book invites.

A child's response to such books will depend partly on his experience of books, his experience of life and his developmental level, (Applebee, 1978) and partly on the sensitivity with which a teacher can help him. For teachers who are responsible for mediating literature with children a knowledge of the range of possible narrative techniques and the demands of these on the young reader is helpful. This knowledge, when combined with an understanding of the child and his reading and writing interests, should help the teacher devise ways of assisting the child to read more alertly.

Narrative is a matter worthy of attention not only in literature but in language development and consequently in the ways the individual or society makes sense of its past, present and future. Literature for the young is justified in a number of ways as far as its inclusion in schooling is concerned. It is how narrative adjusts the rhetorical relationship between author and reader which is significant. This relationship gives the individual, the child, the opportunity, the models and the encouragement to learn a great deal about how to make sense of

experience of both the world and himself.

Narrative has been a matter of attention in recent studies of literature (Mitchell, 1980). It has also been the concern of a number of recent writers for the young as they explore ways of sharing literary form. Such attention and exploration rightly belongs to the study of a rhetoric of children's fiction. A rhetoric, if developed, would allow the teacher of the young to see where the young reader needs help with literary form beyond a concern for syntax, vocabulary and topic only. It would also provide the teacher with ways of justifying a literature program and a particular author or title's inclusion in such a program.

Organization of the Study

My study seeks, therefore, to look at narrative as part of a general matter in education. It seeks to look at narrative technique and the demands that technique places on a reader with a consideration of a reader's developing repertoire. It examines the ways in which, taking narrative technique as a central issue in a rhetoric of children's fiction, teachers may plan and prepare to develop individual repertoires.

The study would be an impossibly large one beyond the scope of the requirements laid down, if it were not restricted. The initial restriction has been to focus upon the work of a suitable author writing for the young in recent years.

The author chosen is Jane Gardam who, as it will be shown, uses a number of narrative techniques and has expressed her interest in exploring

and conducting literary experiments into form. The study looks at the techniques she has used. It considers the demands these place upon a reader and then attempts to show how a teacher may take both the techniques and demands into consideration in preparing to work with adolescent readers.

Though the study focuses upon the work of Jane Gardam, it is presumed that sufficient indication is given so that the considerations articulated may be applied practically and beneficially beyond the work of one writer.

CHAPTER 2

THE NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES OF JANE GARDAM

I have selected the children's fiction of Jane Gardam as illustrative of both the range and the difficulties of narrative in current children's fiction for several reasons, not the least being the fact that she is an admired and respected author. Of her prose Fred Inglis says, 'Jane Gardam steps straight through the conventions of writing for the young teenager . . . and into the literary references with which she seeks to entice a thirteen year old schoolgirl reader into English Literature' (1981, 287). He continues, 'a punchcard summary can tell us little about Mrs Gardam's strictly literary capacity to push her imagination well beyond the limits of University English' (1981, 288). And, as a tribute to her ability to handle conversation, he observes that, 'he can recreate the rambling, directionless lines of such conversation with the fidelity of Harold Pinter, and the much more satisfactory humour of Alan Galton, at the same time give the scene its historical location in a beleaguered, incoherently, patriotic England' (1981, 289).

It is not only because of the respect and admiration that critics like Fred Inglis (1981) have for the work of Jane Gardam that I have selected her. Her books, because of their diversity and complexity, lend themselves to an analysis of narrative and to speculation as to the demands they place on a young reader. She has made some significant experiments in technique of which she tersely comments, 'What have I learned in three books? Not much. Mostly about my limitations. A little about form, perhaps - a few experiments. I think that it may be in form and structure that the twentieth century so called "children's book" might

be in advance of the rest' (Gardam, 1975, 80). Gardam is an aware writer, one who knows what is occurring in literature generally in the twentieth century.

Her books are very fine indeed. They are deeply moving and original, dealing with issues not often encountered in children's fiction but only in life. They are significant because of their form. The delight in reading them is in making the connections, filling the gaps she leaves, perceiving the ironies of both form and language, trying to work out what the narrator wants the reader to think and what the author thinks of the narrator, trying to put together the myriad, minute pieces of a complex jigsaw offered to us by the author in order to make a coherent picture.

Authors such as Jane Gardam indicate to the reader that there is the need to be aware of several levels of meaning, many of them implicit, and that many of these levels are at odds with each other. The reader is required to judge which level is significant. This indicates the importance of the nature of irony in the representation of life. So much of human experience is difficult to express directly and the work of Jane Gardam show how a writer can say so much by leaving so much implicit. Much of her irony leaves it to the good judgement of the reader. Her work allows both growing and mature readers to share a fiction which gives the developing literary reader the chance to look for the implicit. To be able to pay attention to what is said and not said, to what is explicit and implicit, is partially the result of culture and individual ability. The ability will not develop if the possibility, the need to go beyond the explicit, is not met. The work of Jane Gardam offers such possibilities. She delights in playing with language, with characters, with a character's

self awareness, in ways which encourage a reader to learn what is not directly said but only hinted at. Her books depend for their meaning on the reader noticing and searching for the implicit connections.

So far Jane Gardam has written only four books for older children, A Few Fair Days (1974), A Long Way from Verona (1976), The Summer after the Funeral, (1977) and Bilgewater (1979). She has written two for the younger child, Bridget and William (1981) and Horse (1982). In my description of her narrative art I intend to focus on the books for the older child because it is these which reveal the subtlety and complexity of her style and place great demands on the reader. Each one shows her distinctive style but each uses different narrative techniques. She obviously considers that the way a story is told is very important to the meaning conveyed and she is consciously aware of experimenting with technique.

Even a cursory glance at the titles of Jane Gardam's four books indicate to an alert reader that there is more to be interested in than the surface meanings. A Few Fair Days (1974) refers to a particularly delicious cake but it also suggests something about remembered days of childhood. A Long Way from Verona (1976), like the drama of Romeo and Juliet, is about love, sex, death and class, but because it is also about boredom and horror, it is a long way from the romantic excitement of the Verona of Romeo and Juliet, at least, to its heroine, Jessica. The Summer after the Funeral (1977) is not a season in which the heroine can recuperate after the shock of the death of her father. Bilgewater, the heroine of Bilgewater (1979), is so named because she is Bill's daughter, but the contraction seems so appropriate at first, at least to Bilgewater herself, with its connotations of the stagnant water which collects in the

bottom of a boat.

In commenting on the first book she tried to write, Jane Gardam said, 'In fact I would cut out a lot of things. There is a comforting school of thought or development in modern fiction which advocates that more and more should be cut out, refined, reduced, released into anarchy - and even form itself eventually abandoned' (1978, 491). All of this is done in order to capture the immediacy of living. She attempted to achieve this in her first book, A Few Fair Days (1974). This book sprang from 'the single image of a child very young, under five, alone on a beach' (Gardam, 1978, 492). She wanted to 'recreate the mystery of this time, the temporary freedom from fear and anxiety and the need for people which occurs every now and then in very early childhood' (Gardam, 1978, 492). In this book she attempted to capture that ongoing flow of experience by cutting out, refining and reducing much of what traditionally would have been included in a story for children. Her intention was to achieve her effects in 'bare words and clear colours' (Gardam, 1978, 492).

To capture the immediacy of life is extremely difficult because literature offers no immediacy at all. Its medium is language, so it is compromised by questions of word choice, syntax, narrative form, meaning and definition. For these reasons literature is always "belated". Language is full of gaps; the gaps between the word and the thing, between the words and the event, the insecurity that remains even when you have settled upon a word, the gap between the words and the system they inhabit. (Donoghue, 1982).

A FEW FAIR DAYS

Structure

A Few Fair Days (Gardam, 1974) is a volume of short stories, which may be read as a rather episodic or disjunctive novel. It is a collection of childhood memories, recollections of a little girl called Lucy, who lived in a small town by the sea in Yorkshire some years ago. Specifically, the 'Fair Days' (Gardam, 1974, 125) are cakes, beautifully light sponge cakes for which Jinnie Love had been famous for years. But symbolically the fair days are those exquisitely bright childhood memories, so difficult to erase from the mind, the days Lucy would never be able to forget as long as she lived. These memories are recreated vividly, almost as if they had never stopped happening. They have the quality which Penelope Lively catches in her remark, 'Remembering is like that. There's what you remember, and then there are the things that have never stopped happening because they are there always in your head' (1977, 8). The events Lucy remembers so clearly include the time she wandered off alone and met a strange, old woman on the beach, her explorations of an enormous, old, derelict house, nicknamed Dennis, the time she got up early to see the sunrise, the bewildering time when her mother was isolated with scarlet fever and, most disastrous of all, when she was commissioned by her mother to buy one of Jinni Love's Fair Days as a parting gift for her mother's elegant, fastidious friend.

Point of View

The point of view from which the stories are told is that of the

third person omniscient narrator. Wallace Hildick calls this narrative technique 'It Happened to Him' (Hildick, 1968, 15). He sees that the vividness which can be achieved by remaining close to one of the characters is one of the chief advantages, 'By sticking close to the 'he' or 'she' who is one of its principal characters and revealing everything as if it had passed through that person's consciousness, the author can make everything seem particularly vivid and immediate even though it is narrated in the past tense' (Hildick, 1968, 15). However, Hildick explains that there are several disadvantages of this method. He says that, 'what the method cannot do, however, if this immediacy is to be consistently maintained, is leave much more room for explanations . . . or, what is more important, for exploration of character' (Hildick, 1968, 16). Jane Gardam deliberately used this technique to advantage. She intended to cut out, refine and reduce much of what would have been included in a story for children. In doing so, she achieved that poignant sense of immediacy but she left much unsaid. As author, Jane Gardam does intervene occasionally. Indeed, it is sometimes difficult to know whether she is reflecting the events through her third person centre of consciousness or whether she is describing events from the omniscient author's point of view. The distance between the author and her centre of consciousness is not great. As author the memories presented are controlled by the narrator. The reader might ask the question of the third person narrator. How reliable are her assumptions about what a small child would think and feel? The reconstruction of memories is very difficult because memory is notoriously unreliable. Most of us remember what we want to remember and our memories are distorted by time. Penelope Lively captures this succinctly. 'Remembering is like that. There's what you know happened and what you think happened. And then there's the business that what you know happened isn't always what you remember.'

Things are fudged by time: years fuse together' (1977, 16). Reliable or not, the use of Lucy as a centre of consciousness certainly adds intensity to the telling and in this case the memories are conveyed with a naturalness and vividness which give the stories a charm. Many of the descriptions, though narrated in the past tense, have the vividness and immediacy which, as Wallace Hildick says, is one of the advantages of the use of the third person centre of consciousness (1968, 15).

Using the narrator as commentator, Jane Gardam provides the reader with facts which could not easily be learned otherwise. In the opening episode of the book the third person narrator gives us information about Lucy's aunts which Lucy could not possibly know. But because she describes the aunts in words Lucy herself might have used, it is difficult to distinguish authorial comment from the third person centre of consciousness.

Irony

Jane Gardam uses both verbal and situational irony in this book. Through her control of events and by very careful interpolation, the author invites the reader to share knowledge that the central character lacks. Such situational irony is evident in 'The Wonderful Day' (Gardam, 1974, 13). For instance, the author describes Phyllis, the maid as rather a frightening person. 'She was all skin and bone and had a wild old face and crashed about the furniture muttering to herself' (Gardam, 1974, 15). But the author reassuringly comments, 'Lucy wasn't frightened of her because she had known her all her life, but anyone else would have been frightened to death' (Gardam, 1974, 15).

Important in our judgement of what is fact, and what is not, are the authorial comments, those comments which the writer considers important for the reader and yet which could not be reflected legitimately through her centre of consciousness. Throughout A Few Fair Days (Gardam, 1974) the narrator provides us with information which Lucy could not possibly know. In describing the customs of a traditional Yorkshire afternoon tea party, for instance, the story teller provides the reader with a wealth of factual detail (Gardam, 1974, 13-14). Not everyone in Yorkshire has this special information, so the reader is left with the feeling that the comments are untainted with doubt and that it is a privilege to be allowed to share them. In fact, the author deliberately invites complicity, frequently using the word 'you' in the manner of the oral storyteller to include the reader. 'Of course some people will tell you that in Yorkshire you have ham and salad and tinned peaches for tea. But that is not true if the aunts are coming. Not true at all. It has been buns and bits since the Vikings' (Gardam, 1974, 24). In typical fashion the factual summary is concluded ironically.

A fact when given to us by the narrator is a very different thing from the same fact given to us by a fallible character in the story. So when Lucy decides to go out of the house alone and considers that it is the right thing to do, the reader must question the validity of her assumption.

'So Lucy went out. She hadn't even gone out alone before - but now it seemed the right thing to do' (Gardam, 1974, 14). And the reader has been well-prepared for this. Rejected by her mother who was involved in the final preparations for the tea party, by her father who was

shuffling about his pot plants and by Phyllis, the maid, who was crashing about the furniture, Lucy sees that she has no option. The reader cannot help but agree with her, knowing at the same time the inappropriateness of a small child roaming a beach by herself meeting strange people, getting drenched and muddying the church with her wet footprints.

So the reader is not entirely unprepared for Lucy's acceptance of the strange old lady on the beach who wore a man's cap back to front, pushed a cart, had only one eye and who happily told a nightmarish story of her grandad who found a dead sailor and cut a ring off his finger. The irony is underlined when the old lady says what all adults are afraid may happen to children when they are alone.

"'I could carry yer off w'me," she said' (Gardam, 1974, 18).

Fortunately, despite, perhaps because of, the warning growl of Lucy's accompanying dog, she adds "But I nivver would" (Gardam, 1974, 18). The meeting, far from being unhappy is in fact lucky. The old lady gives Lucy a collection of nanny-nuns, the luckiest things in the world, a fact affirmed by the three great aunts later in the day. So a potentially unfortunate encounter is transformed and the symbol of the meeting, the tiny shells, the nanny nuns, are kept by Lucy, preserved in a beautiful old needlebox, encrusted with painted honeysuckle, given to her as a memento of the visit of the great aunts. The author does not need to comment on the events because she has prepared the reader so well to interpret the irony.

It is in the same way that Lucy's meeting with the great aunts is handled. The three old ladies are expected from the beginning of the story. 'Grand aunts were coming to tea' (Gardam, 1974, 13). They are

hardly 'grand' as it turns out. Rather 'They were very small old ladies with white hair, little button boots and high round collars like soldiers, but with little frills around the top' (Gardam, 1974, 21). In fact Lucy thinks them rather queer. She does not acknowledge them as the 'grand aunts', nor do they acknowledge that she is their niece, Lucy, and yet it is obvious to the reader. The irony and the gentle humour is especially delightful when the old ladies tell Lucy that they are going to have tea with their 'great niece' and they all go off together to be faced with the spectacle of panic.

Equally ironic and perhaps more skilfully structured is the story entitled, 'One of Jinnie Love's Fair Days' (Gardam, 1974, 121). Even the title has its ironic implications, the day, though perhaps a fair one for the frail Jinnie Love is hardly a fair day for Lucy. It is a memorable one, however. It all begins because Lucy's mother wants to give her friend, Mrs Binge-Benson a farewell present. Despite Mrs Binge-Benson's fastidiousness about food, "'I'm afraid I couldn't quite manage the grapefruit - just a tiny bit acid you know. And so sweet of you to send up an egg. I really should have said "don't" but I thought you remembered. I think it's just the idea of an egg . . . in the early morning don't you think? The runniness of it? No, I think the stickiness. I'm one of these unfortunate people who are sensitive to stickiness . . . The coffee . . . was delicious . . . Tell me, dear, do you never use beans? I must send you some beans from my heavenly coffee man in London. You'll feel you have never tasted coffee before"' (Gardam, 1974, 124-125), Lucy's mother decides to give her a cake and Lucy and her friend, Mary, are despatched to get it. An ominous note is struck when Mary, discovering that Mrs Binge-Benson is not leaving immediately, asks, "'Well, we needn't go straight back then?'" (Gardam, 1974, 126).

They run to the beach, they roll in the sand, Lucy suggests licking the cake but Mary has a better idea and wants to poison it. When they discover a lovely pile of seaweed, 'A great slithery oily-green and toffee-coloured heap . . . Wet, rich, polished . . . nicely coiled' (Gardam, 1974, 128-130) they decide to place the cake on it to give it a whiff of dead fish which clung to the weed. They remove it from its box, placing it carefully on its little shrine, doing a little dance around it and chanting magic incantations. Just as they are about to go Lucy trips over and puts her fist right through the middle of Jinnie Love's Fair Day. To escape from their dilemma takes all their ingenuity. The remains of the squashed cake has to be scooped from sand, seaweed and dead fish and replaced in the box. They have to relinquish Lucy's pocket money and buy another cake. They have to get rid of the ruined cake which they eventually decide to leave in the church because Lucy's mother has said, "Leave all your sins and troubles in church" (Gardam, 1974, 134) and the cake, though not a sin, is arguably a trouble. Lucy reverently leaves the box on the altar beneath the cross, bowing ostentatiously as she does so. Mrs Binge-Benson appears delighted with her gift, "My dear, my dear, it's not? NOT one of Jinnie Thingummy's Fair Days? Oh, how marvellous! No, I won't open it now. I'll keep it to gloat over at Sheffield Terrace. Darling, you are brilliant - I've been telling everyone for years about these marvellous cakes" (Gardam, 1974, 135). As Mrs Binge-Benson is driven south, she leans exhaustedly back on her fawn car cushion closing her eyes. The narrator tells us, 'After a minute she opened her eyes and looked at the cake box. "What a strange smell of fish," said she' (Gardam, 1974, 136). No more is said. The author has conveyed by her structuring of the events, careful control of the dialogue and skilful use of authorial comment, the dramatic irony and the humour leaving the reader

to decide what exactly occurred.

The collection of childhood memories, episodes in a larger story, does not have the obviously cohesive texture of many novels. The sequence of the stories is determined by Lucy's growth. It begins with her earliest memories and concludes when she is older. Each of the stories is independent but there is a coherence across the collection. It is not only the existence of Lucy, her family and friends, the sense of family, scenes in a life which help to unite the stories, explicit but subtle connections are made within the stories themselves, forging links. Lucy's grandmother and her old grand aunts turn up in many of the stories. For example in the first story the reader is told that the 'Grand aunts were coming to tea' (Gardam, 1974, 13). We learn more about the importance of the aunts in the second story, 'Lucy was born with a lot of aunts. They came in all sizes - fat ones, thin ones, long ones, round ones' (Gardam, 1974, 27). Auntie Kitty, the sensitive, unusual, eccentric aunt is also introduced. All the aunts were convinced that on the whole 'one kept to one's own fireside' (Gardam, 1974, 28) that is, all except Auntie Kitty who believed in the opposite. But it is Auntie Kitty who returns in the nick of time to take the bewildered Lucy to see her mother in the fever house to convince her of her mother's continued existence. It is Aunt Fanny and Aunt Bea who tell Lucy about the ship in the grass (Gardam, 1974, 51). It is the same old aunts who rehabilitate the strange Mr Crossley (Gardam, 1974, 57). And in the story called 'Jake's Queed' (Gardam, 1974, 139) there is a brief mention of Auntie Kitty who had once given Lucy a lovely long rope (Gardam, 1974, 145). In two of the stories Lucy visits her grandmother at Thornby End, high in the rolling hills with a magnificent view. Lucy's grandmother is beautiful, 'a tiny old lady hardly bigger than Lucy, but she was very perfect' (Gardam, 1974, 81) perfect that is

until she dyes her hair green (Gardam, 1974, 84) perfect until she takes a cross and ailing Lucy to meet a witch (Gardam, 1974, 91).

There is one final subtle link between the stories which helps to show the passing of time. As a little girl in the first story Lucy went off by herself to the beach causing great consternation. As an older, presumably more responsible child, she is trusted to buy a cake for her mother's parting guest. On the way home she and her friend Mary are diverted by the attractions of the beach. "What did you do when you came over the sands by yourself before - all that time ago?" (Gardam, 1974, 130), Mary asks innocently enough and only for something to say. But her question makes Lucy very cross, perhaps reminding her of her previous irresponsibility. With Lucy, the reader remembers the events of that other day, now so long ago. It is with references and cross references like this that the author forges subtle links between the stories, creating a cohesion that might not always be noticed.

Endings

The endings of each of these stories are most important. Many of them are ambiguous, forcing the reader to look back into the story in order to achieve possible closures. What, for instance is the significance of the smell of fish in the lovely Mrs Binge-Benson's car? (Gardam, 1974, 136). The final story projects the reader into the future, suggesting that much more is to happen.

A LONG WAY FROM VERONA

A Long Way From Verona (1976) is Jane Gardam's first novel for children and its narrative style differs considerably from that of A Few Fair Days (1974). It is told from a different point of view and the structure is much more controlled.

Point of View

This novel is narrated in the first person. Jessica Vye, a lively and attractive heroine, tells her own story. Fred Inglis gives a summary of the book. 'Jessica Vye at school by the sea in Saltburn in 1941, wants only to be a writer, has a clergyman father who writes for the New Statesman, falls in and out of love a very long way from Verona and is (temporarily) convinced by Jude the Obscure (Hardy) that good fortune never happens' (1981, 288). Jane Gardam uses her own experiences as an eleven year old on which to base her picture of a limited and limiting school. Of the school she says, 'I went back to my old school three years ago to present the prizes there - I had written a book about it, a book which I had thought modestly (like Dickens) might cause the establishment to be closed. But no' (Gardam, 1978, 673). Jessica Vye survives the experience of the school as she does a meeting with a maniac in the woods, a snobbish houseparty for children, falling in love, a bomb attack and falling out of love. She does not emerge unscathed but she tells her tale honestly and unsentimentally. This honesty is important to Jane Gardam who says, 'I can only write very tame tales, most about the tragi-comedy of being young. I sometimes even sing of vicar's daughters' (1978, 679).

Indeed she does, though Jessica's tale is far from tame.

