THE PARADOX STRUCTURE

IN HUMOROUS NARRATIVE

- AN ANALYSIS OF INTELLECTUALS AS COMIC HEROES

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"... dedicating a book is like the fine rhetoric about offering one's life to one's country, or handing the reins of the government back to the people. This is but the vain and empty juggling of language. Despite all the talk about handing it over, the book remains like the flying knife of the magician - released without ever leaving the hand." (Qian Zhong-shu).

So, without bothering anyone to accept my dedication, I wish however to express my sincere thanks to all those who have made possible the accomplishment of this thesis: my deep gratefulness to Xiayi LI, for his tolerance and understanding during my long-lasting labour and interruption, and whose literary taste and sense of humour have always inspired me; special thanks to my mother for her care and love; and my gratitude to Olivia and Antoine, my dear children, who remind me of how instinctive laughter and innocent joyfulness simply go before any intelligence.

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INTRODUCTION

1. Textual Contexts

This thesis is to study certain humorous phenomena in several literary works written in different languages. The humorous texts chosen for analysis in this thesis are: 1) *Candide* written by the French writer Voltaire, published for the first time in French in 1759; 2) *The British Museum is Falling Down* written by the English writer David Lodge, published for the first time in English in 1965; and 3) *Fortress Besieged* written by the Chinese writer Qian Zhongshu, published for the first time in Chinese in 1947.

In these humorous texts, the comic heroes are all 'intellectual characters' sharing some common features. These characters are portrayed with an acute sense of humour and even bold self-mockery. Whether through the effect of joyful laughter or tearful laughter, these humorous texts tell the awkward but fascinating experiences of their heroes: their pursuit of higher-standard values and their final disappointment; their efforts and their failure; their disparagement as well as the beliefs they grudgingly hold in spite of their frustration. In each case, their intellectual adventures have influenced and indeed formed the contradictory personalities of these characters as presented in these humorous narratives.

2. Objectives and Organisation

Humour study was dominated by sociological, psychological, and cognitive research theories until the linguistic study of humour began in the 1970s. The linguistic study of humour then started with the exploration of mere jokes before moving on to recent attempts at the study of longer humorous texts (for example analysis of humorous novels). My discussion of humour is first based on previous achievements in this field of study. To further develop the narrative study of humorous texts, my thesis is experimenting with the analysis of comic heroes by using related theories concerning humour study and narrative study. The two major objectives of the analysis of these humorous texts are: 1) the display of a 'paradox structure' in the humorous texts; and 2) the 'serious meaning' regarding the comic heroes as revealed by the humour structure of the texts.

This thesis is a *test* in the sense that it will show how far we can go in our pursuit of humour with narrative theory, especially in the context of humorous texts of book-length, which is still in an experimental stage. Analysis of the comic characters in humorous texts is in addition an attempt to step into a relatively new territory of humour research. Both the perspectives as well as the limits of this approach will be explored in my discussion.

Part I is the theoretical foundation. The method to be established in this part is principally a narrative theory of humour. My research work will then involve two branches of theory that have been very much separated in the past: the theory of humour and the theory of narration. Among other theorists, Patrick O'Neill, Victor Raskin and Salvatore Attardo have made some initial attempts at fusing these two domains of theory for the explanation of humour phenomena. My present thesis is a further research in the same direction. Like O'Neill (1990), I also take the field of humour study as the 'target field', and the field of narrative study as the 'source field'. In my theoretical exploration, some 'older' concepts in humour study will be renewed and enriched; a few new concepts will also be created for later textual analyses.

My perspective on the narrative structure of each text is mainly directed towards 'spatial structure', a term I create for the study of the multiple determination of humour in these humorous narratives. The starting point is close attention to the play among the different narrative elements within each narrative level as well as among different narrative levels that co-operate for humour production in these texts. To be more precise, the design of the implied author, the actualisation of this design in the narrator's discourse world, in the story world where the main character is located, and in the complex relationship of 'play' among different narrative levels will constitute the framework of my humorous text analysis.

The major term I am exploring is 'paradox', which stems from the relatively old concept of 'incongruity' in humour; a theoretical development of this concept using both the non-narrative and the narrative approach to humour accounts for the status of the incongruous elements for humour production in these humorous texts. I will explore the dynamic mechanisms in humour that drive incongruous elements to paradoxical congruency so as to engender humour effects; I will also explore the functioning structure of these mechanisms. In my research, the problems will come from the field of conventional humour study while methods will come from the field of narrative study. Some recently formed theories that combine these two branches of theory for the study of humour will serve as a starting point for my research.