Jessica Vye is what Wayne Booth calls a 'dramatized narrator' (1975, 152). Wallace Hildick labels this style 'As I Sit Here at My Desk, First - Person Past (As If Written)' (1968, 35). According to Hildick the advantages of this style are considerable. The dramatized narrator can convince the reader that the events described are true. Jessica Vye goes to great lengths to convince the reader of the truth of her story, and she is successful. The 'I' of the story has a strong claim to credibility. A second advantage of the first person narrator is the distancing possibilities. Because the narrator is describing events which occurred in the past, even if it is only the immediate past, enough time has passed for the narrator to have reflected on those events and to have put them in perspective. In this story, the first person narrator, while retaining the vivid immediacy of the events, gives the impression that they have been carefully selected. According to Hildick, the third advantage of this method is that the first person narrator can provide the necessary background information in an unobtrusive way (1968, 35). A fourth advantage is that the narrator can move from place to place within the action smoothly and naturally without confusing the reader or losing any of the potential drama. However, while this method of narration is one capable of conveying depth and sincerity of feeling, the first person narrator can be suspect as to the truth of what she tells, to the accuracy of the report or interpretation, to the clarity and sureness of the interpretation or to the firmness of judgement.

In A Long Way From Verona (1976) Jessica Vye the narrator insists on the fact that she tells the truth. She does not want to give the reader a false impression. 'I will make this clear at once' she says of her

violent experience at the age of nine, 'because I have noticed that if things seep out slowly through a book the reader is apt to feel let down or tricked in some way when he eventually gets the point' (Gardam, 1976, 13). More importantly she tells us that she is constitutionally unable to lie and she emphasizes this throughout the book. And she is persuasive. It is her incapacity to hide the truth which gets her into such trouble in the early part of the book. Were she not so honest she might have been a little more tactful. Tactful or not, Jessica's behaviour convinces the reader of her honesty, but just in case, she reminds us every now and again. She does, however, admit once to nearly telling a lie and one wonders how a person who admits to being abnormal and is decidedly eccentric at times could be relied upon to convey the truth as others would see it. Honesty of this kind is sometimes accompanied by a lack of judgement.

In selecting a first person narrator, Jane Gardam in this work has decided to maintain what Wayne Booth calls 'authorial silence' (1975, 271). In leaving a character to tell his own story it is possible for the author to achieve effects which would not otherwise be possible if 'he allowed himself or a reliable spokesman to speak directly and authoritatively to us' (Booth, 1975, 273). According to Booth, perhaps the most important effect 'of travelling with a narrator who is unaccompanied by a helpful author is that of decreasing emotional distance' (Booth, 1975, 274). And Jessica Vye through exposing her thoughts, her feelings and her actions, gives the reader the sort of insight which gains sympathy perhaps even empathy. Jessica feels that alone she must conquer the world and the fact that she tells her own story gives her an appropriate sense of isolation. In sharing her thoughts and feelings she conveys an almost unbearable sense of helplessness in a

chaotic world. Everybody seems to be antagonistic towards her, nobody understands her. Her teachers do not appreciate her talents, her family fail to understand her eccentricities. Jessica is as intolerant of her parents as they are of her. Perhaps more so. She thinks that they are like children. More sympathetic towards her father, she cannot tolerate the way her mother, in their reduced and changed circumstances, looks and behaves, with her hair frizzled all over her head and her red hands. She admires the marvellous sermons of her father but hates the way he sings too loudly and talks too much. Often she repines alone in her room, forced to overhear the somewhat insensitive remarks of the rest of the family as they discuss her in the kitchen below. When she eventually puts her head under the pillow, the reader understands the force of her plea 'Let me suffocate. Let me die.' (Gardam, 1976, 127).

The use of the first person helps to convey the poignancy, the ecstasy, the dismay, the hopes and the fears of being in love for the first time. Jessica is only too capable of explaining how she feels. At first she is entranced by Christian with his Rupert Brooke look, but her delight does not last long. He leaves her and she has to find her own way home. Eventually she realises she is no longer in love and that she has been misled by Christian's looks. More importantly she realises that he is not the person with the high ideals she thought he was. As first person narrator Jessica has conveyed her feelings with an intimacy, a depth, a naturalness and an intensity which would be difficult to achieve using any other form of narration. The heroine, in narrating her own story, has achieved something for herself which no other narrator could have done. The reader is invited to unite with her against what appears to be a hostile world and gradually realises with the heroine that the world is not as hostile as she has imagined.

Wayne Booth says that the peculiar intensity of such an effect depends on a static character. He says, 'The changes which go to make up the story are all changes in fact and circumstance and knowledge, never in the essential worth or rightness of the character herself. She must be accepted in her own estimate from the beginning and that estimate must, for greatest effect, be as close as possible to the reader's estimate of his own importance. Whether we call this identification or not, it is certainly the closest that literature can come to making us feel events as if they were happening to ourselves' (Booth, 1975, 276-277). Jane Gardam, in using Jessica Vye, as narrator, achieves this.

Structure

The structure of the story is complicated and subtle reflecting the complexity of Jessica's problems, her self awareness and her discovery that the world is not such a bad place after all. Her problems are not clear cut and easy to solve and the structure of the events of the book reflect their complexity. She is attempting to cope with her sexuality and the attempts of an apparently hostile world to crush her individuality. At first the events of the book appear random. It is only towards the end that the complex patterning becomes evident. Part One is called 'The Maniac'. This describes a series of apparently unconnected events; Jessica's discovery at the age of nine that she is a writer, a disastrous end of term tea at Elsie Meeney's shop some years later, a school dinner where Jessica refuses to eat the worms in her brambles, the return of a school essay, the meeting with the maniac, a geography lesson and some letters. Part Two is called 'The Boy'. This describes

Jessica's feelings towards her parents, a poetry competition, a houseparty, her meeting with Christian Fanshawe-Smith, the boy, a visit to the slums, a bombing and the writing of the poem. The coherence of Part Two is more evident, in that it traces Jessica's relationship with Christian. It is only the title of the poem 'The Maniac', which explicitly links this section with Part One. Part Three is called 'The Poem'. This deals with Jessica's recovery from the bombing raid, the submission of the poem for the competition, the bombing of the school, a visit from Christian, Jessica's preoccupation with reading, her disillusionment with life, her discovery that Arnold Hanger, her mentor, writes sentimental twaddle about pastel twilights and her winning of the poetry competition. There is no obvious pattern in the events Jessica describes, rather the connecting threads are the things which Jessica learns about herself. These are not often explicitly described. Rather attention is drawn to them by the events Jessica, and implicitly the author, decides to include. The reader is invited to make the connections among the episodes, perhaps learning in doing so some of the things that Jessica learns. Her problems lie mainly in herself and are articulated in her difficult relationships with people. Most of the things that Jessica discovers are not made explicit. Apart from the realization that she is intensely happy by the end of the novel, she does not say why. Perhaps she does not know why. The reader is invited to make the connections from an apparently haphazard sequence of events. If the reader is not able to perceive the subtle patterning then much of the richness of the meaning is lost.

Irony

A Long Way from Verona (Gardam, 1976) uses both verbal irony and situational irony. The situational irony comes as a result of the subtle juxtaposition of events. There are many examples of this in the book. One example concerns the unfortunate Arnold Hanger. In the opening of the book, it is his pale, drooping figure which is the literary inspiration for Jessica. It is the knowledge that she is 'a writer beyond all possible doubt' (Gardam, 1976, 18) which sustains her courage through some difficult patches. Ironically it is Arnold Hanger's book which a kindly librarian gives to Jessica to cheer her up which has such a devastating effect. The discovery that Arnold Hanger writes sentimental rubbish does not cheer Jessica up. The irony becomes even more pointed when Arnold Hanger sends Jessica a congratulatory telegram on the announcement of her win in the poetry competition.

Perhaps a more pointed example of the situational irony concerns the maniac and Christian. Jessica's encounter with the escaped prisoner is uneventful, and yet, by implication, is full of potential danger. Jessica's relationship with Christian is initially full of promise. So closely does Christian resemble Jessica's hero, Rupert Brooke, that Jessica expects and leads the reader to expect, that his beauty will reflect inner goodness and courage. Early conversations tend to confirm this view but just at the time when Jessica needs his manly capacity to endure danger, he lets her down. He abandons her to her fate, a rather dangerous one at that, which is a far graver crime than even the escaped prisoner committed. It makes one wonder who is the maniac in the poem Jessica eventually wrote. Is it the poor, disturbed prisoner, or is it

the misinformed, maniacal Christian, who is prepared to use Jessica in order to meet her father and who is overcome with fear during the bombing? The full irony and humour of the situation is realized when Christian turns up for the last time at Jessica's home, hardly the fair, romantic hero but now as merely a skinny boy in short trousers, spiky hair sticking out from his bony head and spectacles gleaming on his thin, sad face. Through the use of such irony the author invites the reader to judge the ironic comments she makes.

Ending

The ending of A Long Way From Verona (1976) is a satisfying one which forces the reader to speculate on the important issues of the book. Jessica's poem is published by The Times. She receives telegrams of congratulations, including one from Arnold Hanger, the writer who had been most influential in her life. But more important even than the recognition that her poem is rather better than she thought, Jessica realizes that 'good things take place' (1976, 202). She has overcome her preoccupation with Thomas Hardy's gloomy comment that good fortune never takes place.

THE SUMMER AFTER THE FUNERAL

Jane Gardam's third book for children is The Summer after the Funeral (1977). Perhaps it is because she wanted to explore the growth and change of a character that she chose to narrate the tale of Athene Price in the third person. Fact, circumstance and knowledge change

Athene and at the conclusion of the story she appears to be a very different person from the one she was in the beginning. She is not the static character which Booth suggests is essential to the achievement of the intensity of effect gained by a first person narrator (1975, 276).

Jane Gardam uses a combination of narrative techniques in this novel. Because of its shifting point of view and its use of different narrative devices it is difficult to categorize. It will not fit easily into any one of Moffett's categories (1968). Nor are any of Hildick's neat categories appropriate except perhaps for the last 'Known only to the Emperor' (1968). In The Summer after the Funeral (1977) Jane Gardam explores the minds of several characters, some in depth and some more superficially. However, the narrative technique is not exclusively 'Anonymous Narration: Multiple Character Point of View' (Moffett, 1968, 140). Some of the action is presented through letters so 'Letter Narration' (Moffett, 1968, 126) is used but not predominantly. 'Diary Narration' (Moffett, 1968, 128) is used also. In fact one chapter is taken up with the direct presentation of a character's diary or journal. Much of the book, however, is written in the form of 'Biography, or Anonymous Narration: Single Character Point of View' (Moffett, 1968, 136) or 'It Happened to Him: Third Person Past' (Hildick, 1968, 15). It is written in the third person with much of the action being reflected through one of the characters, a 'centre of consciousness' (Booth, 1975, 153) in this case, that of Athene Price. But to categorize the book as such is not to do it justice as it denies the power of the alternate points of view offered by the author and the effect of this on the meaning and the demands it places on the reader's repertoire.

Despite the persistent changes in point of view, the author's presence is evident, 'the author's judgement is always present, always evident to anyone who knows how to look for it . . . we must never forget that though the author can to some extent choose his disguises, he can never choose to disappear' (Booth, 1975, 20). In this book Jane Gardam chooses many disguises but she does not try to hide the presence of the 'implied author' (Booth, 1975, 151). In novels like this one, where there is no dramatized narrator, there is created 'an implicit picture of an author who stands behind the scenes, whether as stage manager, as puppeteer, or as an indifferent God, silently paring his fingernails (Booth, 1975, 151). Jane Gardam, as implied author, controls the presentation of the events and the medium of their presentation. One has the impression of her, as implied author, standing behind the scenes. But she is far from remote or uninvolved, especially in the opening pages of the book. Here the presence of the implied author is very powerful. However, as the tension mounts towards the end and the focus of attention shifts to Athene, the presence of the author is less obvious. From the beginning, the reader has the impression that the implied author, far from being an 'indifferent God' (Booth, 1975, 151) is one with definite values, and one who does not hesitate to comment. There is an implied teller who acts as a confidante sharing information with the readers. The implied teller, in the opening pages, is an equal with the readers conveying information in a gossipy, confidential way. Both the idiom and the attitudes suggest that this teller is a female consciousness. From the first descriptions in the book the verbal irony is evident. She describes the people who were waiting about after the funeral as, 'quiet and well turned-out like their cars' (Gardam, 1977, 13). She describes their concern for the observation of the proprieties, 'they were leaving a decent interval for the widow and her sister to be together before the handing of

teacups' (Gardam, 1977, 13). Phrases like 'a decent interval' (Gardam, 1977, 13) and 'the handing of teacups' (Gardam, 1977, 13) with their resonances of Jane Austen, are unmistakably ironic. The ironic tone is also directed towards the bereaved family. When she says that the family's behaviour has reached heroic proportions it is obviously gently mocking, especially as the widow was seen to glance at her watch' (surely not)' (Gardam, 1977, 13). Here, the implied teller intervenes. The convention of the brackets suggests the confidentiality of the teller's voice. The readers are brought close to the teller. The irony of tone, the judgement of the teller is also felt in the comment, 'Unkind people might have felt it was a self-satisfied face, but kind ones - and for half an hour they were kind - saw a face grateful to its Maker for an opportunity of proclaiming faith' (Gardam, 1977, 14). The attitudes, values and behaviour of a group of the upper-middle class are gently mocked by the implied author.

Much of the narration, however, is told through Athene, the third person centre of consciousness. Athene is able to add intensities of her own, giving the narrative a naturalness and a vividness. Sometimes we are presented with Athene's articulated thoughts, "'There are things not to be thought of", she said aloud in the barn. "There are words not to be said.'" (Gardam, 1977, 17). Sometimes the thoughts are reported in the third person. 'It had been almost a relief then when the bell had started after the awful morning . . . There are some thoughts not to be thought' (Gardam, 1977, 17).

As the book proceeds the implied author retreats to the background and emerges only occasionally. She withdraws and the reader is left to

watch the story unfold without authorial commentary. Scenes alternate between Athene, Beams and Sebastian with letters from Mrs Price. But the focus is on Athene. As the tension mounts the reader has access to her thoughts and feelings. The intensity of her inner responses is heightened by the authorial description of the activities of the other characters and their reported dialogue. The implied author has, by this stage, become a shadowy figure, who is seemingly letting the action take care of itself, as it must, in a sense. The events must take their course. If they do not then it is found to be contrived.

In many of the scenes where Athene is by herself and the action is described through her consciousness, there is an appropriate sense of isolation. The effect, gained by using a third person reflector of the action and focusing introspectively gains the sympathy of the astute reader. When Athene escapes the clutches of the artist the point of view is confined to her and what she can know. In this chapter she is an isolated, unaided consciousness. The implied author has deliberately distanced herself. This narrative technique heightens Athene's sense of isolation. Athene and the reader are alone and unaided. Perhaps a good deal of the reader's experience of the poignancy of her despair would be lost if an omniscient narrator had accompanied Athene on her lonely journey. Athene's anguish can be felt as she trudges along feeling rejected, homeless, frightened. If this experience is to have its full power, it is important that she is alone. Her isolation encourages us to feel with her. It is her lack of knowledge, her lack of understanding and her lack of human contact which combine poignantly to engage our sympathy. Her anguish is conveyed and the readers are invited to share her feelings, without the implied author's supportive obtrusiveness.

In such episodes the isolated heroine can achieve for herself what no other narrator can do. The world around her seems unsympathetic and hostile. Athene has not been welcomed by Primmy and Sybil, her mother has abandoned her, the painter has abused her. She can recall in this third person form, episodes which in a first person account might imply self-praise, conceit or self-indulgence. With Athene, alone and isolated, the reader can experience the circumstances faced almost as strongly as the character.

The implied author does, however, make extensive use of her right to comment as omniscient narrator. She describes Athene. 'Athene Price was extraordinary. She was healthy, popular and good, happy at school, contented at home . . .' (Gardam, 1977, 18). The complete omniscience of the author is acknowledged, 'there had been some great-grandmother from somewhere or other' (Gardam, 1977, 18). Perhaps the implied author is deliberately distancing herself from her heroine in admitting only a vague knowledge of her history or implying that it is not important. A gossipy tone is sustained with comments like 'Occasionally, sharp-eyed people thought Athene a bit too perfect and said (particularly women, the mother of girls) "You can't somehow get at her", and "it doesn't seem natural to be all sunshine like that"' (Gardam, 1977, 19). Such comments explicitly invite the reader to agree with the implied author. This is partly achieved through the use of the word 'you'. 'She was a girl you remembered' (Gardam, 1977, 18). 'You could wonder at it' (Gardam, 1977, 19) and, 'the thing you could not deny nor even question whoever you were' (Gardam, 1977, 19). Here the author attempts to close the distance between herself and the reader. The reader is invited to become a participant in evaluating the character concerned. However, the author

does explicitly comment in such a way as to direct the readers' beliefs. 'All sunshine she was not, and her summery face was the very highest achievement, the head behind it holding dismal and complex troubles, the first, though not the worst being her name' (Gardam, 1977, 19). The implied author intrudes with explicit comments and judgements, 'it isn't a name people feel comfortable with ...' (Gardam, 1977, 19). Here the implied author invites the reader to be understanding about Athene's hatred of her name. For its full effect the distance between author and reader needs to be reduced. The reader needs to accept the values that the author assumes are right.

Not only does the author omnisciently describe Athene, she reveals much about her in a dramatic way. She reports conversations in which the characters reveal the action through dialogue. Although the author never abdicates her role as omniscient narrator she does retreat to the background. One technique she uses to achieve this is through the use of journal entries.

In Chapter Twelve the implied author gives the reader access to an extended journal entry written by Beams, Athene's ugly eccentric but clever young sister. The device of the journal is an interesting one in fiction because it appears to add authenticity but can actually distort the truth depending upon the reliability, purpose and quality of judgement of the person writing the diary. One would presume that a diary entry would get to the heart of the matter, would describe the truth as clearly as its writer perceives and is capable of articulating it because a diary is usually written for the writer and is intended for neither another person nor for the world at large. 'It represents a transition between

addressing another character and addressing the reader, and hence still purports to be a real-life document' (Moffett, 1968, 28). Such is the diary of Beams which she begins, 'Part I Sub. Sec. I, Page 1' (Gardam, 1977, 74) and continues apparently authentically, however, idiosyncratically, 'My name is Beams, short for Moonbeams (big glasses). Phoebe at the font. Ugly as sin. Alas for me' (Gardam, 1977, 74).

The journal entry adds an apparent authenticity to the events being described and it conveys a sense of immediacy. Usually the events described in a journal are fresh in the mind of the writer and are recorded soon after they have occurred. The narrator is also, intentionally or not, registering his successive states of mind, which also constitute a "story" (Moffett, 1968, 128). Using the journal entry within the narrative, as part of the narrative, is an example of the nesting of stories.

Through Beams' diary we get insight into the character of the strange and ugly little girl, we see the other characters from her point of view, we learn of her emotional attachment to Athene, she describes her own learning difficulties, how she and her family, especially her enigmatic father, coped with them, we learn what she thinks of psychiatrists and she tells us what happens to her in this summer after the funeral. The authenticity of the document is stressed because Beams intends it to be an analytic study, factual and objective. She says, 'I have decided therefore that I shall pass the rest of the holiday writing an analytical study, a sort of case history of someone to pass the time. After all, I intend to pass the rest of my life in this sort of way, so I may as well get started' (Gardam, 1977, 75). However, despite her rather embarrassing honesty at times, the complete reliability of her story is

questioned when she admits that she does rather tend towards misrepresenting the truth and exaggeration. The diary entry is not used extensively in this novel and, although it does provide variety of narrative technique and yet is 'consistent with the harmony and wholeness' (Hildick, 1968, 86) of the novel, it is there for a much 'stronger reason' (Hildick, 1968, 86). In attempting to convey a truth about what it is to be human and to present a coherence of viewpoints for the reader's interpretation, Jane Gardam has attempted to show her characters from different points of view. She enters the consciousness of Athene but she allows Beams apparently to reveal herself through her journal. If any one of the characters in this novel must write a diary it is appropriate that it is the clever, thoughtful Beams, who can reveal to the reader aspects of herself that no one else has realised or been shown.

Dodo Price appears equally unreliable as a narrator, perhaps more so. Mrs Price does not have the persistence to write a diary. Her persistence is of a different kind. Determined to organise everyone, she uses hastily scrawled letters to achieve her ends. Her reliability is to be doubted, or at least questioned, because of her apparent muddleheadedness, her tendency to try to manipulate people and to see things as she wants to see them.

Her unreliability does not matter because the events reported in her letters are also narrated from other points of view but their existence adds a further complexity to the narrative style. Her letters are used in several ways. They not only report recent events but are events themselves and create other events in this story (Moffett, 1968, 126). Perhaps part of Mrs Price's apparent muddleheadedness is a result

of the fact that as a correspondent she is usually speaking from 'within the events instead of from the vantage point of their conclusion' (Moffett, 1968, 127). As such the letters have a sense of immediacy and a freshness, especially the freshness of actual speech, which comes through when she is writing an intimate letter to a friend. Her letters serve to reveal a great deal about her character and her emotions under stress. They are distanced from the action just enough to show the events in perspective and to help the reader reach some conclusion from them.

The letters do not tell the whole story about the character of Mrs Price. In the exposition of her character, as with the other characters in the novel, there are some clever and extremely subtle juxtapositions of points of view. Jane Gardam uses a letter which is followed by a reported conversation. The conversation may be followed by an authorial comment on the events and the reader is left to judge the evidence to arrive at a coherent, if tentative interpretation. For example, in her letters Mrs Price reveals a lot about her attitude towards giving presents. In a conversation between Beams and Sebastian, Beams comments that givers must be watched. An authorial comment then accuses Beams of being unfair (Gardam, 1977, 48) adding, perhaps surprisingly, that she may have only given things she did not want, 'boomerangs that landed nice and heavy on her own mat' (Gardam, 1977, 48). Despite this, the authorial comments acknowledge that any giving takes effort (Gardam, 1977, 48). It is from such complexity of points of view that the reader must judge.

In The Summer after the Funeral (Gardam, 1977) the author uses a range of ironic means. This is one of the most difficult aspects of the book's narrative techniques and one particularly hard for children to penetrate. 'Any but the most naive kind of reading puts us into implicit

relation with an author. A novelist (or a playwright) may be directing our attention mainly to the action and experience of his characters and part of our job is to enter imaginatively into them. But he is at the same time conveying his own evaluation of what is done and felt, presenting it (to mention simpler possibilities) as heroic, pathetic, contemptible, charming, funny ... and implicitly inviting us to share his attitude. Our task as readers is not complete unless we tacitly evaluate his evaluation, endorsing it fully, rejecting it but more probably feeling some less clear cut attitude based on discriminations achieved or groped after' (Harding, 1977, 201). Through his writing, the author forges a bond with his reader and to understand where irony is intended the bond needs to be a close one because 'whenever an author conveys to his reader an unspoken point, he creates a sense of collusion against all those, whether in the story or out of it who do not get the point' (Booth, 1965, 304). Through use of irony the author 'invites communion, collusion and collaboration' (Booth, 1965, 304).

An interesting example of this, which is difficult for all but the most astute and well read reader to pick up, is Athene's experience with the brooding young man she thinks is Heathcliff. Because of the way the events are structured and because of the subtle hints and clues that the author gives the reader, we are able to make the connections between seemingly unconnected events. Athene first sees 'Heathcliff' in the summer house of the hotel in which she is staying. So impressed is she with this vision that she cannot stop thinking about him, she is obsessed, besotted. She thinks she sees him everywhere, finally confronting him in the pavillion where she sees, revealed, a pair of revolting 'yellowish feet' (Gardam, 1977, 44) lying on something 'disturbingly low' (Gardam, 1977, 44). She is so shocked that she does not recognise him again and the reader must guess that the someone who 'jigged and jigged before her

holding a red person with yellow hair' (Gardam, 1977, 50) was Athene's 'Heathcliff'. It later becomes apparent through a subtle accumulation of hints that this handsome, brooding, young man is actually Sebastian's friend, Lucien. The final irony of this situation is impressed upon the reader at the end of the book when we are told that Lucien might be coming to stay with the Prices. One wonders if Athene will be able to recognise that intense dark hero with whom she was so passionately in love for a few days and, indeed, if he will be able to recognise her, with her new short hair and transformed personality.

It is not only in the structuring of the events that irony exists but also in the voice of the implied author. Often where the author intrudes with explicit comments and judgements, she invites the reader to share the values she assumes are right. Where the comments are ironic she invites that 'secret collusion and collaboration' (Booth, 1965, 304), so essential for the understanding of the ironic meaning being conveyed.

'Irony is always, in part, a device for excluding as well as including, and those readers who are included, those who happen to have the necessary information to grasp the irony, derive at least part of their pleasure, from a sense that others are excluded' (Booth, 1965, 304). In this book the implied author's voice carries an ironic tone from the opening pages, where the speaker, the implied author, is the butt of the ironic point. To understand the irony the reader needs to grasp the meaning of the relationship that the author is forging with him. It is as if the author and reader are in collusion. Much of the point of the authorial comment is lost if the reader fails to detect this and does not see the irony. The pleasure, which can be gained from the irony is lost if the reader does not realise the knowledge which is being offered or

fails to grasp that he has been invited to share a special relationship with the implied author.

One example will suffice. In one of Mrs Price's letters to Sybil Bowles, the author interrupts to comment, 'with a strict regard for what passes as truth' (Gardam, 1977, 27), not the truth, the comment stresses but what passes as truth. Here, the verbal irony has moral implications which reverberate throughout the book. The implied criticism is for those people, like Mrs Price, who are concerned to observe the proprieties to look as though they are doing the 'right thing' and are not really concerned with truth itself. The comment is ironic in its implication. The reader is invited to see that it means much more than it actually says and that the implied author, far from agreeing with it, rejects it and is inviting the reader to agree with her judgement. The astute reader gains pleasure from this sense of collusion, in knowing that he and the author know more than the characters in the book and perhaps more than other readers.

This effect is brilliantly achieved in a comment of Mrs Price's that the one thing that mattered was that 'Mim had a restful quiet summer' (Gardam, 1977, 155). The reader knows that poor Athene has experienced the most traumatic summer of her life. The satisfaction gained is that of collusion with an implied author who has created a trap into which the ignorant narrator of the letter has fallen.

Perhaps the most difficult narrative sequence of the book and one which deserves some comment because of its complexity is the final bewildering events of Chapter Twenty One. Athene has run away from the school and it is thought that she has returned to the rectory. The

narrative technique used is particularly difficult because of the quickly shifting points of view and the subtle, almost imperceptible movement backwards and forwards in time. The mood created by the description of the desolate rectory is carefully controlled. The day is wild and ominously windy. The family, arriving by car, discover that Athene has gone into the church tower. The first part of the scene is exterior description of events by the author, interspersed with dramatic dialogue.

The tension gradually mounts through the frantic action and rapid dialogue. Dr Padshaw shouts, "'Athene'" (Gardam, 1977, 147) twice. They all look at her and suddenly someone says, "'My God, she's going to jump!'" (Gardam, 1977, 149). They all rush for a rug and hold it out to break her fall, rather ineffectually. Suddenly Sebastian cries, "'She's down. She's down'" (Gardam, 1977, 149). And we are convinced that she has jumped. The point of view changes swiftly to Athene and back in a short time. The whole scene is rerun, only this time the events are shown from Athene's point of view. The focus is on the internal responses. Sebastian's cry is repeated but this time Athene walks through the door at the base of the tower, safe. It is now that Athene is stunned by the thought that all the people milling around and making so much fuss are concerned for her. When she realises how much they all care for her, she breaks down and cries. For the first time since the death of her father she is able to cry, she cries for herself and for the death of her father. We learn just how significantly she has grown and changed in Mrs Price's final letter. She leaves her old school and enrolls at the local high school, she cuts her long hair wearing it straight all round with a fringe like St. Joan of Arc, she begins to speak her mind, she changes her name to Anna and is much more fun, according to Mrs Price. But, how much has

Athene changed? We only have Mrs Price's word for it. And as we have been told and shown, appearances are deceptive. Perhaps we ought to leave the last word on Athene to Jane Gardam herself who says, 'but I liked old Athene, too, in the end, and it was painful when I destroyed her. For destroyed she is, of course, poor duck. Gone, gone like fifteen wild Decembers - or fifteen rainy Augusts anyway. Gone, my dear American psychiatric critic who went for me so vigorously. 'Gardam', he says 'suggests that Athene is no more than a "high spirited animal". 'Oh dear me, no, sir. It is much worse even than that' (Gardam, 1975, 80). This final complex sequence with its enigmatic ending invites the reader to wonder about the nature of truth, to ponder on Jane Gardam's relationship to her story and characters and to question the belief that an author can ever have the final say.

BILGEWATER

Structure

Jane Gardam's fourth book for young readers is Bilgewater (1979). This novel shares many of the narrative techniques used in her previous books. It is the story of Marigold Green and the story of 'a school master who gave bunches of flowers to little boys and an ogre like headmaster's wife who ran off with the captain of the school' (Gardam, 1978, 493), a tame tale 'mostly about the tragic comedy of being young' (Gardam, 1978, 679). The structure is linear with a prologue and an epilogue.

Point of View

Like Jessica Vye in A Long Way from Verona (1976) Marigold Green is what Wayne Booth calls a 'dramatized narrator' (Booth, 1975, 152). She is a named narrator, a specified author. The narrative style is that described by Wallace Hildick as 'As I Sit Here at My Desk, First Person Past (As If Written)' (Hildick, 1968, 35). Hildick claims that there are considerable advantages for this narrative style and in Bilgewater (1979) Jane Gardam uses these to full effect.

Unlike Jessica Vye, Bilgewater, does not go to great lengths to convince us of the truth of what she is saying but she does not need to. She conveys her thoughts and feelings with such honesty and penetration that the reader does not question their truth. It is apparent that she is telling the truth as she sees it. Only once in the narrative does Bilgewater inform the reader that she is attempting to tell the truth when she says, 'I present you therefore with my obedience to Thomas Hardy, my attempt at naked truth, the thoughts I really thought, the fantasy I really had' (Gardam, 1979, 57). Unlike Jessica, Bilgewater does not keep insisting that she is telling or writing a story. Only once does she address the reader directly, making it obvious that she is aware that she is telling a story and that there is an implied audience but insisting that narrative can convey the truth. She explains that, 'A narrative and an equation are one, in that they are some sort of an attempt at a statement of truth, at what - as Hardy says - everyone is thinking and nobody dares to say: so that in case you are thinking that I was a bit weird in my feelings for Grace Gathering, a bit steamed up like the Third Form girls get about mistresses or Puffy Coleman gets about the new boys - let me tell you quite coolly that I am not like that' (Gardam, 1979, 55).

Bilgewater had been stunned by the revelation that a narrative could tell the truth, a fact she discovered one day in her English lesson. It was in pondering on a quotation from Hardy that she realized the astonishing fact that 'A novel must be true' (Gardam, 1979, 41). She found this extraordinary and very interesting. She went over and over it in her mind 'It was something Hardy said about novels. A novel, said Hardy, should say what everybody is thinking but nobody is saying . . . A novel must be true . . . Think of it - TRUE. True like a theorem. True like an equation. Naked and unashamed' (Gardam, 1979, 41).

First, on one level the reader is aware that he is reading a novel and that the novel can express truth. Secondly Bilgewater, in her narrative, draws the reader's attention to the fact that she is writing a narrative and in doing so is attempting to convey the truth. The symbols used are capable of conveying levels of meanings, different perceptions of truth. 'I felt warmth and satisfaction as I saw the words hollowly gleaming behind the symbols - facts behind facts. Truth behind truth' (Gardam, 1979, 41).

Jane Gardam leaves Bilgewater to tell her own story and does it so revealingly that the reader does not question the truth of what she tells. In maintaining 'authorial silence' (Booth, 1975, 271) effects are achieved which could not otherwise be possible. The reader is encouraged to feel emotionally close to the experiences of the dramatised narrator. We feel both with, and for, Bilgewater as we follow the events she selects to describe for us. Bilgewater is lonely, she has no mother, her father is kindly but distant, Paula, the matron of the school, loves her but is extremely busy and insists that self pity is destructive, she has no friend and is kept apart from the boys in the school. She even has her

meals alone.

In revealing to the reader how she thinks and feels she conveys a sense of helplessness as she comes to terms with life, love, relationships. Perhaps it is love which concerns her the most. She says, 'I have a very good balance of hormones all distributed in the right places. The only thing that ever worried me was that I started brewing them so early and at - well I'd better admit it - even eleven, I couldn't sometimes sleep for thoughts of Jack Rose' (Gardam, 1979, 56). When she tells Tom Terrapin that she has been invited to stay at the home of Jack Rose, she is surprised by her feelings, 'And I had such a longing - so queer. I wanted suddenly to take Terrapin in my arms. There was something in his funny face, his ancient sorrowful look' (Gardam, 1979, 69). When Jack Rose kisses her, again she is surprised by her response. 'His face was very smooth and large as he kissed me and I thought, this is Jack Rose and this is I, Bilgewater, but all I wanted to do was look back at the space where the lovely metal steps had led down into the water' (Gardam, 1979, 108). Perhaps this was because Jack Rose was so self-satisfied, so pleased with himself for destroying that lovely, curly, iron staircase.

A little later in discussing the dress she is to wear at the Roses, she wonders if the dress matters. 'I felt it simultaneously with the memory of Jack Rose's large, smooth face, the eyes that would never see what anyone was wearing anyway. Some breath of uneasiness stirred. I had had the same feeling when he had laughed at the falling iron stairs; and there was something else. I turned my mind away' (Gardam, 1979, 111). She finally realizes what Jack is like when he arrives home with the beautiful Grace Gathering. Bilgewater discovers a room prepared, 'I

stepped out of the room again feeling worse than I'd felt yet because the flowers told me two things - (1) that the other guest was more important than me (which didn't matter) but also (2) that the other guest who was arriving any minute with Jack was a girl' (Gardam, 1979, 122). She watches Jack at dinner that evening and notes 'how remarkably small his eyes were and how careful; and I know that he'd completely forgotten that he'd kissed me last Saturday week on the pier' (Gardam, 1979, 126).

Finally she discovers Jack and Grace rolling on the kitchen floor and decides to go to church where she reflects on the events which have occurred. 'I was thinking how easy it would have been for Grace to have told me she had been invited, too - how easy for her, knowing - because I was sure she knew somehow what I felt about Jack - how easy for her with all her conquests, legendary in the past and their absolute certainty in the future, to have left me Jack for just this one weekend. Jack whom I had known and loved so long' (Gardam, 1979, 130). But Bilgewater realizes she has been a fool and eventually she runs away, smack into the arms of Tom Terrapin. She ends in Terrapin's bed, her virginity preserved by a loud knocking on the door. Finally Bilgewater begins to see that there is more in Boakes, another student of her father. Their relationship develops and the reader is left to work out what has happened. 'Whether we call this effect identification or not it is certainly the closest that literature can come to making us feel events as if they were happening to ourselves' (Booth, 1975, 276).

Through the use of the first person narrator the author can convey feelings with an intensity that can disturb the reader. The dramatized narrator can give the reader access to another style of awareness through

private dreams, reflections and memories. Bilgewater tells herself stories about her past, dreams about her future and she shares these intimate longings with the reader. Barbara Hardy says, 'Dream can debilitate but its subversive discontents are vital for personal and social development. It can provide escape or a look at the unwished-for worst. It lends imagination to the otherwise limited notions of faithful memory and rational planning. It acts on the future, joining it with the past. It creates, maintains and transforms our relationships' (1977, 13). Bilgewater is delighted by the prospect of friendship with Grace Gathering and weaves a romantic story to do with turrets, trailing gowns, lonely vigils, gauntlets and chargers, around her. But in order to escape from her own identity Bilgewater herself is transformed. As she wanders over the playing fields she dreams, 'I saw Grace Gathering in a floating dress and a tall cone of a hat with a flimsy bit of net fluttering behind it, drifting down to a river and lying flat out in a boat and the boat floating smooth, smooth, down the river into a pearly haze beneath the bridges. And I heard Grace's voice singing, singing, softer, softer and stopping, and then at the last bridge Lancelot himself leaning sadly over, sadly gazing' (Gardam, 1979, 57). But it is not the lovely Grace Gathering he loves, the hand he lifts to his lips is Bilgewater's - Marigold's. Bilgewater's dream is a hopeful one, this is what she would like to be, like to happen. However much she enjoys contemplating her own escape from reality she remains aware that she is dreaming, that though she is telling the truth, there is more to it than that.

Bilgewater does not only tell herself stories to escape the actuality which is her life, she attempts to transform the past through her imagination. Uncomfortably travelling on the bus to stay with the Roses she wonders what it would have been like had her mother been there

to wave her off. 'I imagined her, little and sweet in a sort of cape with a hood, bits of silvery, silky blonde hair blowing out under it, both small hands pressed up against her mouth, tears in her eyes' (Gardam, 1979, 112). In this version of the story Bilgewater creates a mother who is sensitive, caring and overprotective of her pretty daughter. This image Bilgewater almost immediately rejects for a much more glamorous, sophisticated one. 'Or - no. It wouldn't be like that. Mother would be in an Aston Martin. She'd have that marvellous long, turned under, young looking white hair, and lipstick and she'd be wearing a heavenly suit with a fur collar and hat to match' (Gardam, 1979, 113). Despite Bilgewater's intense desire to be beautiful, sophisticated and cool, in her heart she knows that neither of the two imagined mothers would suit her. 'I leaned my head on the window considering these mothers who never were. I was probably going mad again I thought. I didn't really like either of these women at all' (Gardam, 1979, 113).

Bilgewater reveals her sensibilities in a way which is entirely her own. The dreams that she creates are a product of her vivid imagination, her reading and her experience and she expresses them in a language which is idiosyncratically hers. 'Our narratives are of course limited by our sensibility, inhibitions, language, history, intelligence, inclinations to wish, hope, believe, dream' (Hardy, 1975, 21). So too with Bilgewater. And her inner narrative is entirely consistent with the way in which she narrates the rest of her story.

Jane Gardam's work is powerful in holding up distortions and distorting fictional mirrors for contemplation by the reader. She opens up possibilities of human living for inspection through the complex, though fictional consciousness of her character.

Bilgewater's reflections on the nature of experience are revealed with the same honesty as she reveals her dreams. Rational, mathematical and logical she explores the effects of experience on human nature and at the same time giving the reader access to layers of human consciousness. 'I began to reflect on the nature of experience and particularly of experience not advancing maturity. Experience. Experio. Experire. So many levels encompassing one definition. $X = a + b + c + d + e + f + g + h + i + j + k + l + m + n + o + p + q + r + s + t + u + v + w + x + y + z$: but yet possibly equally only some of these or different combinations of them. But x can also = o . Can some people experience and remain unchanged?' (Gardam, 1979, 73). Bilgewater rejects this idea. She says this is not possible and she outlines the reason. Despite the fact that she has had such a rational argument with herself, as she looks down at herself wearing an outdated brown herringbone tweed suit and an old pair of blue high heeled shoes, she feels no better. With anguish she says, 'And I, Bilgewater. I seem to experience and experience, I thought. Oh I go experiencing. I ought to be quite worn out. Yet I don't seem to change either. I don't seem to get wiser or find anything easier' (Gardam, 1979, 74). The dream does not help much because she knows it is fantasy nor does introverted rational argument because it does not appear to influence how she feels or how she behaves. 'There are times when my environment appears to me as very much less than educative and the rational element in man to be so miniscule that you wonder what creation is all about and turn to chess or cats or mathematics as to straws upon the sea' (Gardam, 1979, 73). Nothing much seems to work for her but at least she tries and in doing so reveals to the reader her inmost thoughts, modelling for the reader a conscious awareness.

Bilgewater does not escape into her dreams, she does not live in the past, nor is she always looking ahead. She is very much a creature of the present responding imaginatively to the experiences she has. Memory, however, is important to her. She is not bound to the past, nor stuck in the present, her responses, her speculations and her memories are fluid and continuously on the move. Present, possible future and past co-operate. When Uncle Pen collects her from the Roses he promises her a memorable day. It is in thinking over the pleasures of this day that she remembers other important occasions, the most striking one being what she called the saucer story, so funny, so tremendous, so delightful that forever after it was known as 'The Night you Dropped the Saucer' (Gardam, 1979, 171). The past easily takes over as she describes the fooling around in the kitchen last night when they were all so happy. Paula began to throw the china around, hurling it into space with Bilgewater catching it. The funniest thing of all was that she had not dropped the saucer. A memorable day this was though 'absolutely nothing had happened' (Gardam, 1979, 171). Bilgewater reflects on the nature of these memories. 'There are days that you remember as perfect and which in fact were nothing of the kind. They grow better for the telling and more beloved with the years' (Gardam, 1979, 170).

Bilgewater is aware of the act of remembering, sufficiently aware to make comparisons. The day she describes is not like the night the saucer was dropped because it has an entirely different quality. Many things happened during this day, they drove in the ancient car through beautiful countryside, they had coffee, they explored the enormous Cathedral, they ate a delicious lunch of turkey, gravy, stuffing, potatoes, red currant jelly, followed by a good plum pudding, all consumed with an expensive bottle of wine, they attended evensong in the Cathedral,

they went out to tea. All were ordinary, everyday events and yet they had a quality which for Bilgewater is hard to describe, 'the memory of them doesn't come up with a name for what went on. It was just a series of things that were important and beautiful and namelessly good, an experience proof against nostalgia, proof against the distortions of time' (Gardam, 1979, 172). A precious memory indeed. But Bilgewater is soon jerked back into the present.

According to Hildick a second advantage of the dramatized narrator telling his own story lies in the distancing possibilities (Hildick, 1968, 35). In reading Bilgewater's story the reader is aware that it took place sometime in the past and that the narrator has had the opportunity to see everything in perspective. Despite this the events, though reported in the past, do not lose a sense of immediacy. Bilgewater conveys a sense of telling things as they happen. It is almost as if she has not complete omniscience concerning her own tale. Gardam uses a modification of the 'As I Sit Here' category of Hildick (1968). This is helped by the fact that she tells much of the story through dialogue and reported conversations. Terrapin, for example, tells his own tale. One might wonder that Bilgewater could remember it so accurately but then she is an exceptional child.

A third advantage of this narrative style is that a first person narrator can provide the necessary background information in a natural and unobtrusive way (Hildick, 1968, 35). The register used by the narrator is distinctive. Bilgewater describes her own background in detail with a literary opening, 'My mother died when I was born which makes me sound princess-like and quaint' (Gardam, 1979, 11) she begins. This type of information can sometimes be difficult for the story-teller when the tale

is being told in the third person. The first person narrator can make comments on the action and the characters that the author in the third person might find difficult. Bilgewater comments on her family with forthright honesty. 'The Greens of course are thought to be odd and father's silence and my ugliness and lack of what is called a social life is much remarked upon' (Gardam, 1979, 13). She shows the same honesty in describing Mr Edmund Hastings-Benson, one of the other masters, 'Love has always made him sad. It's odd he has kept at it as assiduously when you come to think of it. On and on he goes, however - first it's the girl in the chemist in town, then it's the new woman on school dinners' (Gardam, 1979, 16) and Puffy Coleman 'who always stands sideways in the School Photograph because his teeth drop out' (Gardam, 1979, 15). But not only can Bilgewater, as first person narrator, comment on the characters she can also comment on the action either explicitly or implicitly.