Part II consists of textual analyses. The basis for the unification of the three humorous texts for discussion, as explained earlier, is the kind of intellectual characters that lie at the centre of the story presented in these texts. However, there are also important differences among these texts. *Candide* more or less falls to the category of the 'classic' humorous text for the major reasons that the comic hero has only one distinctive feature (cf. Sareil, 1984); and that the humour structure reveals a distinctive 'serious meaning' and exposes clear objects for fierce mockery next to the humorous portrayal of the main character. *The British Museum Is Falling Down* is more of a 'modern fiction' in the sense that 'uncertainty' not only lies at the centre of the main character's personality but also lies at the centre of the humorous structure that reveals nothing definitive for negation or criticism (cf. Yaari, 1993). *Fortress Besieged* is eventually a less 'joyful' text in spite of the abundant comic effects produced throughout the narration. In a sense, the major source of humour in this text comes from the original usage of language and the multiple imagery the language play creates, though this is not the only humour skill used in this text.

Each of the three humorous texts has one major 'narrative strategy' to be explored in my text analysis. In *Candide*, *parody* will be examined as an important mechanism producing humorous incongruity and being largely responsible for the overall comic effects of this text. In *The British Museum Is Falling Down*, *dialogue* (Bakhtin, 1984 a) will be examined as an organising principal responsible for the narrative structure and for the humour structure in particular in this text. In *Fortress Besieged*, *analogy* and various kinds of *humorous analogy* in particular will be examined as the major device used for humour production and for the construction of the narrative structure at large in this text. 'Ironic humour' will be a general term used with reference to the kind of humour determining the 'serious meaning' regarding the intellectual main characters in these humorous texts.

The 'paradox structure of humour' then accounts for the nature and function of the humour explored in these texts: 'nature' because humour involves both incongruity and congruency; 'function' because humour is also a production process with multiple narrative components working together to provoke various forms of comic climax. 'Paradox' in a way not only governs the humour structure, it also leads to the revelation of ironic meaning in the portrayal of the intellectual characters under discussion. In this account, a primary investigation is into how the potentially tragic story materials are narrated to comic effect in all these texts. Various narrative skills, either as general narrative strategy or as local narrative tactics function to assimilate the incongruous elements for the humorous portrayal of the

intellectual heroes in these texts. The 'paradox structure of humour' in addition refers to the special 'serious meaning' revealed by such humour which provides the portrait of the characters in question with mild mockery.

Part III is about the limitations of the narrative approach to humorous texts and new perspectives in this research. In this thesis, some extra-textual elements are placed near the end of our discussion in order to offer the possibility of a new departure in the narrative analysis of the humorous texts in question. In this part, further discussion will be given to three topics: 1) the *real author* and its relationship with the *real reader*'s understanding of the text; 2) the impact of *cultural references* on the understanding of these texts; 3) the extended dimension of *character* beyond narrative models as typified by the 'actantial model'. In relation to the portrayal of the intellectual characters previously analysed, the extended view of 'character' is developed around its *humorous dimension* and its *human dimension*.

3. New Territories of Investigation

This thesis attempts to contribute to related research fields in the following respects:

1) The analysis of humour in *humorous narratives of book-length* is still not a well-established technique or topic. In such attempts, Attardo's analytic methods (1994, 2001) are an advanced achievement in this domain. I am particularly interested in those aspects that, according to Attardo, need to be further defined in his account of humour in such contexts. A general challenge is to locate the components of humour structure in a complex humorous narrative when an adoption of the earlier theoretical account of jokes becomes insufficient. A more concrete question is that, according to Attardo (1994), a linguistic element called "trigger" is usually necessary to engender the passage from the initial "organised chunk of information" (cf. Attardo, 1994: 267-268; also cf. Part I, Chapter 3. 3 and 5 of this thesis) to the second or the eventual one. But is it possible to address the issue of alteration of information when there is no evident trigger present to generate the switching between two scripts? Among other things, the notion of 'register' is to be further explored in terms of narrative levels in my humorous text analysis; Attardo's idea about 'hyperdetermined humour' will also be developed in my account of the simultaneous activities of more than one active source or of different contexts in the humour production process (cf. Attardo, 2001: 100-101); some new tools provided by Attardo's 'linear formula' of humour will be adopted for the explanation of humour. However, humour structure in this thesis will be illustrated in terms

of 'spatial structure' which is also an attempted innovation based on recent achievements. In short, I shall refine and further develop many recent ideas in both my theoretical exploration and in my textual analyses. As a result, I shall suggest some possible answers to a few puzzles that arise when we face extended humorous texts.