Towards the end of the story some rather unlikely events occur. Bilgewater leaves the Roses, surprisingly ending up at Terrapin's enormous house. He returns her to the Roses on his motor bike. She discovers that the Vicar she saw the previous day was the father of Boakes, another of the boarders at the school. Terrapin runs off with Grace Gathering and Jack Rose elopes with Grace's mother, the Headmaster's wife. Bilgewater comments implicitly on this string of rather unlikely coincidences in her essay for the Cambridge entrance examination which was called "Coincidence". She says, 'I wrote of chess, relating it to mathematics, of the final appropriateness of events, of Shakespeare with reference to Hamlet, of The Tempest with reference to Sycorax, of the Eumenides, the 'Kindly Ones' with reference (veiled) to father, Mrs Deering and the Reverend Boakes. I wrote of truth, and the necessity of it not be manipulated and veiled in white samite, veiled in black sables, of

Terrapin, of Terrapin's versatile father - in philosophical terms of course. I ended with a dissertation on the mathematical peace experienced in the realms of chess, in the pathways beyond accident, coincidence or desire' (Gardam, 1979, 193). Unlikely coincidence? No, Bilgewater is telling us that what happened was true.

Irony

As with the novels previously discussed, Jane Gardam uses various types of irony in this novel. Though equally delightful the irony is less complex and more accessible in Bilgewater (Gardam, 1979) than in the previous novels. One of the reasons for this perhaps is that the verbal irony consistently belongs to the dramatized narrator. More subtle and complex is the situational irony which the heroine is not always aware of but which comes as a result of the clever structuring of events.

Bilgewater mocks herself and her outlook on life, she comments ironically on those aspects of society which she, and her implied author, wish to criticize. Boy - girl relationships, politics, the class structure and the education system are but a few of the aspects of society which are questioned. The situational irony highlights many of the important themes and is implicit in the organization of the events.

One example Bilgewater cannot fail to notice and occurs when she is invited to spend the weekend with Jack Rose. She is elated and devotes much thought to anticipating what is to happen. The visit which promised so much is a failure because Bilgewater thought she had been invited instead of the beautiful Grace Gathering but she arrives to discover that

while she had to travel on the bus in a dowdy outfit of clothes, Grace has travelled with Jack in his sportscar. The final irony of this situation is that Bilgewater loses Jack, not to Grace, but to Grace's mother, Mrs Gathering, the headmaster's wife. Bilgewater is confused about the achievement of happiness. For much of the novel she pursues a false trail and the irony of this is subtly indicated when she discovers that true happiness does not lie with the hero, Jack, in his dashing sportscar, not in the romantic medieval tower with an aristocratic knight on a motor cycle but that it lies closer to home with the apparently ordinary, somewhat studious and plain, Boakes. Whether or not happiness is achieved ultimately is left for the reader to decide but the author provides sufficient information on which the astute reader can make an informed speculation.

Ending

The ending of the book has a significance which goes beyond what happens. Jane Gardam uses both a prologue and an epilogue which she narrates in the third person. She describes a young girl going to Cambridge to be interviewed and she uses the consciousness of the seventeen-year-old through which to reflect some of the events. The interview had been conducted by the Principal of the College, a woman with rather pretty, frizzy hair. The girl wonders if the woman has ever experienced intensity of feeling, "Have you ever run mad for love? Considered suicide? Cried in the cinema? Clung to somebody in a bed?" (Gardam, 1979, 9). She thinks not. 'A massive intelligence clocking and ticking away - observing, assessing, sifting, pigeon holing. Not a feeling, not an emotion, not a dizzy thought. A formidable woman'

(Gardam, 1979, 10). How wrong she is! The reader only knows for sure that this formidable presence, the first woman Principal at Cambridge, is Bilgewater, when reading the Epilogue. The girl is Tom Terrapin's daughter, perhaps too, the daughter of Grace Gathering, though one cannot be sure. The girl cannot believe that her father could ever have been crazy about Lady Boakes. She is sure that such a woman would never have 'done anything silly in her life' (Gardam, 1979, 204). The reader knows better and is closer to the truth.

I have quoted at length from the four major works that Jane Gardam has written for older children. I have done this quite deliberately, for a number of reasons. I wanted to pay tribute to the fine achievement of this author in writing fiction for children in a complex and subtle style. The extensive quotations were necessary to support the general claims I have made. More important, however, is the fact, that her sophisticated style with its complex use of point of view, structure, irony and enigmatic endings, places considerable demands on the young reader. In order to investigate these demands it is necessary to explore in some depth the complexity of the narrative style. In the next section I intend to speculate upon some of the demands that these techniques impose. I have used the same incidents from the novels on a number of occasions. This repeated examination is intended to highlight the complexity of the considerations involved. The advantage of using the same examples is that it shows the technique, indicates the demand and shows how the teacher may work with the children to help them cope with the complexity. Other examples from the texts of Jane Gardam and other authors of literature for children could be developed in the same way.

CHAPTER 3

THE NARRATIVE DEMANDS OF JANE GARDAM

Because of the complexity of Jane Gardam's narrative in her novels for children, the books place considerable demands on the young, indeed, any reader. Two of her books are narrated in the first person and two use a third person centre of consciousness. She also employs devices such as letter narration, diary narration, dream sequences, complicated patterns of structuring, including the dislocation of the chronology of events, different types of irony and enigmatic endings; all of which require the reader to interpret in a sophisticated manner.

According to James Moffett's analysis (1968) of the spectrum of narrative, the techniques used by Jane Gardam are highly abstract. Although she does not use the entire sequence outlined by Moffett, the spectrum is a useful one to give some indication of the levels of abstraction and generalization demanded by her books.

The sequence goes from the most subjective and personal to the most objective and impersonal as regards the writer's relation to his reader and the writer's relation to his subject. The most accessible method of narration, according to Moffett, is the style he calls, 'Anonymous Narration: No Character Point of View' (Moffett, 1968, 142). The author withdraws from the minds of all his characters and the result is something like legend, myth or fairy-tale. The external deeds and words are described and the narrator supplies the background information and commentary. The characters tend to be typical or universal. It is usually easy to forget that this type of story is being told by somebody. The stories are impersonal and the distance between author and reader is

great. According to Moffett stories told using this technique are most accessible to the young child, only later can he cope with stories which place more demands on his ability to abstract and generalize. It is not only fairy tales and legends which use such simple narrative techniques, many of the series books which have such appeal for children use similar techniques. The stories of Laura Ingalls Wilder, Enid Blyton and Judy Blume are examples.

The next most accessible method of narration, according to James Moffett, is 'Anonymous Narration: Dual Character Point of View' (1968, 136), the most abstract and least easily accessible to the reader is 'Interior Monologue' (1968, 123).

Jane Gardam's novels, like many recent books written for children, do not fall neatly into the narrative types as outlined by James Moffett (1968). The books which would be most accessible according to the spectrum are A Few Fair Days (1974) and The Summer after the Funeral (1977) because both books are predominantly 'Biography or Anonymous Narration: Single Character Point of View' (1968, 136). But both books are complicated by other narrative techniques which would place further demands on the young reader. Because Jane Gardam takes us so close to the consciousness of both Lucy in A Few Fair Days (1974) and Athene in The Summer after the Funeral (1977) parts of the books closely resemble the most difficult of James Moffett's categorizations, 'Interior Monologue' (1968, 123). As well as that in The Summer after the Funeral (1977), Jane Gardam uses both 'Letter Narration' (1968, 126) and 'Diary Narration' (1968, 128), two styles which place considerable demands on the reader according to Moffett. Her two other books fall into the category 'Subjective Narration' (1968, 129) which also demands much of the reader's

ability to decentre, or to see points of view other than his own (Donaldson, 1978), to abstract and to generalize.

James Moffett's analysis focuses on the point of view from which the story is told and according to his suggested spectrum Jane Gardam's books pose considerable demands for the young reader. But her narrative technique is more complicated than a description of point of view would indicate because of her use of irony, her unconventional sequencing and ambiguous endings, the ending being an important consideration in giving both cohesion and meaning to a work (Kermode, 1977). In discussing the narrative demands of Jane Gardam's books I intend to explore not only the potential problems caused by the point of view from which the story is told but also those which result from her use of irony, sequencing and her choice of endings.

A FEW FAIR DAYS

Point of View

In A Few Fair Days (1974) Jane Gardam tells her story from the third person omniscient narrator stance but most of the action is seen through the child who is at the centre of the book. The use of Lucy, through whose consciousness much of the action is described, is demanding of the young reader because at the beginning of the story Lucy is very young and perhaps does not see the events as clearly as the young reader might like, an 'unreliable narrator', perhaps (Booth, 1975). The events are described from the young child's limited perspective. Even the opening sentence has an inexplicitness typical of the self-centred, small child, who considers that the world revolves around her. 'It began badly'

(Gardam, 1974, 13). Like a young child speaking, the exact referent for 'it' is not made clear. The reader has to provide the context of utterance for himself, to build gradually a background through an accumulation of hints and clues. The adventure of that day is shown as Lucy experiences it and the worry, despair, panic and confusion she causes has to be inferred by the reader. It is the same with most of the incidents described in the book. The author vividly presents the thoughts and preoccupations of Lucy, leaving the reader to detach himself from the world as Lucy sees it, in order to understand what is going on in the world around her. The mysteries imposed by Lucy's limited understanding of the world are great. What did happen at the Fever Hospital? Why is Mr Crossley 'so-so' and what is wrong with him wearing a wig? What was the bundle wrapped in the blanket? Why did her grandmother have green hair? Why does Mabel Twentyman look over Lucy's head 'in a funny sort of way'? (Gardam, 1974, 92). What is a beast in the mire and so on? Some of the many mysteries are solved for Lucy and if the reader is tenacious he can answer more. The reader is expected to seek, make and test cohesions that make sense in seeking answers to these questions.

Irony

The narrative is made more difficult because of the type of ironical comment the implied author occasionally allows herself to make. Intervening early she comments, 'Of course some people will tell you that in Yorkshire you have ham and salad and tinned peaches for tea, but this is not true if aunts are coming. Not true at all. It has been buns and bits since the Vikings' (Gardam, 1974, 14). What is the young reader to make of this comment? Is it to be believed? Is it to be taken literally? Is the author gently mocking or wryly commenting on the tradition of the

Yorkshire tea party? Perhaps this kind of narration is influenced by kinds of oral discourse to which the reader might not be accustomed. And later the author comments on the queer music which issues forth from the strange house called "Dennis". 'The members of the cricket team had looked at one another and the Vicar had raised his eyes from his books and Jinnie Love in her little house on the edge of the sand hills had stopped beating her cakes for a moment' (Gardam, 1974, 144). The implied author gives the impression that she knows a great deal but she does not give the reader much help. Therefore there is more to know. This must be knowable by someone. There is also the implication that occurs in face to face situations, that the listener/reader should be able to work something out for himself. In order to be able to do this the young reader needs to have experienced such oral demands.

Even more demanding for the young reader are the gaps left by the situational irony for the reader to fill. If the connections are not made then much of the significance of the stories is lost. Sometimes the gaps are small, as when the aunts, who are expected for tea and are the cause of Lucy's truancy, find her and take her home. The reader is not told whether or not they recognize Lucy but they do say as they take her home "We are going down the road . . . to have tea with our great-niece". (Gardam, 1974, 22). All the time they had pretended not to recognize her yet they take her safely home. Nor is the reader explicitly told why the young teacher, who has driven Lucy's father to the Fever House several times, eventually refuses to. The astute reader remembering Lucy's comment, "'You have got awful ears'" (Gardam, 1974, 32) can make the connection. It is never explained why Mr Crossley is 'so-so'. That is left for the reader's speculation. But Mr Crossley is cured of his wig wearing habit. Again it is not explicitly explained. All that is said is

that Miss Fanny tells Mr Crossley that the fire has burned off his hair and that it will never grow again because of the shock. The reader has to work out whether this explanation is true or not and what effect it had on the behaviour of Mr Crossley, just as we have to work out how grandmother came to have green hair, what grandmother forgot about, what the witch told her and why it was significant, what the bones are that the old lady finds in the garden of "Dennis" and the awful significance of the fish smell in the back of Mrs Binge-Benson's car. In these examples the author/reader relation is a complex one, so too is the relationship between the fiction, the real world and the world of the reader. Jane Gardam's fictions offer complex exercises in interpretation.

Structure

Not only does the sequence of events in each of the stories have a significance which must be recognized but the connecting links between the stories also need to be observed if the richness of the individual stories is to be seen. Each of the stories is complete on its own but the collection of stories has a coherence, a loosely textured one perhaps but more demanding because of it, the recognition of which adds to the meaning of each of the stories, if the connections are made.

Endings

The endings of each of the stories are most important because the way they end forces the astute reader back to the story in order to interpret the actions and utterances reported, described and shown. If the reader cannot do this then much of the meaning is lost. The conclusion of the final story for instance, not only leads the reader to

speculate on the meaning of the story but to the nature of life itself. If the reader is unable or unwilling to speculate in this way then the conclusion could be seen as very flat and pointless.

A LONG WAY FROM VERONA

Point of View

A Long Way from Verona (1976) is narrated in the first person. This technique places demands on the young reader in a way that a story narrated in the third person does not. In his judgement of the events of the story the reader has to take into account the fact that they are being told by only one of the participants. He must judge the authenticity and accuracy of the telling by judging the reliability of the dramatized narrator and he must fill the gaps which the narrator leaves. On the other hand, because what is revealed is controlled by one narrator, the story told in the first person can make sense of experience and have an explicitness and a coherence which the other may lack. The story emerges much as the narrator interpreted his experience and can have the immediacy and difficulty of a diary or a memoir. As a result the structure is usually based on a simple sequence, often a time sequence, which has an accessible coherence, even though some of the episodes may be long-lasting and highly-structured within themselves. This is because the reader frequently expects to get the fiction, in a sense, pre-interpreted. Henry Brulard's comment in The Life of Henry Brulard (1973) summarizes what the subjective narrator usually does. 'I'm wandering from the point, I shall be unintelligible unless I keep to the order of events and besides, I shouldn't remember the circumstances so well' (1973, 27).

As well as presenting a clear sequence of events the narrator of such a story remains constant and can provide the focus needed by the young reader. This can work to engage the sympathy of the reader, especially if the view of the world which is reflected accords with the reader's view. On the other hand, however, if the character through whom the story is told, is difficult to understand then his view of the world might be inaccessible or really incomprehensible.

Because of the eccentricity of Jane Gardam's heroine, many children might find it hard to sympathize with her. Blatantly truthful, she opens her story with the words, 'I ought to tell you at the beginning that I am not quite normal having had a violent experience at the age of nine' (Gardam, 1976, 13).

Jessica is strangely different from other girls of her age. She maintains that she is not mad, there being no hereditary madness in her family but that she is set apart from her contemporaries because at the age of nine she discovered that she was a writer, 'beyond all possible doubt' (Gardam, 1976, 18). The impact of the discovery is so stunning that she is transformed. Her transformation coincides with the development of a ruthless honesty and a tactlessness which earns her the dislike of her peers and provokes irritation on the part of her teachers. Her response to the world and the people with whom she comes in contact is not the traditional one that a reader might have come to expect from fiction concerning bright, middle-class, English children. She says and does the sort of outrageous things that many children might like to do and yet have neither the courage nor the audacity to carry through. Even in the end or at the point of action the young reader might not want to do some of the things Lucy does. She organizes afternoon tea in a restaurant

on the last day of term, threatens to call the police when the sloppy waitress informs her that the place is shut, knocks over an ostentatious pot plant scattering dirt and greenery everywhere, spills the tea all over the tablecloth and floor, strikes up conversation with an odd, whimsical, arty lady in an eccentric arrangement of antique clothes, a long waisted dress, a low belt, pointed shoes, amber bangles and a hairstyle and make-up reminiscent of the 1920's. Claiming intimate knowledge of politicians, poets and novelists, the woman is obviously not without means or influence. To Jessica's horror she is served the most delicious tea. Jessica's retorts are positively rude but the woman is delighted to hear her quote from Shakespeare, she pays for the children's tea and goes off leaving most of her own which the children immediately devour. Jessica uses this adventure as the basis of an essay she writes the following term, forty nine pages long and crammed full of accurate detail. When her teacher rejects the essay as being both untrue and unstructured, Jessica's response is one which would delight most young readers who have ever felt that their pieces of writing, so lovingly prepared, have been harshly treated by misguided teachers.

Throughout the book, Jessica continues to articulate her objections, some of which a young reader might find hard to understand, especially if that reader is separated from Jessica in both time and values. Jessica hates everything that the Fanshaw-Smithe's stand for, for example. The Reverend Fanshawe-Smithe is a Rural Dean, he lives in an impressive rectory with his family and has money. Jessica's mother insists that she attend the Christmas party for which she has received an official invitation. Jessica objects. She does not want to wear black dancing pumps and last year's viyella with its pale blue flowers, pearl buttons and puff sleeves. Secretly she smuggles a fancy dress costume in

her luggage and confronts the astounded Fanshawe-Smithes with the spectacle of herself ostentatiously clad in scarlet tights, gold tunic and a gold turban. She objects to all that the Fanshawe-Smithes represent, the snobbishness of boarding schools, posh accents, hockey, riding, Arthur Ransome, Mrs Molesworth, Mrs Nesbit and the centuries of dreariness which, to Jessica, is symbolized by the pale, pretty viyella party dress. She hates the superficiality, superiority and hypocrisy of the people and hates herself for conforming. Despite all her resolutions she agrees to wear her viyella.

'Trying not to be sick on the mat I willed myself. "I will wear these clothes, I will, I will. I will not let them win". "Actually I have got another dress with me. It's viyella. Just in case," I said. "Just in case it wasn't fancy dress"' (Gardam, 1976, 113).

She capitulates but not without a fight. Most young readers can understand the agonies the young endure over dress and its subtle coding but they might find it difficult to understand what it is about the Fanshawe-Smithes that Jessica objects to. Is it simply that they are the privileged class and despite the war have access to the most delicious food, chickens, turkey, butter, trifle, fresh cream and ice cream? Jessica's own mother is forced to put mashed vegetables in their own Christmas pudding. Is it their conceit? Is it their hypocrisy? Or is it a combination of these? These are difficult issues to judge, especially when the reader lacks the cultural and experiential background from which to judge the truth. The young reader needs to be able to decentre and objectively judge from a range of points of view.

Jessica's attitude to her writing is bewildering and her response

to almost every situation is delightfully unpredictable. Her astonishment over the naked bosoms in a painting owned by Miss Philomel, her lecture to the headmistress, her desire to own a dusty picture in a crumbling art shop, her rapidly changing feelings towards Christian, her forthrightness, her stubbornness, her impulsiveness, her ambivalent feelings towards her distracted mother, her refusal to accept the cheque she has won can both delight and perplex the reader. But how do we develop a coherent interpretation of Jessica and work out what motivates her? Her madness may confuse some young readers to the extent that they might be put off from grappling with the text in the way demanded of it. The narrator is a disjointed sensibility in many ways, trying out varying views of the world and herself. How is a teenage reader to cope with the disjointed teenage coherence as presented in the novel?

However, Jessica's eccentricity might be the aspect of the book which appeals and which encourages the reader to sustain the effort of a complex reading. Her characterization transcends the stereotype and demands much of the reader's ability to interpret. The complexity of the narration is intensified because it is obvious that Jessica cannot see things clearly nor coherently at times. She is preoccupied with herself and her problems. Like Alice in Through the Looking Glass, the world she sees is a distorted one. Perhaps the epigraph might help the reader understand how Jessica can misinterpret the events of her world.

'The sun was shining on the sea,
Shining with all his might.
He did his very best to make
The billows smooth and bright.
And this was odd because it was
The middle of the night'

So quotes Jane Gardam from Alice through the Looking Glass.

Structure

The structure of the story is complicated. It reflects the complexity of Jessica's problems, her changing viewpoints and her discovery that the world is not such a bad place after all. Her problems are not clear cut nor are they easy to solve and the structure of the events of the book reflects their complexity. At first the events of the book seem random, even disjointed. It is only towards the end that the complex patterning becomes evident. At first there appears to be little plot, the events seem to be randomly chosen and loosely linked. In fact, for some young readers the pattern is so subtle, the links so tenuous that the structure and its implications for meaning may never become clear nor cohesive. This indeterminacy is valid in terms of the implicit meanings conveyed but the reader has to probe and tentatively construct in order to work out what these meanings are or might be.

Part One is called 'The Maniac'. Each of a number of incidents is lengthily described and each has a coherence. Apart from the fact that Jessica is the protagonist there appear to be few connecting links. Part Two, called, 'The Boy', through the way the events are sequenced, traces Jessica's relationship with Christian. It is only the title of the poem she writes which explicitly links this section with Part One. Part Three is, for the skilled reader, predictably enough, entitled, 'The Poem'. After some horrifying experiences, Jessica eventually realizes that 'good things take place' (Gardam, 1976, 202). This sequence of events is not obviously coherent, the connecting threads are the things which Jessica learns about herself and these are not often explicitly described. Rather attention is drawn to them by the events, Jessica, and implicitly the author, decides to include. The reader is invited to make the connections

between the episodes, perhaps learning some of the things that Jessica learns, though in a gentler, less threatening way. If the reader is unable to perceive the subtle patterning and the implicit meaning it conveys then much of the richness of the book is lost. Engaging with the character's formulation of understanding, the willing and agile reader is involved with the development of a personality. The story is about a growing consciousness. It gives access to the growth of an interior life.

Irony

In this book Jane Gardam uses several types of irony which demand much of the reader. There is the situational irony where the reader must make explicit the connections. Examples of such use of irony abound in this novel. One example concerns the unfortunate Arnold Hanger. A more important example of the situational irony concerns the incident with the maniac and Jessica's relationship with Christian. Jessica encounters an escaped prisoner. This is uneventful and yet full of potential danger.

In contrast Jessica's relationship with Christian is initially full of promise. Christian's appearance resembles Jessica's idea of her hero, Rupert Brooke. One expects that his beauty will reflect an inner goodness and courage. To Jessica he is the archetypal hero. At first their conversations tend to confirm this view but just at the time when Jessica needs him he lets her down. He abandons her. This is a far graver crime than ever the maniac committed. Jessica eventually 'sees' Christian clearly. One hopes the reader, too, learns to 'see' Christian and to reconsider his own perhaps reluctantly examined stereotypes. The reader must notice the ironies and then decide which are the preferred and justifiable connections. Only the tenacious reader will do this.

Not only does Jane Gardam use situational irony but her dramatized narrator has a verbal irony which the reader is required to unveil. The author invites the reader to agree with the ironic comments she makes on society through the narrator. The use of such irony places cognitive demands on the young reader. In this case it is difficult to establish whether or not the author agrees with her narrator. When one is convinced that this is so, at least for part of the time, then the text requires that the reader perceive the intended irony. The party at the Fanshawe-Smithe's is an example of this. The reader has to decide whether or not Jessica is being fair to these well-off, upper-class people and if so, does the author endorse her judgements? More importantly is the reader expected to agree with the judgements? The Fanshawe-Smiths are portrayed as typically county snobbish, but not stereo-typical. Implicitly the author is inviting the reader to share these views and if he fails to see the intention of the author then much of the richness is lost. The reader has to recognize the unspoken point and in doing so joins with the author in making a judgement. It is extremely difficult for many young readers to detect the irony, especially when there are complex and perhaps competing levels to it. Many inexperienced young readers find it demanding enough to determine what has been said at the literal level. It is much more difficult to fill in the gaps which have been left in the structure or to infer meaning from what has been left unsaid.

Ending

The ending is a happy one. Even for the unobservant reader it is clear that Jessica is happy. But to understand the full significance of

the ending the reader is forced to reflect on the events of the rest of the book. To realize that Jessica has come to terms with herself and has realized that there is hope in the world is to see what has been preoccupying her. Her despair is something which is not explicitly described, rather it has to be inferred. So too, the reader has to infer from the ending of the book that through the love and concern of others Jessica comes to think that Hardy's view of human life was not necessarily correct, an inference crucial to an understanding of the story. Jane Gardam writes as if she expected the young reader to become aesthetically aware. She seeks to have the reader reflect on the power of narrative art and through that life itself.

THE SUMMER AFTER THE FUNERAL

Point of View

Even more demanding is Jane Gardam's next book. Because of the cognitive demands placed by the extremely complex and clever shifts in viewpoint and because of the deliberate gaps left in the narrative The Summer after the Funeral (Gardam, 1977) cannot be considered easy reading for anyone. It is the persistent changes in the point of view which gives the narrative style its distinction but at the same time places considerable demands on the young reader. It demands a certain kind of reader, one who is prepared to decipher the range of social and emotional codes represented by the text and fill in the gaps. Much of the narration is through a third person centre of consciousness, in this case, Athene Price, sixteen years old and bereft. While this technique works to bring the reader close to Athene and engage sympathy for her dilemma, it creates certain problems of interpretation. Athene is confused and her thoughts

reflect her intense, bewildered state. This poses problems for the reader, especially when Athene's private, jumbled thoughts are revealed. What are 'the things not to be thought' (Gardam, 1977, 17) which so preoccupy her? The first time the reader has access to the inner recesses of Athene's mind is immediately after the funeral of her father when she is ruminating on past events. Her thoughts are impressionistic and obscure. Jane Gardam is inviting the reader to share these thoughts by placing them before us. 'And the getting ready, all clean and calm like for a queer party. For Buckingham Palace. And the following out. The front door, through the wicket, the humps of green, the flash of flowers, tall black shadowy men with professional understanding faces presenting hymn books, white handed. Like a Dickens film.' (Gardam, 1977, 17)). Athene is almost in a trance-like state, peculiarly out of touch with reality. Colours and shapes impinge upon her consciousness and she does not always realize the reality of the objects or people with whom she comes in contact. 'All the parsons, the tea-urn, the sandwiches, the flutter were a parish party but dream-like, for all the clothes were black. And Sybil Bowles's red eyes brimmed over and Posie Dixon beamed' (Gardam, 1977, 18). For Athene, it is almost as if she is watching a strange surrealist film as an impartial observer. The reader is asked to note the film narrative which is not always logical but is accumulative. She reflects these impressions with the consequent demands on the most astute reader who must share the character's experience of distance from events. These demands do not decrease as the novel continues because, far from coping with the trauma of her father's death, Athene becomes more and more lost and confused. Her increasing sexuality and desire for love do not make her life any easier and her confusion is both convincing and perplexing for the young reader. Thinking of Posie, 'A pale soft hand on a brass door handle, a mountainous soft bed, a writing desk, a dead, oval

mirror. All cream, all dustless, all still. The shocking, astounding vision came again: Posie in bed with no clothes on, lying there eating jam. Putting her paw in like a bear. And oh! The face her own!' (Gardam, 1977, 37). This image disturbs Athene so much that she runs outside only to meet Heathcliff. What is happening to Athene? As she reflects her confusion, so too is the reader confused.

Things do not improve when Athene goes to stay with Sybil Bowles. If anything her confusion and despair increase, this affects her consequent view of events. She is forced to run away, takes refuge with a seedy artist and has to flee from him. While hiding in the pantry in his cottage she conveys to the reader only those things that she can hear, 'Rumble rumble from the man. A bark (Primrose)' (Gardam, 1977, 71). The reader has to participate as it were in the story making. Athene thinks back over the events in the pantry and while she tramps along the road clad only in her nightdress with a mackintosh over. Her thoughts are seemingly unconnected, intense, passionate, difficult to interpret. Jane Gardam is presenting a discordant consciousness, one which appears to lack an organizing centre. The character is distanced from herself, she accumulates experience and impressions but she cannot organize. She reflects sense experience and sense impressions but there is a lack of critical and organizational centre. The reader is asked to share this disjointed view of reality. Such an act requires a degree of self-awareness on the reader's part. Athene's thoughts are interspersed with present images of colour and sound, images which impinge upon her thoughts as if they are part of what she is remembering. 'The flagstones beneath her feet, the fine stone walls spelled home. She knew them and the folk they were meant for, plain-living folk, frugal, excellent. Near such a pantry Emily Bronte had stood, chaste as a willow, kneading elastic

bread, her German grammar propped up before her, old Biddy in the rocking chair, Charlotte and Anne peeling the potatoes. Drip, drip, drip. The blood-red, abandoned mess denied all, She had cried "Oh where have I got to? Where am I going?" She could remember no more' (Gardam, 1977, 72). She does not know what has happened to her. Because we only have access to her thoughts the reader does not know either and can, at best, only speculate provided he knows the intellectual pleasures of such an act. The reader is being asked consciously to reconstruct the text, to write the text in a sense.

Jane Gardam suggests that the reader write coherences for Athene's anguished, disjointed consciousness. In this way Jane Gardam's text is a 'writerly' one. (Brooke-Rose, 1981). 'Can one stop being a virgin and not know?' (Gardam, 1977, 73). Athene becomes obsessed with this thought and by the time she meets the school teacher, Henry Bell, she feels she is going mad. 'He was a long, lean lamp-post of a man, or a queer, sideways, quizzical, mild bird of a man . . . Mephistopheles, but delicate. A fine, spidery silhouette. The first primrose' (Gardam, 1977, 102). Does she see Henry as the first primrose? Whether or not, she finds he has an attraction which leads her into further trouble and confusion. She is enchanted by him and eventually he admits to being in love with her, married though he is. Fortunately, or unfortunately, their bliss is shattered by a meeting with Mrs Messenger and when they arrive back at the school, Auntie Boo is there and Henry and Athene must separate. Again, Athene has been thwarted. In her desperation she runs home to the old vicarage and climbs the tower. Here, towards the conclusion of the book, is the last time the reader is given access to Athene's thoughts. At first it is almost as if she is mad. Her attention is focused on the antique details of the stone tracery at the

top of the tower. She tries to force herself to look at the graveyard.

The reader must decide the reasons for this because Athene does not or cannot articulate these. She behaves in a most irresponsible way swinging out over the edge of the tower, wondering in a perplexed way about the 'ovals' below. 'The ovals were in a ring now and holding something, some carpet sort of thing' (Gardam, 1977, 150). Again, she does not see what is there, so intense is her focus on her own inner life.

It is up to the reader to work out what is happening from the minimal clues provided. 'They looked like pink stones holding a picnic cloth in a breeze. No they didn't. They looked like people holding something in a circle in their outstretched hands' (Gardam, 1977, 150). Gradually it is dawning on Athene that these people think she is going to jump from the top of the tower and they care enough to stop her. 'The dancers were there again, shuffling round until they were directly below her, the ovals like pink beads. They were like the net you put over milk with beads sewn round the edge to weigh it down. Pretty things to make' (Gardam, 1977, 151). The memory of such a pretty, tangible object reminds her of her sister, Beams, whom she sees crouching by a tomb. Gradually the blur clears and Athene sees what is happening, her mother writing her a note, everyone thinking about and caring for her. She descends the tower and emerges into a fuller contact with the actual world. Athene has changed. Her story has not finished but no longer does the reader have access to those fine, sensitive thoughts, confused though they were.

Finally we are forced to judge what happens from another point of view. To have to stand back and objectively to judge the truth, places considerable cognitive demands on the reader. Jane Gardam may be asking the young reader to do two apparently conflicting things, to be more

self-aware and to be less self-centred. In this way she presents a profound wisdom. Neither being without self-awareness nor being completely self-centred is a way for humanity. It is a tension between the two. However, if the young are given disjointed examples for contemplation then there are certain moral and aesthetic issues to be considered. If we say that such disjointed examples are bad then must the young be provided with good examples? If we say that to be disjointed is to be good, then are their own disjointed times to be condoned? Is it appropriate that the young look at the disturbances of others to try to appreciate them and perhaps learn from the example?

Finally the author's deliberate reluctance to tell all is an important part of the implicit meaning which raises both moral and aesthetic issues. In abandoning the access to a consciousness at the end of the book, Jane Gardam makes an implicit comment about human interpretation and understanding. The reader is forced to write the final script and perhaps, in doing so, becomes more sympathetic.

In order to judge the truth and ascertain the meaning of the letters of Dodo Price, Athene's mother, the reader must ponder on the reliability of Mrs Price as a narrator. It is possible to see her as an unreliable narrator because of the limitations of her perspective and her apparent muddle-headedness. Perhaps it is too easy to be harsh on Mrs Price because of the sympathy we feel towards Athene. In any case we have other evidence on which to judge. Mrs Price's unreliability or bias as a narrator does not matter because the reader has other information on which to judge the authenticity of what she has to say. But this is cognitively very demanding. The reader must hold all the information which is provided and make a judgement as to the truth. The exposition of the

character of Mrs Price is an interesting example. In Chapter Six Mrs Price writes a letter to Athene in which she describes her new job at Larpent Avenue. This is followed by a scene between Beams and Sebastian in which they discuss their mother. "'Now givers', as Beams once said ominously, 'are worth watching'" (Gardam, 1977, 47). Not only does Beams comment, the author intrudes with the judgement that Mrs Price was a real giver. Later in the book Sebastian discusses his mother with his friend, Lucien. Sebastian obviously admires his mother very much and his admiration appears justified. It is very difficult for the reader to make a final judgement about Mrs Price but it is interesting and significant that the author allows her to have the final say on Athene. It is evident that the reader is led to believe that all along she had honesty and integrity, misguided though some of her actions may have been. Gardam, like all writers, is profoundly but not explicitly, a moralist of some kind. In this way her novel can be seen as an exercise in acquiring moral judgement. The young reader has to learn to grasp how layered human understanding is. He must be able to move from simple generalizations to recognition of how these must be modified in actual living.

The question also must arise as to how reliable a narrator is Beams in her journal and how demanding is it for the young reader to judge her reliability. Beams' journal reveals much more explicitly many aspects important to the reader's understanding of character and events. She gives us insight into her own character, strange, idiosyncratic and appealing as it is, we see the other characters from her point of view, we learn of her emotional attachment to Athene, she describes her own learning difficulties, we learn what she thinks of psychiatrists. The

authenticity of the document is stressed because Beams intends it to be an analytic study, objective and factual. However, its authenticity is questioned when Beams admits that she tends towards distortion. So what is the reader to believe?

The implied author, as omniscient narrator, gives the reader some help through her comments, although the tone of the authorial intrusions is often so ambiguous that the narrator assumes a character which the reader is forced to judge before being able to ascertain the truth of the intrusion. Despite the persistent changes in the point of view the author's presence is only too evident; more particularly at the beginning of the book. Although the author selects many disguises she does not try to hide the presence of the implied author. From the beginning the reader has the impression that the implied author far from being indifferent, is one with very definite values, one who does not hesitate to comment and who does so in a very definite way. By intruding into the narrative and making comments on the characters and the events the implied author is offering to have a contact with the reader above the events and characters. The reader needs to comply and be in agreement with the implied author or at least to suspend judgement and agree for the period of the reading, if the reading is to be a successful one. As Harding says,

Any but the most naive kind of reading puts us into implicit relation with an author. A novelist or playwright may be directing our attention mainly to the action and experience of his characters and part of our job is to enter imaginatively into them. But he is at the same time conveying his own

evaluation of what is done and felt, presenting it (to mention simpler possibilities) as heroic, pathetic, contemptible, charming, funny . . . and implicitly inviting us to share his attitude. Our task as readers is not complete unless we tacitly evaluate his evaluation, endorsing it fully, rejecting it, but more probably feeling some less clear cut attitude based on discriminations achieved or groped after.

(Harding, 1978, 201)

Jane Gardam, explicitly invites the reader to agree with her comments. What is particularly demanding on the young reader is the tone of such intrusions, for Jane Gardam's irony places great cognitive demands. A perplexing question is how does the young reader pick up the intended irony? And further, how does the young reader distinguish between factual statements and those loaded with ironic implication. The author uses irony to involve the reader and invite that secret collusion which is such an important and satisfying aspect of reading. Take the description of Athene at the beginning of the story, for instance. 'Athene Price was extraordinary. She was healthy, popular and good, happy at school, contented at home, effortlessly clever and played the piano like an angel. A fat sweet-tempered baby, a very pretty small child, she had never been spoiled; an elder daughter, she had not grown bossy . . .'

(Gardam, 1977, 18).

The complete omniscience of the author is questioned and acknowledged where the comment in brackets states '(there had been some great-grandmother from somewhere or other)' (Gardam, 1977, 19). This type of comment complexifies the character of the implied author, placing greater demands on the reader. By using the implied author like this

Jane Gardam brings the telling to the reader's attention, thus making the telling a 'problem'. By making it a problem she implicitly raises the nature of human telling and interpretation to the level of consciousness. Therefore she makes the nature of human explanation, interpretation and judgement a focus of attention, a very moral purpose.

Details concerning Athene are accumulated through a narrative which reads rather like gossip. Such a narrator would only have limited knowledge of family background but it makes the reader wonder about the narrator, an added complexity. It is through the gossipy tone, sustained with comments like, 'occasionally sharp-eyed people thought Athene a bit too perfect and said (particularly women, the mothers of girls) "You can't somehow get at her", and "it doesn't seem natural to be all sunshine like that" (Gardam, 1977, 19) that the reader is invited to agree explicitly with the author. This is partly achieved through the use of the word 'you'. 'She was a girl you remembered' (Gardam, 1977, 18) 'You could wonder at it', (Gardam, 1977, 19) and 'the thing you could not deny' (Gardam, 1977, 19). Here the author attempts to close the distance between herself and the reader. The reader becomes a participant in evaluating the character concerned, almost behind the back of the characters, or he becomes a commentating onlooker, in secret as it were.

Participation in the issues of truth telling and adequate interpretation is important. If the reader cannot participate in this kind of reading, if he cannot become the kind of reader demanded here then much of the meaning is lost. An even more sophisticated negotiation of meaning between author and reader is required where the author comments on Athene's name. Here the reader is invited explicitly to agree with the evaluation. 'For though 'Athene' is not perhaps such an unlikely name

when taken down fast with Sebastian and Phoebe, it isn't a name people feel comfortable with - less comfortable than now for this was some years back when middle-class English females were called artless, breezy sort of names that went well with tennis' (Gardam, 1977, 19). To this authorial comment the reader is required to negotiate meaning in much the way that Harding suggests (Harding, 1977, 201). One initially agrees with the author's comments and almost simultaneously questions their validity. The reader must be able to hold several judgement possibilities in some combined yet reviewable way, indeed the reader must be aware that this is what is expected. Perhaps because the referential demands are great, the reader might not immediately see why the English middle-class people in the thirties might object to such a name, nor what is meant by 'artless breezy names that went well with tennis' (Gardam, 1977, 219). Implicit too, in the comments, 'artless, breezy names . . . disagreeable births, unconventional passions . . . one is always a bit uneasy about pronouncing Pallas . . .' (Gardam, 1977, 19) is an irony in that the author is smiling at the sort of people who have such pretensions and the reader is invited to agree. If the reader does not see the type of reading demanded here then the ironic implications of the comments are lost.

Irony

The term 'irony' today has developed an augmented use. It is one of the most difficult aspects of the narrative technique. The author in inviting 'secret communion, collusion and collaboration' (Booth, 1965, 304) places great demands on the young reader. 'Whenever an author conveys to his reader an unspoken point, he creates a sense of collusion against all those, whether in the story or out of it who do not get the

point' (Booth, 1965, 304). But first the reader has to recognize that a point has been made though unspoken. An interesting example of this, which is very difficult for all but the most astute reader to pick up, is Athene's experience with the brooding young man she thinks is Heathcliff. Here the author sequences the events in such a way as to create situational irony. Such a structuring of events places great demands on the reader because it is only the astute and tenacious who will recognize the accumulation of hints and clues, make the appropriate connections and recognize the irony. Even recognizing the irony is insufficient because the reader must then seek the message of these ironies to understand what is indicated by them.

In this book the author places great cognitive demands on the reader because the reading must be one where the implied author and reader are in secret collusion behind the backs of the characters involved in the action in order for the full meaning to be grasped, a meaning which is more powerfully conveyed through irony than any other means. Through the book the author uses her irony subtly and caustically. There is verbal irony evident in her comments on characters like Mrs Price, who she says writes with 'a strict regard for what passes as truth' (Gardam, 1977, 27). Here, the social and moral critical discrimination is for those people, like Mrs Price, who are concerned to observe the proprieties, to look as though they are doing the right thing. This comment is ironic in its implication. The reader is invited to see that it means much more than it actually says and that the implied author, far from agreeing with it, abhors it and is inviting the reader to agree or at least consider the viewpoint. Through such verbal irony as well as through the ironies of event and outcome the author builds a special relationship from which the reader can gain pleasure from the sense of collusion so essential to

understanding. For the reader who does not pick up the intended ironies one must question the adequacy and validity of his reading.

Structure

The situational irony depends on the author leaving gaps in the narrative structure for the reader to fill. The reader must make these connections and comparisons if he is to be said to have read the book. One of the aspects of this book which makes it such a demanding read is the gaps which are left, the things which remain unsaid. They are not always ironic but the connections must be made if the reader is to work out what is happening even at the level of events. One is required to follow separate but intimately connected stories, each narrated in subtly different ways. Each of the stories is taken up intermittently and the reader is required to hold in suspension one story while he proceeds with the next. A further demand is that each of the characters is very different, each tells similar events though in a different way. To complicate matters further not all the story is told. Gaps are left in the narrative sequence which the reader must fill if he is to work out what happened. Flashbacks are used and occasionally events which occur simultaneously are described one after the other, sometimes even interwoven. Occasionally events are juxtaposed for moral judgement.

Each of these techniques is used to convey the truth that the author intends. Her complex narrative style reflects the complexity of human conscious experience and interpretation as she sees it and reports it. The language she uses recreates the texture of human experience in all its diversity and strangeness and she conveys with subtlety and honesty a view of life with all its vulnerability, joys and pain. Life,

she sees it, is a complex business and the narrative style reflects the passions and pleasures with many of their complexities. Such a style is cognitively very demanding for the young reader and yet deeply truthful.

The first three chapters are illustrative of the extreme complexity of the narrative style. Gaps of several different kinds are left for the reader to fill. Even the names mentioned in the opening few lines can leave the reader bewildered, wondering who are the creatures with the strange names. It is very different to fill the gaps here because the reader has not a context into which he can place the names. He is in the position where the number of suppositions to be propped are many and few seem satisfactory. Not only is very little information provided - it is difficult to pick up what they signal - but the names are unusual, difficult to place, especially for young readers who lack the referential background necessary. The first name mentioned is 'Athene' and as the author later admits this name does pose problems because of its 'queer overtones' (Gardam, 1977, 19) and 'dazzling associations' (Gardam, 1977, 19). Then there are the peculiar nicknames which are linked with a particular social class at a particular time, 'Boo' and 'Dodo'. 'Sebastian' and 'Mrs Price' are two other names mentioned in the first few lines and a little later 'Beams', 'Moonbeams', '(Phoebe at the font)' (Gardam, 1977, 15), 'Sybil Bowles' and 'Posie Dixon'. All these names the reader must hold and remember, filling in the emptiness behind them as the reading proceeds. The information is filtered gradually, the author does not provide us with coherent units at any time, so great demands are placed on the reader's ability to remember what is significant and make the appropriate links in the appropriate place. The reader is joining a new group as it were and experiences the difficulty similar to that even mature readers have coping with the names in Russian novels.

From the stance of omniscient narrator the author provides a sequence of short, dramatic scenes, described in abrupt almost staccato language, first in Mrs Price's drawing room, back in time to the funeral service, forward to the mourners lingering on the gravel, to the barn where the three children are conversing. There is a different sequencing of time and the point of view changes. The reader is given access to the disjointed thoughts of Athene, then back to the drawing room where Athene is greeted enthusiastically by all the well-wishers. Chapter Two is a description of Athene by the author. Two incidents from her childhood are briefly described. The story then takes us back in time to a discussion she has with her father, an incident which takes us further back in time to Athene's schooling and to her discovery that she had lived before as Emily Bronte. A science lesson is described in which Athene's private passionate thoughts are focussed upon, the reality of the science lesson and the comments of the science mistress indicated in brackets. Chapter Three begins with a series of letters from Mrs Price to Sybil, to Posie and to Boo. It concludes with the departure of Athene and Sebastian to their holiday destinations as described by the author. Enigmatic and oblique, with very little explicit explanation, the reader must wait to fill out the most important events with appropriate significance. This will require the production of tentative hypotheses and the ability to speculate and predict.