2) The *analysis of comic characters in humorous texts of book length using the narrative theory of humour* is a relatively new territory of research. This thesis attempts to search for a functional analytic process so as to achieve this goal. As explained earlier, the 'paradox structure' of humour, with the perspective of a 'spatial formula' of humour in particular, will be the general analytical parameter; narrative levels will then be used as the organising principle in the textual analyses; various narrative elements like 'humour registers' and 'logic mechanisms' (cf. Part I, Chapter 3. 3 of the thesis) will be in addition analysed as the basic components of the humour structure in these texts.

3) Next to the analysis of humour structure, an enquiry into the *serious meaning* of humorous texts is also a relatively new investigation. This item seeks for the communicative message intended by the text, by which I try to enlarge the narrative study of humour related to the portrayal of comic characters. It is worth noticing that there have been comparatively numerous attempts in humour research; but the meaning intended by humour has scarcely been explored. More exactly, although there are numerous analyses of the meaning of individual comedies, explorations of how comedy achieves serious meaning in general are rarer. In the name of 'serious meaning', this thesis undertakes an investigation of the implied author's intention regarding those humorous characters. A close scrutiny is on how ironic salience is gradually revealed in the paradox structure of humour in those humorous texts.

4) This thesis is perhaps one of the rare attempts to bring together three humorous texts written in three different languages from three different cultures (western and eastern). Among other things, I'll be searching for a formulation of humour functional at least in the context of these three humorous works. By this research work, *comparative literature study* is to be enriched by analysing humorous texts from a linguistic and narrative point of view. This pursuit intends to provoke such reflections: to what extent can we bring together humorous works for discussion while these works are from different linguistic and cultural origins? What common ground can we discover from these works for the account of humour which is a special faculty of human kind? How far can we use narrative view to analyse the humour

phenomena taken from these humorous works? At last, of course, we will also consider the limitation of narratology exposed by this experiment. Though this thesis does not claim to provide full answers to all these questions, it does try to inspire new approach to humour and new orientation in comparative study of different literary works.

PART I

A NARRATIVE THEORY OF HUMOUR

FOR THE ANALYSIS OF COMIC HEROES

This thesis is an analysis of a certain type of comic hero using a combination of narrative theory and the theory of humour. Part I is then the construction of the theoretical foundation.

Intellectual characters are the type of comic heroes to be studied in this thesis. A comprehensive explanation of this term would involve some extra-textual elements, which is then beyond the scope of the narratological approach adopted for this thesis[1]. Being aware of the weakness of narratology in dealing with such questions, some post-structuralists have tried to provide a new version of narratology. For example, Barthes' five codes for narrative analysis includes a "cultural or referential code" (Barthes, 1974: 262). To a certain extent, this code should be drawn from "non literary experience, but one can not deny that to certain degree, some non-literary experiences have become *literary conventions*" (Culler, 1975: 237; emphasis added). Limited by the scope of narratology, I am avoiding any definition of intellectual characters in terms of sociology. However, an introduction to these comic heroes is given below in terms of "literary conventions" as the foundation for our later analysis.

As literary conventions, these comic heroes are usually portrayed to be engaged in some scholarly activities related to certain academic communities. Both their environment and the activities they are engaged in stand for a set of attitudes and values that can rightly be described as "practices of collective identification" (Björk, 1993: 14)[2] in literary representation. In his study of "intellectuals", Shils summarised some of their characteristics as social beings. The first two are the "romantic tradition" and the "tradition of scientism". Shils explains, "romanticism starts with the appreciation of the spontaneous manifestations of the essence of concrete individuality" and is "the estimation of the value of impulse and passion" (Shils, 1974: "Preface"). Meanwhile, "the *tradition of scientism* is the tradition which denies the validity of tradition as such" and "insists on the testing of everything ..."(Shils, 1974: "Preface"). Hence both value "originality, i.e. the unique, that which is produced from the genius of the individual" (Shils, 1974: "Preface"). These features, once transformed by

literary works, will become efficient elements for the portrayal of comic images. As literary conventions, their "romanticism" may become the sexual adventures of the comic heroes; and their "scientism" may become obsession with knowledge, intellectual eccentricity of a certain kind, or/and defiance against conventions. Apart from functioning as ingredients of humour, these features also help to transmit various messages as a kind of intellectual consciousness.

Such literary conventions are the primary conditions on which I base the unification of these comic heroes for discussion in this thesis. The comic heroes to be studied are a certain kind of intellectual literary figure in humorous narrative. It is also worth noticing that intellectual characters form a specific type of comic hero in many literary works of different languages and cultures. These characters tend to live some intellectual adventures, which brand their personalities as full of comic contradictions. It is amusing to explore these characters: how their passion goes with their dejection, their vanity goes with their humility, their insolence goes with their self-contempt. It is also interesting to study the similar mechanisms of humour regarding these comic heroes, in spite of the difference of languages and cultural background. The eagerness to know, to understand, and to share the stories about these characters' intellectual adventures, the images of such intellectual characters as portrayed in these humorous texts, the narration skills and the humour skills in particular constitute not only the initial motivation but also the final objective of this (perhaps equally exciting) intellectual pursuit in this thesis.