There are even facts which have the appearance of significance but are rather like red herrings. Again and again the egg sandwiches, the binoculars, the crucifix and the rope ladder are mentioned. In a sense they act as symbols encoding for us a great deal about Mrs Price and her preoccupations and in another sense they do not matter at all. But

because of the way that their presence reverberates throughout the novel they gain a status which perhaps they do not deserve. The world and its objects are unavoidably coded for all of us but the codes are not always extensively public nor equally significant. On the other hand there are comments which are apparently thrown away but which are of immense significance. Athene's relationship with her dead father is crucial to an understanding of what happens to her after his death but there are some thoughts which she will not allow herself to have. The reader is left to work out what these are. 'There are thoughts that must never . . .'

(Gardam, 1977, 20). The enigmatic old Rector is also a puzzle. The reader is provided with a number of clues but must finally work out for himself what he believes the Rector to have been like. We know he is old, that Sybil Bowles was mad about him, that he had been seventy when Athene was born, he alone always called his daughter Athene and 'then always after a few tries at something else, for by this time his great age had made one name much the same as another', (Gardam, 1977, 20) that he was tall and lively and talkative, that he was energetic and as noble as Wordsworth, that Athene was ashamed of his age, but Beams never thought about it, that his name was Alfred, that he honeymooned in Perugia in 1928 and bought a crucifix there, that he had not organized his financial affairs well, 'men of Alfred's genius are like this about money' (Gardam, 1977, 27) according to his wife, women are besotted by him and Sebastian does not think much of him. What is the reader to believe? This is rich territory for reflection and discussion.

Alfred Price is not the only mystery which faces the reader. Many other taxing questions are left for the reader to solve. What is wrong with Aunt Posie? Who is Heathcliff? What does Athene see in the pavillion? Who is the person who 'jigged and jigged before her holding a

red person with yellow hair?' What is wrong with Sybil Bowles? What is wrong with Primmy when Athene arrives to stay? Why is the rope ladder hanging from Basil's bedroom? What has happened to Athene at Basil's cottage? What is it that Athene does not know? What does the telegram mean? 'Is a thin Padshaw's Ring Cook's Cove 37 urgent Bowles?' What is the Buddhist monastery? Who is the only girl that Lucien has ever admired? What does Athene want from Henry Bell? What is happening to Athene up the tower? Why must she look at the graveyard? What finally happens to Athene? Has she really changed as much as is suggested? People as complex as these are tiring in real life, let alone a book about them. Young readers may not have had sufficient experience of life and people to cope with the diversity and complexity of the characters and situations presented in this book. The reader needs to be open to the concentration necessary to ponder on the questions raised by the book and open to experience outside himself.

Ending

The ending of this novel is a particularly difficult one. The reader knows that Athene eventually emerges from the door at the base of the tower and that the crisis is over. But there is one final view of Athene. Her mother describes how much she has changed in one of her letters but one wonders if Mrs Price is right. Again the reader is forced to reflect on the action of the novel in order to make a judgement but it is very difficult to do so. These are some of the questions that are never explicitly answered but the reader is required to make at least some tentative speculations about them if the book is to be partially grasped. The reader must attempt to make a coherence through tentative hypotheses and in all likelihood articulated speculations. The book invites

recursive reading. Most of the mysteries are created because of the way in which the story is narrated and the distinctive structuring of the events which leave gaps to be filled by the reader. Such gaps require a level of inference which for many readers is extremely demanding.

BILGEWATER

Point of View

Perhaps not quite so demanding is Jane Gardam's fourth novel *Bilgewater* (1979). For the second time in her fiction for the young she uses a first person narrator. Again the acceptance of her heroine, *Bilgewater*, who narrates the story, places demands on the young reader. *Bilgewater* is such an extraordinary young lady. She is so unlike the adolescents most young readers meet that they may have difficulty in accepting her. They might like to escape 'into' her if they are capable of being able to sustain a suspension of some judgements. Rather than contemplating what she represents, some young readers may dismiss her perceptions as those of someone certainly not ordinary. And *Bilgewater* gives much evidence for her strangeness. She looks odd, she has been brought up in unusual circumstances, after an exceptionally late start as a reader she has emerged as a brilliant mathematician, much given to swimming idly up and down the school swimming pool and wearing an odd collection of clothes from a second hand box.

Bilgewater's eccentricity is also revealed through her use of extremely vivid language which abounds in examples of striking simile and literary references. She describes the pork butchers' wives who appear at

school functions, 'in polyester and earrings' (Gardam, 1979, 20) looking like rows of drooping Christmas trees' (Gardam, 1979, 20). Her father as he looks at a bottle of wine, she describes as 'standing like a priest at Mass gazing at the pinkness of the wine held aloft' (Gardam, 1979, 25). She does not let herself escape from such extravagance. On one occasion she says she looks 'like a bilious owl' (Gardam, 1979, 25). These comparisons are probably used for her own amusement. Although a little ostentatious they reveal an adolescent liking for fancy dress extravagance. Not only would it be difficult for some young readers to understand the motivation of a child who thinks like this but it may be difficult to accept her view of the world as true. She tends to use simile rather than metaphor, perhaps indicating her level of development and she reveals a capacity to classify and re-classify. The agility and vitality of her mind is evident.

It may also be difficult to understand the odd comparisons which Bilgewater makes in her knowledgeable way. Again and again she makes reference to things which are important to her, sometimes explaining their meaning, sometimes as a passing reference. For example, in describing her name, she says that her second name is Daisy, after her mother. She admires the beauty of the name because of the fact that Chaucer uses it. 'Daisy' the day's-eye, the eye of day (The Legend of Good Women, Prologue 1.44)' (Gardam, 1979, 12). The significance of the name 'Chaucer' may pass many readers, as might the connection between Chaucer and 'The Legend of Good Women' but more of that later. Further on in the paragraph Bilgewater refers to herself as 'Marigold Day's-eye' Green' (Gardam, 1979, 12). A little later when discussing an academic gown she says that it is as 'green as grass and has buttercups and the eyes of day sprouting out of the seams' (1979, 15). In this way Bilgewater reveals her personal

symbolic schema in action, a web of personal symbols to which she constantly refers. The reader must pursue their significance to feel the full force of their impact and, in fact, to understand the meaning. It is only too easy to miss these references, especially if one is reading primarily at the level of events.

At times it is very difficult to work out exactly what she is describing, even at the literal level. When she describes the sights and sounds of the garden on one summer evening long ago, it is possible that the reader is as mystified as Bilgewater herself. 'There stood our garden first, pretty as a fire-screen, a lovely-hazy embroidered mixture of holly-hocks, tobacco plants and roses all tangled up together against an old brick wall' (Gardam, 1979, 29). More vivid than this is the 'distant high line of moors drawn with a sharp point across a great gentle sky' (Gardam, 1979, 29). There are the strange sounds 'plonk, ker-plonk, thud, bump' (Gardam, 1979, 29) and 'one, two, three, notes, pause. Yell, her-plonk, 'Oh blast you Jenks! One-two-three-four pause. Twitter of birds. The evening breeze. Ker-plonk. One, two, three, four, (go on, well done) five, six came the notes, then down again. Pause - then the whole phrase, effortless this time, complete. Mozart. Wonderful! (Gardam, 1979, 29). This is enigmatic and impressionistic writing like a report on a human awareness or a window on the play of a roving, unfocused consciousness. Bilgewater uses language to express a personal view of herself making sense of experience. Bilgewater's oddness of vision is once so disturbing that she has to run away from what she sees. She conveys her vision to the reader in the way she sees it. Dazzled by the sun, she is looking at a group of people who have been playing croquet coming towards her.

'Older than me, younger than Hastings - Benson, but filled with blessed self-respect. On they came, four or five of them across the

lawn, laughing like what Paula calls County, smiling, enjoying themselves.

Water-snakes, I suddenly thought. Like Coleridge's water-snakes. 'Slimy things that crawled with legs' but phosphorescent, adapted, cheerful. I envied them. 'I blessed them unaware'. They scared me stiff but I blessed them unaware.

'And who is this?' asked water-snake one (The Headmaster) mellifluous and kind.

'Why Marigold,' said water-snake two (Mrs Gathering) and I took to my awful high heels and fled' (Gardam, 1979, 74- 75).

Not only does the reader have to cope with Bilgewater's blurred vision and extravagant language but also with the complexity of her mind and the subtlety of the literary allusions she has at her disposal. The narrator is not kind to the reader. She makes assumptions about the reader's literary background. She makes oblique references without explanation. Her use of syntax is complex. She describes Paula's acceptance of the foibles of other people placing in brackets Paula's direct speech. 'She accepts and accepts and accepts. Puffy Coleman keeps falling in love with very little boys ('Well, it's not as if he does anything') dear Uncle Edmund Pen HB climbs ladders and weeps for love of anything vaguely female (He's romantic the dear knows'); one of the boys gets howling drunk at The Lobster Inn after failing all his O levels ('He's to be sobered and pitied and set to do them again at Christmas')' (Gardam, 1979). The reader has to work out which are Paula's comments which are Bilgewater's and the task is difficult. The layout adds to the density of the task, again suggesting the complexity of the human consciousness narrating the events. The reader cannot skim read if he is to make sense.

Bilgewater has a particularly vivid imagination. She dramatizes her daydreams. She includes these in her narrative almost as if they are part of the story, which in a sense they are. The unobservant reader may read these at the 'is happening' level rather than at the level of dream. Bilgewater dramatizes the conversations she would like to have with her mother over the Peeping-Tom episode and over Jack Rose, supplying alternative versions of the same conversation. She also acts out her desire to drown Terrapin when he tells her she has lovely arms, dramatically abandoning the helpless figure,

'Down you go, you filthy boy'
'Help! Help! I can't swim!'
'Drown then!'

(Gardam, 1979, 35)

And she revels in her dramatic re-enactment of the romantic, medieval love scene on the bridge with herself as heroine and Jack Rose, the knight in shining armour, Grace Gathering, the drowned Lady of Shalott (Gardam, 1979, 57). These scenes are so subtly a part of the narrative that it takes an effort of attention, a shift of focus to realize they are romantic imaginings.

Not only are Bilgewater's romantic daydreams demanding. Even more complex are the mathematical and philosophical ponderings of her clever mind. She is moved by a quotation from Hardy on the nature of the novel, 'The novel should express what everybody is thinking but nobody is saying?' (Gardam, 1979, 41). Thinking about the significance of this statement she says, 'I felt a warmth and satisfaction as I saw the words hollowly gleaming behind the symbols - facts behind facts. Truth behind truth' (Gardam, 1979, 41). The meaning of the symbols fascinates her, as does her growing realization that there are similarities between

mathematical and literary truth.

She wants to know if some people can experience and remain unchanged. These are complex thoughts which are most demanding for any reader, especially when phrased in such an enigmatic fashion. Nor do the coincidences of life escape her recognition, 'But something came suddenly before my own unspectacled eyes - a vision of the black dress and the soft and luscious sables being scooped out by me into the carrier bags. If one reads or thinks much about the roots of causality and coincidence one is always coming back to the moment of vision, the chicken or the egg' (Gardam, 1979, 90). Such thoughts are clearly moments of clarification for the thoughtful Bilgewater but not necessarily for the reader. The reader is expected to join with her not just watch her. She astutely sums up her thoughts on mathematics, coincidence and life in the essay which is part of her entrance examination for Cambridge. In the essay she links her experience of life, literature and science, linking also the events of the book. She may make explicit the connections for herself but it is only the astute and careful reader who will make the same obscure connections. As a dramatic narrator, Bilgewater demands much of the reader, linguistically, referentially and cognitively, conceptually and reflectively.

Structure

She does not tell all. Sometimes she tells, sometimes she shows. She expects certain connections to be made. There are gaps in the narrative structure which the reader has to fill in order to understand what is happening. The events are not all in the present time of the novel. Recursion must be made for noting and re-ordering the significance

of the codes of the information. She intermingles past events with ones which are more present, though of course, all the events are in the past. For most of the novel the reader has the impression that the main events of the story are in the recent past. The Prologue and Epilogue dispel that idea, once the reader realizes that the present Principal of a Cambridge College is the Bilgewater of the main story. Three unnerving incidents of Bilgewater's past are narrated before she brings the reader to the present time of the core of the novel. Not content with that there are frequent forays into the past through recapitulations of past memories. And there are the frequent interruptions to the story by the imaginative dramatizations of day dream. Such complexity places considerable demands on the attentiveness of the reader.

Frequent reference to literary figures may create gaps for many young readers. These are so much a part of the narrative that much of the meaning at the literal level is lost if the reader cannot fill in the background with the appropriate knowledge. There are references to James Joyce's Ulysses, to Wordsworth, to Thomas Hardy, Chaucer, Coleridge, Robert Graves, George Orwell, Shakespeare, Tennyson etc. There are even unacknowledged quotations from these works, unacknowledged because Bilgewater has taken them over and made them her own. Such a modelling shows interesting possibilities for the growing consciousness. On one occasion when Bilgewater catches sight of herself in a mirror, looking 'like a bilious owl' (Gardam, 1979, 70) she says, "'The mirror cracked from side to side'" with reference to 'The Lady of Shalott' (Gardam, 1979, 70), but a reference which is unacknowledged. And there are others, so many perhaps that even an astute, knowledgeable reader can miss them, missing out on some of the subtleties of the book and perhaps limiting an adequate reading.

Irony

There is the same subtle and sophisticated irony that requires the reader to see those meanings which are not explicit. There are the implied author's ironies and those of Bilgewater herself. Bilgewater makes ironic comments about herself throughout the story. She mocks herself. Many of these highlight the difference between herself and other girls of her age. One feels, however, that the author implicitly applauds her heroine for her social, intellectual and imaginative individualism. To read such subtleties requires considerable ability. More explicitly, perhaps, our heroine ironically comments on her father's 'at homes' which are not the least bit 'intellectual', at the same time commenting on the type of novel which inevitably described such 'intellectual' conversations. Through her irony she implicitly judges the education system of the time and what goes on in the name of a literary education, she shows her contempt for what is superficial about County and the sporty, social professionals, and, of course, about Cambridge.

Then there is the situational irony which so deliciously highlights the important themes but which requires a special effort on the part of the reader if the connections are to be made. There are obvious examples, for instance, when Jack Rose invites Bilgewater to stay at his home for the weekend. She is elated. The final irony of this situation is that Jack runs off, not with the lovely Grace, but with Mrs Gathering, Grace's mother, the headmaster's wife.

Less obvious are the ironies which highlight the fact that Bilgewater's teenage vision blurs reality for her. She ends up in her

medieval tower but it is decayed and crumbling. For a time she thinks of her real knight on his charger not Jack Rose and his sportscar but Terrapin and his motor cycle. It is only when her world has crumbled, Paula has gone away, her father is to remarry and there is an outbreak of measles with which she had to cope while preparing for her entrance examinations that she realizes who her real hero is. She questions the criteria for heroism, in fact. Again this is only suggested, the reader has to select from possible implications.

Ending

The ending is a complex one. The epilogue does not neatly conclude a complex tale. No 'Happily ever after' for Bilgewater. The reader must work out for himself that despite the judgement of Terrapin's daughter as she cheekily waves to Lady Boakes, 'You can see that she's never done anything silly in all her life' (Gardam, 1979, 204) that the inimitable Bilgewater, who waves back so jauntily, is still the same feeling person, the one who could answer in the affirmative the questions posed in the Prologue. These messages are never explicit and it takes an alert and attentive reader to perceive the subtleties of meaning which are contained in the book. Most young readers will need help.

Jane Gardam has written four books for older children. Each of the books is a fine achievement, culminating with the superbly controlled Bilgewater (1979). She has used a variety of narrative techniques in each of the books, combining them in complex ways to produce a richness of meaning which is distinctive. She does not compromise or write in a condescending way because she is writing for children. Indeed, it could be argued that she is not writing for children at all rather for mature

readers of any age.

As a result her books have an allusiveness which can easily escape all but the most astute of readers. Yet she writes with sensitivity about the young. She understands the pains and embarrassments of growing up and she explores this with a sympathetic conviction which is moving. She has much to offer to those who are prepared to engage with her texts.

Because of the complexity of her narrative style her books are not easy to enter and engage with. The implied reader they require is one who is prepared to be active, who willingly negotiates with the text, who grapples with meaning, withholding judgement until sufficient information has accumulated, who is prepared to suspend judgements until they can be reviewed, who speculates on possible outcomes and solutions perhaps without ever coming to a final solution and who takes on trust the complexities offered knowing that many of the mysteries will finally be solved. But the questions are answered only for those tenacious readers, those who insistently seek to make meaning. The sophistication and subtlety of the narrative style demands much of the young reader but the intellectual and emotional rewards are there for those who persevere. And the teacher can help.

A sensitive teacher can mediate these books in such a way that the children are given access to a richness of meaning which otherwise may be beyond them. At the same time an understanding of such books is providing the children with the sort of literary experience which will help them become the type of readers able to grapple with the great books of our literary heritage. Such experience enables them to practice speculating, predicting and questioning the text. It enables them to become agile,

sensitive and reflective readers and helps the development of a mature personality. More than that, because to understand the complexity of the stories Jane Gardam has to offer is an intellectual achievement.

CHAPTER 4

HOW THE TEACHERS CAN HELP

Aidan Chambers maintains that literature written for children, as with any literature, requires a reader to complete the work (Chambers, 1973, 67). He says that if this is so, then the author addresses someone as he writes and that this someone is called the implied reader. It is not necessarily that the author has a particular type of reader or a particular group of readers in mind while he is writing, rather, that for adequate understanding of a work a certain type of reading is demanded and this requires a certain type of reader. The book is a form of communication and the meaning has to be negotiated between author and reader. To achieve this an author creates, 'an image of himself and another image of his reader, he makes his reader as he makes his second self and the most successful reading is one in which the created selves, author and reader, can find complete agreement' (Booth, 1975, 138). He can do this both consciously and unconsciously. The author's second self is created by his use of various techniques, the way he tells his story, the way he sequences and structures the events, the comments he allows himself to make, the attitudes he adopts towards his characters and their actions and the ways and rate at which the information is disclosed, to name a few. By the way he tells his story, through the techniques he uses, he demands a certain type of reader, one who accedes to what the book has to offer, who copes with its demands, who seeks to negotiate meaning with the author, in short, he becomes the type of reader who willingly gives himself up to the book.

The text is the author's organization of experience and a way of organizing a reader's experience. Narrative can be about the real world,

the world we directly experience through our senses but it can also be about 'virtual worlds' constructed either in our own imaginations or through our involvement with the stories that others provide for us in gossip, story, novel, drama, film and television. While the text is the author's organization of experience, what each reader makes of it is, indeed for him, the story. His only direct perception of the story is what he makes of it. No-one else can read it for him, though the mediation of others may help to shape his response. A sentence or a paragraph in a novel may evoke different interpretations for each reader. The constructing of meanings involves both the author's text and what the reader brings to it. Through the discovery of the experiences of others with the text, discoveries which may be direct or indirect, he may come to see that his own was confused or limited and he may be stimulated to return to the text and reconstrue it in a better way. Or he may learn that his interpretation was adequate and ample and that certain expectations and practices are confirmed. This the reader must do for himself, and only what he experiences in relation to the text is the work.

The reader, in interpreting the text should seek cohesive patterns of meaning which account for, in increasingly ample ways, the details he notices. The reader seeks to make sense of what he is reading and he does this in terms of some of the interpretative schema he has acquired. The reader should remain aware of the interpretative schema being used at any time and be willing to try others, so that several interpretations compete for the reader's approval. The reader, in being aware of competing interpretations and interpretative artistry, enhances his own capacity as an interpretative artist. Some texts obviously require more interpretative artistry than others. The reading of a text occurs at a particular moment in the life of the reader. The transaction involves not

only the past experience but the present preoccupations and interests of the reader. It is also influenced by the quality of attention he dedicates. As well as his knowledge of literary conventions his interpretation is affected by his previous experience of reading and responding. This process is one which is learned and shaped by sharing. Sharing of the world and of the text helps the reader see significance in the text. Indeed it helps to construct significance. The act of interpretation helps the reader learn to interpret. Memory, expectations and an agility in conscious reflection and adjustment affect interpretation.

Literary fiction requires considerable effort and attention on the part of the reader, who needs help to develop interpretative ability, flexibility and judgement. Texts can offer a range of complex meanings which demand much of the reader. According to Kieran Egan, stories 'are embodiments of fundamental structures of the human mind; they reflect and educate us in important ways of making sense of experience, of investing the world with meaning, and of putting world and experience into words' (Egan, 1979, 141). Though if Egan is correct the use of story is fraught also with considerable dangers in that it may also restrict the expectations and anaesthetize the powers of aesthetic appreciation and critical discrimination.

A literary reader (Culler, 1975, 129) is one who expects to adjust and review his interpretation of the text. He has the ability to trust that a text is open to interpretations which, while making sense, may always be reviewed and adjusted. He knows that any reading is an interim one. With a demanding text, an 'adverse text' (Steiner, 1975, 296) once the reader has entered a negotiation with the text trusting that it is to

make sense, the next move is one of aggression and according to Steiner 'understanding, recognition, interpretation are a compacted, unavoidable mode of attack' (1975, 296). Although Steiner's comments refer to translation, the act of interpreting a text has similar qualities. A literary reader realizes that many strands enter into a judgement of a work and one's response varies depending on the different categories of criteria which may be applied to the work. Various categories of value, technical virtuosity, psychological insight and admirable moral values, for example, provide frames for looking at the totality of the fictional transaction. What the literary reader seeks is a text which is valued because of its quality as discerned from a number of critical perspectives.

To participate in the complex demands of following a story and the act of story telling itself is no easy task, especially as the interpretation of the story will rely, in a crucial manner, on the understanding of the significance of the value issues which underpin the story itself. It is in the critical interpretation of fictions that the individual can come to realize something of the shared basis of self-conscious human action. Judgement of a text is absolutely crucial, 'the formation of opinion is one of our corner-stones, in our private lives and generally in civilization' (Robinson, 1973, 227) but the judgements are not final, last judgements, they are successive, changing judgements which can be refined and developed as the conversation continues. 'Formal criticism guarantees the criticism there must be in every life in the same way that love poetry guarantees the seriousness of sex' (Robinson, 1973, 227). The written word is enduring, it has a permanence that can be largely free of a non-linguistic context. As Margaret Donaldson says, 'the lasting character of print means that there

is time to stop and think, so that the child has a chance to consider possibilities - a chance of a kind which he may never have had before' (Donaldson, 1978, 95). This process encourages the development of an awareness of one's own thinking and contributes to the development of the critical intellect, which Margaret Donaldson says are relevant to the development of the kinds of thinking important in other areas of the school curriculum, mathematics and science, for instance or, indeed, in living a life.

Even the simplest story, a fairy story, for example, offers the opportunity for reader participation in story making. The richer the story the more potential it has. A rich story offers the reader the opportunity to choose from several different orders of connections, to fill the gaps in the author's telling. Some authors, William Mayne, Alan Garner and Eleanor Raskin, for example, deliberately disguise their intentions. They do not make plain. They invite the reader to go digging for meaning. The openings of their books signal the type of reading, the kind of personal involvement which is demanded, if the reader is able to notice the signals. Most people read 'too bitily and too quickly; they have no gears in their reading' (Hoggart, 1970, 207). Mayne, Garner and Raskin demand that the reader shifts gear. They provide texts which have dimensions of richness in the events, the characters, the issues presented and the inter-subjective engagement with the author, which demand much of the young reader. So too with Jane Gardam. Like them she provides occasions for learning how to be more aware of oneself and others.

The gaps left in a text can be filled in different ways. Any one text is potentially capable of a large or indefinite number of realizations. At one level a reader can understand the words and yet not

see their significance in the cultural context. He fills that gap according to his expectations of what is likely. His ability to propound suppositions will be influenced by his cognitive hold on the frame, 'his knowledge of texts, textual laws and conventions, together with his general cultural preparation and the influence of critics, friends, and so forth . . .' (Elam, 1980, 93). According to Elam these features combine to make up what is known in the aesthetics of reception as the 'horizon of expectations' (Elam, 1980, 93).

Perhaps no one reading can exhaust the full potential of a literary text, just as one viewing of a film of the complexity of 'Chariots of Fire' or 'Apocalypse Now' will not be sufficient to gain the depth of meaning which is there. As the reader fills the gaps left by the text he is forced to make decisions and these decisions reveal an awareness of the possibilities of meaning as well as the need to decide the ways in which closure must take place. Every reader's interpretation of the text is in effect a new construction of it 'according to the cultural and ideological disposition of the subject' (Elam, 1980, 94). It is the reader who must make sense of the text for himself, the final responsibility for the meaning, coherence, comprehensiveness and intellectual rewards of what he constructs is his.

A literary reader is not locked into a single interpretation. He shows an interpretative sensitivity and agility and knows what to pay attention to. For the literary reader a second reading of the text can be a richer, fuller one. The extra knowledge will influence the re-interpretation of the text. Because of what he now knows, he sees significance that he was not capable of seeing in the first reading. As Iser says,

With all literary texts, then, we may say that the reading process is selective, and the potential text is infinitely richer than any of its individual realizations. This is borne out by the fact that a second reading of a piece of literature often produces a different impression from the first.

(Iser, 1974, 280)

The reader must be able, through the process of anticipation, retrospection and controlled concentration, to link the different phases of the text together. This is not a simple process and requires work and agility on the part of the reader. He has to make comparisons and connections between his own experiences and those offered by the book, he has to provide that part of the text which is not told and to do this he must think at least some of the time in terms of experiences different from his own, speculating on alternative possibilities.

For the inexperienced reader these processes can be extremely difficult and interaction with a sensitive adult is often crucial. A sensitive teacher with knowledge of the child, the book and the nature of the narrative demands upon our attention and background can often mediate the book in such a way that its potential is more fully realized. Many children do not want to work at their reading in the way the text demands they do. They have not learned the different genres of literature and reading or to become the type of reader the genre demands. If the book is not immediately accessible to them, often they want to reject it. They want the book to suit them rather than accepting that they might have to adapt to the book. It is not enough that children read, even if the reading is regular and frequent. What is important, 'what ultimately matters is that the children be brought to a valued appreciation that reading is more than a passive pursuit' (Chambers, 1973, 30).

The reader has to involve himself in the work and make critical judgements, not the type of judgements which set out to mechanically analyse and perhaps destroy a work, rather a questioning appraisal which can bring the reader close to the meaning of the text. There may be a range of valid interpretations of a work. What is important is the development of a critical awareness which will help the children 'to read with more enjoyment and understanding what their teachers have found to be of value' (Chambers, 1973, 121). Interpretation depends on the kind of discourse which, in literature, is related to genre. The reader should be able to recognize the genre if he is to gain adequate meaning from the text. The development of critical awareness requires that the teacher knows both what it is about the book which is demanding and this turns on realizing the kinds of reading the book requires if it is to be both pleasurable and intellectually rewarding and methods by which he can help the child to enter the book and come to a close understanding of it. In other words, it would be helpful for the teacher to know 'how to mediate the books and their readers in such a way that individual books are not only better appreciated by children but that children are also helped to become literary readers' (Chambers, 1973, 67).

Children need to be helped to recognize the type of fiction which attempts to recreate life in all its complexity and diversity, recreating its texture in a language which is apt and original. Most children will not gain an understanding of such fiction on their own. 'Readers are made not born. No-one comes into the world already disposed for or against words in print' (Chambers, 1973, 16). They need help, encouragement and guidance. They need to be introduced to books which will expand their sense of what it means to read while not destroying their desire to read. The reader needs to learn that it is important to seek a coherence of the

text and that to do this requires a personal effort. The young reader needs to be helped to discover that what may appear to be a difficult task has its inherent rewards, that to work at gaining meaning from a book, especially if the effort is expressed through talk or writing, can be satisfying and enjoyable. The expression of one's interpretation can be opened to extension and re-ordering and the young reader needs to be helped to realize that this is a valuable and exciting process.

Reordering is important in terms of developing a comprehensive account of the book. In order to gain a coherent and comprehensive account of the text, imaginative projection on the part of the reader is important. Such projection is highly individual and it is only when such projection is exposed to public review that it can be controlled, modified, polished and extended (Searle, 1969, 74).

Any interpretation of a text requires the reader to ask both what the text means and what are its implications for living. Interpretation 'includes not only what biblical scholars have named *'interpretatio'* but also what they are traditionally called *'applicatio (significance)'* (Hirsch, 1976, 19). Any connection that the teacher makes from the text to the world itself reveals to the children, in a wide variety of ways, how to make sense of the world, how to judge and how to judge interpretations.

Jane Gardam tells stories which move the reader to see 'other worlds' and to reflect on his own and his understanding both critically and creatively. They encourage reflective thought and conversation, as well as writing, which engenders further thought about the world, literary art as well as consideration of the ways that our individual representations help our living. They offer the opportunity for the

reader to identify with the nature of the situation, the events and the kinds of character, even the sort of story. The reader may agree with the work, he may read to escape from his current life, to meet the shared illusions of the book, to stand back from his own living so that it can be viewed against a new pattern or background and thus see it in new proportions, to hide from actuality, to confirm a prejudice, to dull a worry or soothe an emotion. The reader's stance before the work is not a stable one. He may do some or all of these things. Most readers read for a variety of reasons and purposes. Occasionally a reader wants to escape from the prison of himself and his current living. In doing so his living may be enlarged and made more vivid by the experience; so that we keep the categories supple by which we make sense of life.

What a young reader enjoys and identifies with may only slowly shimmer into clear relief in the reader's consciousness. He may need time and encouragement to go beyond the surface of a story, beneath the surface of a character, beyond the apparent cause and effect in human action and response. The young reader may become only aware slowly of depths in himself beyond his own surface understanding. Only gradually does the reader come to see how he observes himself to himself. The compelling literary narrative provides the energy to stir the individual to reflect upon his understanding, upon the measures by which human action and human hopes are to be judged. Reading the books of Jane Gardam provides the reader with the opportunity of paying attention in different ways. The reader has to decide what lies beyond the explicit and the teacher can help.

There is a trend in literature for children to provide non-linear narratives which convey subtle layers of meaning in increasingly complex

ways. These narratives are layered expressions of the understandings of character, action and purpose. The layers mutually support, though critically comment on each other. Such critical comment allows for the development of ironic awareness in the young reader. The works of Jane Gardam exemplify this trend and if a young reader can be helped to cope with her rich and varied narratives, then intellectually he is a step forward. If the teacher can help the inexperienced reader to gain the range of reading skills that her texts demand, not only will the child develop those skills of logical reasoning, anticipating and retrospecting, problem solving, forming hypothesis and reformulating them in the light of further knowledge and so on but there should follow that increase in self-awareness which is so important in the development of the child. To become more self-aware is important if the child is to be able to control his own thinking. For this to happen he must be conscious of his thought processes and this awareness can be developed through the process of making meaning from story. Jane Gardam's stories offer rich opportunities for such meaning making.

Her novels are complicated, like the complex social and physical worlds we inhabit. They contain a world view which indicates to the young that simplistic views are insufficient and untrue. They suggest that all our understanding of the world is theory-laden. She is not alone in bringing this view to the attention of the young. This view is one which needs to be examined in these story contexts with the help of skilled teachers. The text itself is not reality, rather it embodies a system of values and beliefs for the reader to interpret. Even the world of streets, buildings, people, relationships and the organization of days themselves reveal on inspection that it, too, embodies systems of value and belief which we are all a part of.

The texts we are looking at and interpreting are not 'reality' but man-made 'artefacts' (Brooke-Rose, 1981, 6). The story is always out there. The author selects from the unremitting flow of events, interprets relationships, causes, motives, feelings and consequences and gives them order. Beginnings and endings have to be invented to give order to an otherwise unmanageable flux. The text is the result of a mental process through which the author has distilled from his experience a meaningful sequence, placed it within boundaries and created a narrative. According to Christine Brooke-Rose, the text is like a meaning-making machine, which works like a philosophy or an ideology which the reader interprets as such (1981, 6). If it is a philosophy then the reader might hold it propositionally or even 'ironically', as Egan uses the term, that is one way of looking at his own life and the world, one among many ways (Egan, 1979).

Jane Gardam's works are examples of what is now available in children's literature. They raise profound questions about life and living, calling on and extending the reader's understandings and perception. Teachers need to provide children with the sort of questions which, while eliciting thoughtful and open responses, are also applicable outside the classroom and school, indeed outside literature. Such questions would help the reader notice more about interpretation and the act of interpretation. Jane Gardam's books allow the child the opportunity to become a literary reader, more aware of the interpretative schema available and being used. Her stories can provide the occasion, through conversing and conferencing for sharing ways of interpreting ourselves and reality - noticing how other people build up and interpret a picture of reality, how they re-interpret their realities and how they

reflect upon prior events in order to build up new patterns of significance. Rather than telling the reader what to think in an obvious way Jane Gardam presents a subtle view of a complex world, one which enables the reader to establish the connections and make a coherence. She 'shows' rather than 'tells'. This method is dramatic, it is like Henry James' 'notion of 'showing'. It calls for a dramatic reading of the text, not necessarily in a dramatic form. It is not theatrical nor is it explicit but it invites the reader to recreate the drama of what is shown in the text. 'The work is more than the text' (Iser, 1974, 274). Each individual realization of it will impose a pattern. A web of significance will be achieved through selection, anticipation and retrospective modifications. All individual realizations will enrich the text through the reader's creative role which allows for 'a high degree of 'free' variation' (Brooke-Rose, 1981, 34).

In his realization of the text the reader will ascribe motives, will postulate theories and try to solve mysteries especially when the text is a 'writerly' one (Brooke-Rose, 1981, 41). All texts have a creative aspect inherent in them but the modern 'writerly' text demands much more of the creativity of the reader in that he must become a producer of the text. Authors like William Mayne, Ivan Southall, Alan Garner and Jane Gardam require a 'writerly reader' - one who can complete the work, a poetic reader - one who can join the writer in the creative aesthetic act.

It is not only the participation in the reading which is important in the development of the literary reader. It is the growing individual awareness on the reader's part of how much interpreting depends on the reader himself, who will bring to his reading in some open textured way

his own expectations, social, emotional and moral. To become a literary reader is to grow to self-awareness. To develop self-awareness is to be able to make explicit or articulate understanding, response and interpretations. A text which extends the reader's awareness of how and what he attends to, how he produces a coherence would be an important addition to the reader's sense of being.

Jane Gardam's books help the reader see that the world, too, may be viewed largely as a text and the act of self-conscious interpretation is one which gives the individual a sense of control and freedom. Her books demand much more sustained attention than those of K.M. Peyton, for example. To read a Jane Gardam novel requires much more literary agility because the reader has to reconstitute from shards of information what is happening both inside and outside the characters and the events.

It would be unwise of the teacher to introduce Jane Gardam's books to adolescent readers unless they had experienced a wide variety of other literature which would prepare them for the encounter.

The young reader needs the support of social and participatory action to help him develop the power to engage with the complexities of novels like Jane Gardam's. A good reading requires the reader to retain an awareness of his fictive engagement and not to surrender to another's fantasy. A power to control and layer one's own consciousness so that experience and consciousness become contributors to self-reflective power is crucial in such a reading. The power of reflective engagement is crucial. It is important to convey that the process is an exciting and challenging one, and there are permanent pleasures and rewards. The young reader should not be hurried into impersonal and abstract formulations,

'the successful teacher of literature makes the classroom a place for critical sharing of personal responses' (Rosenblatt, 1976, 286). The awareness that others have had different experiences with a text will lead the reader back to it for a closer look. The exchange of ideas and the scrutiny of reasons for the response will create in the young reader the awareness of the relevance of developing a critical terminology. It should also develop the ability to handle more and more demanding facts. The discussion of personal responses can give rise to the serious study of literature. It implies trust in some profoundly personal way. It also implies some pressure of authority both of teacher and text.

The better the teacher understands the demands of the work the better he is able to help the young reader. But this cannot be done by 'formulas for reading, or by simply requiring the mouthing of the right answers to the right questions. Passive acceptance of the teacher's interpretation can bring only pseudo-understanding, verbalizing about rather than experience of the work. Even the skills and knowledge to be imparted can so easily become substitute ends in themselves' (Rosenblatt, 1976, 286). A description of point of view, an analysis of structure, a definition of the nature of irony or the recognition of the pattern or significance of the ending are not the ends or the justification of teaching. These are the foci for the reader. It is attention to these aspects of literature which can help the reader learn to describe or express his response to the clues offered by the text and gain more meaning from it. Their value lies in helping the reader enter, in a more fully aware way, into the total experience by which he organizes and recreates the work for himself and prepared for others like it. An increased understanding of the work should help prepare the reader for life experiences like the ones he encounters in literature. This study is

not just about Jane Gardam and her novels. It is about the teacher developing a literary repertoire and developing the skills that the reader needs to make a literary work with an author.

Jane Gardam's work is a model for narrative technique and the occasion for the exploration of literary competence. She writes 'writerly' texts which the reader must complete. She is both a model for learning to tell stories and learning to write.

In this context writing is not conceived as a literary enterprise but as a means for developing self-awareness. Gardam requires a multi-faceted approach to her representations of life. Her stories, which are complex stories within stories, beg explanatory stories from the reader. They provide writing contexts. The writing will be about human understanding first and, as a consequence, about writing itself. It will use some of the literary forms to report on the novel. Jane Gardam uses and models many of the forms of writing suggested by Moffett, interior monologues, dramatic monologues, plays, letters, diaries, fragments of autobiography, eye witness accounts, reports, case studies, first and third person fiction, essays of generalization and essays of logical argumentation (1981, 146). Gardam provides a reading experience which initiates the reader into writer-like activities to which the reader can express a response in writing activities.

Engagement with the work of Jane Gardam offers opportunities for the young reader to project into several viewpoints, to look at endings in relation to the work as a whole and to notice ironies both of literature and of life. Her works offer the opportunity for the reader to develop an appreciation of irony in its various forms, which should lead to the

possibility of aesthetic disengagement and distancing and to develop tentative perceptions and understandings. These opportunities are not only literary, they are moral and humane. They are part of the pursuit of virtue - necessary but not sufficient. In telling and receiving stories that aspire to truth man is part of that moral tradition 'according to which the telling of stories has a key part in educating us into the virtues' (MacIntyre, 1981).

The beginning of literary awareness requires the development of self-awareness, a reflective way of engaging with one's own living. The work of Jane Gardam can be the basis for a range of possible writing activities which can help the development of self awareness. Her work, because of the diversity of its narrative form, models a range of writing vehicles. The Summer after the Funeral (1977) gives the young reader examples to look at of how different forms of writing can be used, the letter, the diary, third person narration. Bilgewater (1979) provides an example of a narrator using different forms to express ideas, thought and feelings. She uses anecdote, daydream, reporting and the generalized essay which is a distillation of abstract thought through experience. Jane Gardam models writing in complex and diverse forms, providing for the student different ways of engaging with his own reality.

Narrative is not only, nor does it begin as, an aesthetic matter. Narrative is part of the individual's means to self-awareness and to the growth of a philosophic view of human living (Egan, 1979). It introduces the individual to the exploration of ironic viewpoints of life.

Perhaps most important of all is the fact that narrative offers the opportunity to project oneself into another point of view. If one can

see things from different points of view one can make judgements. The ability to see things from different points of view helps in the development of understanding and tolerance. To be able to accept the attitudes and values of others and to be tolerant of them is most important. Different points of view must be tried out to develop the capacity for empathy. Good literature offers the reader the opportunity to do this.

Point of View

The novels of Jane Gardam present a complex world view. They present characters with different world views within a coherence organized by the author. The central characters are in the throes of making sense of themselves and others and perhaps are growing towards being compassionate and mature beings. These central figures invite the sympathy of the reader and offer opportunities to see things from different points of view. To understand these viewpoints is part of the maturation process.

Other Reading

To help the young reader cope with stories told from different points of view, it is important to read stories narrated from different stances. Jane Gardam's A Few Fair Days (1974) and The Summer after the Funeral (1977) are both narrated in the third person, using the main character as a centre of consciousness. Examples of this method of narration, both in its omniscient author and third person centre of

consciousness aspects are so numerous as to make any list seem redundant. For the purposes of this study, however, the following books could have been selected; A Stitch in Time (Penelope Lively, 1978), The House in Norham Gardens (Penelope Lively, 1974), Tom's Midnight Garden (Phillippa Pearce, 1956), The Jersey Shore (William Mayne, 1973), Bread and Honey (Ivan Southall, 1970) Josh (Ivan Southall, 1971). Jane Gardam's two books, A Long Way from Verona (1976) and Bilgewater (1979) are told in the first person. Some particularly interesting uses of the method can be found in the following - A Winter of the Birds (Helen Cresswell, 1975), Summer of my German Soldier (Bette Green, 1977), The Pigman (Paul Zindel, 1968), Blowfish Live in the Sea (Paula Fox, 1974).

Writing

Once the children are aware of the possibilities of narrating stories from different points of view then it is important that they be encouraged to do so in their own writing. In choosing different stances from which to tell his story the writer becomes more aware of the writer's relations to his subject and audience. Such awareness should help the child when reading and listening to fictional narratives told from a similar stance. James Moffett suggests that 'the writing of letters, diaries and general autobiography begin in elementary school and be followed in junior high by narrative that specializes in memoir, biography and chronicle' (1968, 153). He says that in this way, as well as through encountering a range of fiction told from different points of view, the student becomes familiar with the story types on his spectrum and closer to an understanding of them.

In A Few Fair Days (Gardam, 1974) the story is told from the point of view of an omniscient narrator, using a young child as a centre of consciousness. Because of the age of the child the perspective is a limited one and difficult for the reader to cope with. Many young readers need help to notice the vagueness of childhood memories and the mysteries which surround even the most vivid recollections. Before reading the first story from the collection the children could be asked to recall their own vivid childhood memories and perhaps to write about a particular favourite. The pieces of writing could be shared and the children could be encouraged to discuss the problems they had recalling, selecting and describing their memories. This activity would make an excellent bridge to the reading of the first story, helping the children prepare mentally for what they are about to encounter without detracting from the immediacy and vividness of Jane Gardam's writing, or it might accompany their reading. The point of view from which the story is narrated can be discussed and the children could try writing their own memories in the third person or Lucy's experiences on the beach in the first person from Lucy's point of view. To describe the events of a story from a point of view different from the one the author selected is to require the reader to focus closely on particular passages. Close focus on the text, followed by talk, sharing tentative interpretations, bringing one's own experiences to bear on the understanding of an event or character, describing what happened from another point of view helps the young reader refine and shape meaning. It also needs the reader to make explicit the ways he is combining clues the author leaves but has not developed.

The Summer after the Funeral (Gardam, 1977) is also narrated in the third person and there are many passages in this book which could be amplified if retold in the first person. To ask the students to describe

the funeral in the first person from Athene's point of view, to describe her experiences with Heathcliff, her responses to the school teacher, Henry Bell, her feelings towards her father, the traumatic incident on the tower or her experiences at the new school would help the reader fill in some of the gaps left because the story has been narrated from another point of view.

Similarly, where the story has been written in the first person the young reader could be encouraged to distance himself from the intensity of the telling and reflect, in a more objective way on the truth of what is being told by describing some scenes from the stance of the third person omniscient narrator. In A Long Way from Verona (Gardam, 1976) there are many scenes where gaps could be completed if told from the stance of the third person. Jessica's devastating last day of term, her dramatic response upon receiving back her forty page essay, the tea in the tea shop, her meeting with the escaped prisoner, and her conversations with Christian, for instance, would benefit from an alternative telling. The results of such tellings by the students could be compared with the text to decide which method conveyed the meaning better and the reasons for this. The novel, Bilgewater (1979) also told in the first person has many passages whose meanings would be enriched for the reader if told from another point of view. Bilgewater's school experiences, her life with her father, the visit to the Roses, the dance on the pier, the night spent with Terrapin in his tower and coping with the epidemic of measles are but a few of such passages. Not only would the children gain more meaning from the passages by focusing closely on the text but they would begin to compare the narrative techniques to decide which ones convey the meaning more clearly. Any activity which encourages the reader to look at the events of the novel from another point of view, describing a scene from

the stance of one of the other characters, writing an answer to one of the letters, writing a journal entry for one of the characters or writing a script should encourage the children to return again and again to the story to look sympathetically at what the author is attempting to do.

Reading Aloud

One important means of helping children understand complex narratives and one which should not be undervalued is that of reading aloud. Even the best readers enjoy being read to, and adults do far too little of this for older children. Reading aloud to children is an excellent way of sharing a story together, it demonstrates the reader's valuing of literature, provides opportunities for the sharing of books which would not ordinarily be selected by the children, and, more importantly, helps shape understanding through the way the story is read.

The teacher can read to the children in a serial way, one episode at a time, after which the events can be discussed. The students can follow the text with the book or sometimes they can be read to without the books.

Sometimes the teacher may want to read suitable passages. The opening of The Summer after the Funeral (1977), the afternoon tea scene in A Long Way from Verona (1976) and Bilgewater's dream sequences are a few of the sequences which lend themselves to reading aloud by the teacher. The students can be asked to select passages to read aloud to the rest of the group, perhaps giving reasons for their selections.

Questions

Questions are most important in helping the reader towards

understanding. The teacher should seek the comments and puzzlements of the students first and then through carefully selected questions attempt to guide the reader to a closer understanding of the text. The importance of such questions, and the way the answers are received, cannot be underestimated. Questions do more than reveal something of what a pupil understands. They reveal to the young reader what to look for, what to note on the way, what is important and significant. A question can be answered openly or defensively but unless the teacher can get the child to reveal his tentative understandings, it is very difficult to begin to shape a more mature response.

An important learning moment for teacher and child, indeed for anyone, is when one opens oneself to counter interpretations or understandings. The kinds of questions asked largely determine the quality of the children's thinking and the depth of their understanding. If the questions the teacher asks are to help the child gain more meaning from complex narratives and begin to understand how different techniques have been used to shape meaning then the questions should require the children to use details rather than recall them, encourage them to recognize implied meanings and base inferences on what has been written, expect them to relate the author's ideas to their own experiences and to form judgements about their validity. The questions need to be informed concerning the demands the actual narratives place on the young reader. It is important that the teacher admit to not being sure about certain aspects of a book.

The teacher can be chairperson helping the young reader negotiate meaning and incidentally reaping rewards. The teacher needs to set up situations in which the children are encouraged to ask questions. For

example when the students are reading they can be asked to jot down puzzlements and questions, tentative interpretations, questions to ask other young readers and teachers. These jottings can lead to conversations with each other, with the teacher or with other adults about the jottings. The conversations will include possible explanations of actions, attitudes and events, explorations of the writer's art and discussion of the moral views. In this way a number of insights can be combined into a more coherent expression.

Irony

To help a young reader recognize irony and implicit meaning is much more difficult. The detection of verbal irony is something that children learn gradually. Awareness of verbal irony begins in the common experience of sarcasm. Because sarcasm is oral it uses several codes to adjust the surface meaning of the language utterance. The listener has the help of tone of voice, facial expression, gesture and context of situation to help him read the implicit meaning. In written language the cues are different and more difficult to interpret. The language background of a child, his attitudes to life and society, his reading repertoire, the questions asked and the way a story is read to him may help him detect that there is a meaning in the statement beyond the literal one. Sometimes, perhaps, the young reader will have to be told by his peers or the teacher, of the ironies, at the risk of ruining the reading experience but with the hope that the next time he encounters such irony he will be more prepared for it. Sometimes the reader may only need to be told in advance about the irony and left to detect it for himself. Perhaps, too, sometimes there is no need to point out the irony at all. Close focus on certain important

ironic passages, followed by carefully phrased questions will often be enough to encourage the young reader to think beyond the literal statement.

Key Passages

Jane Gardam cues her irony in quite complex and at times particularly covert ways. Focus on key ironic passages may help the children see that there is more meaning beyond the literal statement. For example, in A Few Fair Days (Gardam, 1974) when the implied author comments, 'Of course some people will tell you that in Yorkshire you have ham and salad and tinned peaches for tea but this is not true if the aunts are coming. Not true at all. It has been buns and bits since the Vikings' (1974, 14), the children could be asked to explain the meaning of the statement. If they fail to detect the verbal irony further questions could be asked. Why do they have buns and bits if the aunts are coming? Why not ham and salad and tinned peaches? Why since the Vikings do they have buns and bits? Who are the Vikings? What are bits? Do you think the author means what she says? Is she mocking? What has been left unsaid? The teacher must judge when too many questions have been asked or asked too quickly.

There are many such passages throughout each of the four novels, passages which use the full spectrum of verbal irony ranging from an indulgent awareness of other people's foibles through to full blown mocking. In such passages the irony implicitly invites the reader to share the views of the implied author, or at least to detect the presence of these views and if the reader fails to see the intention of the author

then much of the richness of meaning is lost.

Conferencing

The non-threatening conference session provides the opportunity for the type of careful questioning by the teacher which can help the young reader fill the gaps and recognize the situational irony. An interesting example for close attention is Arnold Hanger in A Long Way from Verona (1976). Arnold Hanger is mentioned three times in the book and it may be enough merely to draw the attention of the children to this for them to see the irony. It is Arnold's pale, drooping, romantic, stereotypical figure of the poet or writer, who is Jessica's inspiration to become a writer. Ironically it is the discovery of Arnold's sentimental, poorly written book which causes Jessica so much anguish. Yet to receive a telegram from him congratulating her on the publication of her poem gives Jessica a great deal of satisfaction. Why? To focus on the three incidents and to explore the connections between the three would help the children see the irony. The conference session also allows students to ask questions and share ideas not only with the teacher but with each other in a way that they might find difficult in a larger group.

Dramatic Re-enactment

To help the students cope with irony and point of view, aspects of a complex narrative, but also to help them fill in the gaps caused by the way the story is structured, dramatic re-enactment is most important. Louise Rosenblatt says,

Perhaps a better analogy for the re-enactment of the text is the musical performance. The text of a poem, or a novel or drama is like a musical score . . . in the literary reading even the keyboard on which the performer plays is - himself .

(1978, 14)

To read in a literary way requires the reader to re-enact imaginatively the text. To encourage the child to perform the text in a dramatic way is to get him to do what the literary reader does in his mind. The goal is not to turn out theatrical interpretations. The learning takes place in the trialling rather than in the performance. Jane Gardam's books require that the reader be able to perform flexibly, imaginatively and self-correctingly. In performing her texts the reader is helped to a more agile and concentrated consciousness, to an amplified sense of being.

There are many scenes in Jane Gardam's books which could be re-enacted in a dramatic way. The opening of The Summer after the Funeral (1977) which begs for a shared social engagement, one which allows the child to become conscious of the possibilities of participatory imaginative involvement. This involvement would help the young reader fill in the gaps left in the text because of the complex structuring and the irony. Dramatic re-enactment requires the examination of a number of points of view in some sort of coherent way because it is the presentation of a highly selective, edited and patterned version of what has happened. In the opening of The Summer after the Funeral (1977) the author provides a sequence of short, dramatic scenes, first in Mrs Price's drawing room, the funeral service, the mourners lingering on the gravel and the barn where the children are conversing. To recreate these scenes dramatically demands that the readers pay close attention to the text, be able to hold several points of view at once and be prepared to adjust and re-adjust

interpretation.

After having read the first chapter of The Summer after the Funeral (1977) the teacher could ask the students to act out the drama of the first few pages of the book. The students could be divided into small groups, each group responsible for presenting either part or whole of the chapter. Group work has many advantages particularly as it allows for otherwise quiet children to make a contribution and to articulate their ideas in a way that they might not in front of the class as a whole. The climate of the room which encourages these activities is also crucial if the children, quiet or otherwise, are to contribute honestly and willingly.

The close focus on the text, the talk about what is happening, and the discussion of interpretations help perceive and refine meaning. Such talk is not possible if the situation is not one which engenders both excitement and trust. It is most important that the children are encouraged to share their interpretations in such a way that all can revise and reformulate their ideas in the light of the contributions of others. Imaginative re-enactment encourages a close focus on the text. Such an activity shows the child how active he can be in obtaining the full possibilities from a story. The dramatic re-enactment, which gives rise to shared examination, to discussion and action, helps the reader to concentrated attention.

All of Jane Gardam's novels have sequences which lend themselves to participatory imaginative involvement through dramatic re-enactment because her writing seeks imaginative closure on the reader's part. To achieve closure the young reader must show understanding. Understanding

implies that the student has a way of explaining motivation and action. The story and the shared interpretative situation encourage the individual to go responsibly beyond the immediate and what is explicitly stated in text.

There are many sequences which could be selected by the teacher or the children for dramatic re-enactment. The final, powerful climax of The Summer after the Funeral, (1977) the tea party in A Long Way from Verona, (1976) Lucy's meeting with her aunts in A Few Fair Days, (1974) the dance in the pavillion, the party at the dentist's, the bedroom scene in the tower, the interview with the principal of the university from Bilgewater (1979) would all benefit the reader if he were to re-enact these in a dramatic way.

It is the discussion prior to, during and after such exploratory performances which is crucial. The participants need to be encouraged to share their responses and reflections so that they can be helped to articulate how they refined and developed their understanding of the story through close attention to the text and shared interpretation. If each of the readers has been given the opportunity to experience being actor, director and dramatiser, his range of language will have been extended. The social context and the text will have interacted to enrich and extend the consciousness of the participants.

Structure

Reading Diary

Another way of helping young readers to enter the novel, to fill in the gaps left by a complex structuring and the irony is to ask him to keep a reading diary. The term 'diary' is often used in a number of ways. Many children may need help to understand how a diary may work to help them come to terms with their own understanding. A diary can be used as another order of engagement with the book. It can be used in a general way to record immediate responses, anticipations, problems and comments on aspects of the book found appealing. It can be used to transcribe parts of the text which are found to be interesting for any number of reasons. The diary entry can be impressionistic and it has the advantage of being free from the demands of a judging audience. A diary must always, in a sense, be private. It is written for the diarist himself and as such must first be a record of his private thoughts, feelings, judgements, reflections and ideas. However, these jottings can later be used as a basis for sharing.

The reader may discover through the use of his diary jottings that for a fuller understanding the book needs to be read again, a process which encourages him to see that any responses or comments on a book, perhaps on life itself, are interim ones and always capable of refinement and rearticulation in the light of what has since been learned. The diary entries can also be used as a basis for telling someone else about the book, either what the story is about or the selection of scenes which would encourage someone else to read the book, both techniques which mature readers use when recommending books. The diary is a way of

preparing the student for a conversation and further writing on a book. It might include anecdote, a most important part of the discussion of literature. The anecdote can come from the book or from the life of the reader and should help to make a generalized comment on either the book or life. In coping with the unique the reader learns to build it into a generalization while sustaining the unique. The anecdote needs to be controlled, to be brought back to the central matter. The anecdote can be used to inform the central issue. The diary can be used as a means of using the anecdote to build generalizations. Of course, the children can be encouraged through talk to anecdote and to make the connections between their own life, the novel and generalizations about life but the diary has the added advantage of the written work in that the ideas are frozen and are a record for contemplation and reflection.

The reader can be helped towards a more mature reading by the question he is asked to note and comment on in his diary. General questions can be asked. Clichés of plot and character can be commented upon, nuances of setting, clothes, custom, attitudes and values can be noticed. For instance, with A Long Way from Verona (1976) the reader might be asked to comment on some or all of the following questions:

1. Where did you find your mind wandering when you were reading the novel? Can you explain why?
2. What was your first impression of Jessica? Did you change your mind? When? Can you believe her to be true?
3. Do you think that Jessica's version of the events is a true one?

4. Write an entry in the teacher's diary on the way she read Jessica's long essay.
5. What is the significance of the titles of the three parts, 'The Maniac', 'The Boy' and 'The Poem'?
6. Why did Jessica not want to go to the party?
7. Why is Arnold Hanger important to Jessica? Would you have been influenced?
8. What happened to Jessica at the Fanshawe-Smithe's which transformed her life?
9. Why was Jessica so impressed with Christian? Why did she change her mind? What would you have done in the same circumstances?
10. Why did Jessica run away?
11. Did the story become emotionally overpowering for you at any point? Where? What was it influenced you particularly?
12. What sort of a reader did you find yourself being in each text? How did you catch onto the kind of reader you need to be?
13. How successful was the opening and why? Where and when did the story puzzle you? When did you find yourself adjusting your understanding and interpretation?
14. What other books do you think are like each of these texts? In what ways are they similar?
15. Can you say that the book is trying to teach something? If it does what does it teach? How did you decide? At what point in the work did you know?

16. If you were to recommend this book to someone else, what passage would you choose which would engage their attention and yet alert them to the kind of book it really is?
17. Why would anyone say that this book is worth publishing?
18. Who, would you say, that the book was written for? These answers could be tackled through writing in a diary form but they could also be explored through talk, other forms of writing and in other media, like painting.

Similar questions could be devised for the other three novels or indeed any complex novel for the young.

There are many questions left unanswered in The Summer after the Funeral (1977). The children could be encouraged to make the connections or to go beyond the text and to make inferences if they were asked careful questions. The point of the questions is to help the children interpret and make a coherence. The method of the question should not be threatening nor should it encourage a mere looking at the text to find the right answer, though sometimes this will be so. The questions are invitations to participate in order to learn how to consider, to ponder, to reflect, to make connections or to imaginatively project possibilities.

Such questions could be:

1. What is wrong with Aunt Posie?
2. What does Athene see in the pavillion?
3. Who is Heathcliff?
4. What is wrong with Sybil Bowles?

5. What is the relationship between Primrose Clarke and Sybil?
6. What is wrong with Primmy when Athene arrives to stay?
7. What happened to Athene at Basil's cottage?
8. What does the telegram say?
9. What is the Buddhist monastery?
10. Who is the only girl Lucien has ever admired?
11. What does Athene want from Henry Bell?
12. What is happening up the tower?
13. Why must Athene look at the graveyard?
14. What finally happens to Athene?
15. Has she really changed as much as is suggested?

These questions are some of those which are never completely answered and through talk the students could be led to make the sort of inferences necessary in order to attempt to make a coherent pattern from a mysterious book and perhaps to justify this pattern to others.

Close focus on particularly complex passages would help the young reader fill the gaps and gain more meaning from those passages. Through talk, through sharing interpretations, through bringing one's own experiences to bear on the understanding of an event or character can help a young reader refine and shape meaning. One passage in Bilgewater (1979) which begs close attention is where the heroine is pondering on mathematical and philosophic thoughts, inspired by a quotation from Hardy on the nature of the novel which raises the question of truth. Through talk and discussion the young reader can be helped to see the significance of truth in story, truth in mathematics and the importance of experience. To ask the students to discuss the meaning of the entrance examination essay that Bilgewater wrote would help them to make the connections that

Bilgewater herself makes. Jane Gardam raises one of the most profound questions about art in this passage and that is the nature of truth and how we deal with it in our lives. Because the passage is bound in the book it is more accessible to the young reader than if it were an isolated philosophic tract. It is an example of the type of passage which offers the young reader the opportunity to be part of the reflections and speculation on the nature of truth and how it affects one's life. The ideas of the passage are highly abstract and yet by the way it is told it is within the grasp of most of the students who would be reading the novel.

In this way the novels of Jane Gardam cleverly extend the ideas of her readers. She also introduces them to the knowledge that literature is part of a larger web of meanings and does not exist by itself, that no piece of art exists in a void. Her books introduce children to the notion that to read the books you need to read other books, think about them and your experience of actual life. To be a literary reader you need to become part of the culture's web of meanings. Even if the young reader can only recognize one or two of the authors mentioned in one of Jane Gardam's novels it gives him the opportunity to enjoy being knowing. The teacher can help him fill in some of the other gaps. In Bilgewater (1979) for example, there are references to the work of James Joyce, Wordsworth, Thomas Hardy, Chaucer, Coleridge, Robert Graves, George Orwell, Shakespeare and Tennyson. It would not be appropriate for the readers of this novel to do empty research into these authors but talk about the significance of their names in the context of the novel would help the readers begin to establish some of the connections. Knowledge of the world view of Thomas Hardy and the kinds of novels he wrote is important for an understanding of A Long Way from Verona (1976). Talk about his

novels, reading crucial passages from a novel like Tess of the D'urbervilles and perhaps viewing the recent film, Tess would help the young reader see what it was which so depressed Jessica when she first began to read Hardy. The reading of a lucid critical summation of the novel may also help. Each of these activities may invite the young reader to seek out the books for himself, the best way of becoming a literary reader.

Endings

In each of the four novels the endings are highly significant and it is worthwhile focusing closely on each one. With each book it is important first to work out what the ending means. In both The Summer after the Funeral (1977) and Bilgewater (1979) the narration is particularly oblique and before the young reader can decide on the rightness of the ending he needs to work out what has happened. What has happened to Bilgewater and Athene? After he has done this he can be asked whether or not the ending was the best one. This question is a most important one because it encourages the reader to reflect on the entire novel. If the ending is thought to be unsatisfactory then the children could be asked to write an alternative one. Again, this requires them to look closely at the text in order to write a satisfying conclusion to show why their alternatives might be accepted.

Art Work

Art work can be used to help the children cope with the demands of a difficult narrative. There are many forms of art which can be used to

help the children gain more meaning from a text. In order to do a drawing, a painting, a cartoon or a frieze, the reader is articulating in an alternative medium his understanding of what he has read. To do an alternative cover for the book, to illustrate the characters, to sequence the story as in a comic book, all require that the reader have a thorough understanding of the text. As the piece of art is being done, the reader will have to return to the text to check his accuracy and justification and may even have to look outside the text for additional information on time, place, setting, fashions and so on in order to fill in the gaps in his own experience.

To illustrate a chapter or to design a cover requires the reader to make abstractions and generalizations about the book and in executing the illustrations he should be refining his own ideas on the book itself. The art work can be displayed to allow for a trial of interpretations. It can lead to discussion on how well the artistic interpretation comprehends what is written, what aspects it highlights and what it neglects. Such discussion can lead to an adjustment of interpretation for the participants or at least a refinement of meaning. As with dramatic presentation, the aim of the art work is not to produce great works of art, though it may, it is to allow for the interpretation and refinement of meaning in a different mode. Through art work the reader may be led to make decisions about setting and dress that may not be otherwise noticed. The art work is not for its own sake but is an activity which has serious overtones. It enables one to live more fully. It should not dull in the sense that it reproduces cliches but in putting up patterns for review, it augments the consciousness. The art work foregrounds and highlights, it selects and emphasizes and it leaves certain aspects implicit, all important intellectual processes. When done in connection

with a novel it should help the interpretation of both.

Narrative and the Other Arts

This study has raised questions of the relationship of the arts and how they mutually support one another. I have suggested that writing, art and dramatic re-enactment, as well as being important individually can, when used in conjunction with each other, extend the understanding of each. The process of translating a novel into another medium adds to our understanding of each of the arts. In the process of selection and translation one learns a great deal, sometimes a new art form is produced, one which can be better than the original.

Literature in the Curriculum

The mediation of literature with children is a difficult and demanding task. The teacher wants the young reader to gain more from his reading without spoiling the experience for him and without the child or adolescent losing the intellectual and emotional pleasures of it all. The possibilities offered by the four books of Jane Gardam are many and those I have suggested are only examples. What the teacher would select to do would depend not only on the books but on the young readers reading them.

To isolate aspects of narrative technique like point of view, irony, structure and endings is to risk a mechanical approach but this is not the intention. The analysis is intended to provide a basis for

helping a young reader notice what the author and the reader himself is doing. It provides a focus of attention and a basis for artistic awareness. The analysis should help indicate the kind of reading and self-aware readers the work requires. In this way it should be a contribution to the issue of readability. It may help to reconceptualize the notion of readability so that it takes into account the complexities of narrative not taken into account in the approaches and formulae which use surface information only.

Jane Gardam's books offer the reader opportunities for extending his repertoire. They offer the reader a special opportunity for making judgement and reasoning because enfolded in their particularities are seductive invitations to penetrate their secrets. Her methods of narration are an integral part of the meaning she intends to convey. The way she uses language to capture the flow of sense experience and its emotional accompaniment gives the young reader the opportunity to reflect upon human expectations, hopes and experience. To give attention to the way a story is told is to extend the reader's repertoire and is the beginning of both critical awareness and the acquisition of a set of critical concepts and their accompanying language. The reader's awareness of language is an important issue but so too is the reader's awareness of others and of himself. Attention to the complexity of the books of Jane Gardam and the way her stories are told should help the young reader cope with other literature of this complexity and, perhaps, with life itself.

As James Moffett says,

Finally, we are suggesting that the interrelation of life and literature is both more precise and more organic than is commonly expressed in the truism that one can learn through the other. Fiction holds a mirror up not only to our behaviour but to our modes of

communicating and learning. It does this not only in what it says but how it says it. By moving freely back and forth among the three realms of fiction, discourse, and growth, via a common concept, we can bring them to bear on each other and thus understand each better.

(1966, 573)

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