CHAPTER 1

'PARADOX' IN CONVENTIONAL HUMOUR STUDY

1. 'Humour' and 'Comic'

Before settling down to explore the system of any humour theory, we must confront the essential term 'humour'. We may first remember that scientific research up till today has not found the faculty of 'humour' in another life form except human beings.

In common terms, the word 'humour' may be easily linked to certain experiences that can make us laugh. However, a brief reflection is enough to make us realise that not all laughter belongs to the category of humour phenomena: tickling can make us laugh, but it is not out of humour. Nor does humour always result in laughter: a humorous remark may be received as being too aggressive to be laughable[3].

As we attempt to explore the notion of humour in achievements obtained from different fields of study, with the hundreds of books that exist in English alone, we realise that there are also multifarious terms related to the discussion of humour: joke , wit, comic, ludicrous, not to mention such sub-realms as irony, parody, satire or sarcasm.

A definition of 'humour' is found in *The Oxford Encyclopaedic English Dictionary* (1991: humour 1. a) the condition of being amusing or comic ... b) the expression of humour in literature, speech, etc." In this definition, we notice that both 'humour' and 'comic' are involved in the explanation of the exertion of a human faculty. We also notice that these two terms seem to indicate a condition-and-effect relationship. I shall then take this definition as an adequate explanation of the two key terms to be used in this thesis. To be brief for the moment, in the humorous text analysis later, *humour* refers to the general condition or the producing process of comic effects, while *comic* refers to the ultimate delivery of such effects or the climax of the humour production process.

Another term I want to discuss is 'wit', though this term is to be absorbed into the general term of 'humour' eventually. In the discussion of the special humour related to the intellectual characters, 'humour' is often close to a definition of 'wit': "Wit originally indicated the seat of consciousness or thought, then progressively became associated with intellect, reason, and understanding, then with the whole of the mental faculties" (Martin, 1974: 26). However, according to the classic definition, 'wit' at the same time applauds the "intelligence"

in humour: wit is conceived "not only as a product of the intellect but a legitimate form of knowledge" (Martin, 1974: 44). In the novels to be analysed in this thesis, it is nonetheless this 'intelligence' that is called into question, for it may even become the butt of humour. For this reason, I decide not to use this term to refer to the special humour typical of intellectual characters as comic heroes.

'Joke' is another term closely related to our discussion of humour, for joke is a form of humorous narrative. However, my humour study will not centre on jokes for mainly two reasons. First, as a narrative form, joke is brief, self-contained and closed, whereas the humorous works to be studied are a more extended narrative context. Second, according to Freud, joke must have a listener and the eventual laughter must be aroused in somebody else (Freud, 1976). However, in this thesis, humour is to be studied mainly within the scope of texts without considering much the actual response of the audience. The humour cases to be examined are taken from some literary works. These works are considered as *humorous texts* on the basis that they are all regarded as 'funny novels' in the common sense at least by their native speakers, and there will be no further argument about the truthfulness of this assumption in this thesis.

2. Incongruity Theory in Earlier Humour Analysis

There are various early assumptions about the nature of humour, which result in different classification of humour theories. In the later analysis of the intellectual characters, it will be important to examine some contradictory characteristics in their personality and how these characteristics are related to humour in the narrative. Among other humour theories, *incongruity theory* will be the main subject to be explored, as it is considered as the most appropriate starting point for the construction of humour theory for this thesis.

In the book *The Psychology of Humour*, "incongruity theories" are introduced as one of the eight classic theories concerning humour (McGhee, 1972: 4-13). There are also other classifications of humour theory like that of Lilly's 21 varieties (Lilly, 1898: 724-737) that touch on the concept of 'incongruity' in the study of humour. Keith-Spiegel (1972) in her classification of the early theories of humour, listed 24 authors among supporters of the so-called theory of incongruity (cf. Forabosco, 1992: 46). Raskin, in summarising some earlier achievements in humour analysis, stated that theories of humour can be grouped into three large classes: cognitive-perceptual, social-behavioural and psychoanalytical while the first class is usually associated with incongruity (Raskin, 1994: 33). There have been also many

other terms used in humour research which fall into the compass of the concept of incongruity, such as contrast, discrepancy, dissonance, or incompatibility. These words, though each with its special connotation, also fall into the same semantic field. Meanwhile, examination of any other term or notion related to incongruity of humour in turn advances its exploration. In general, the classic study of this term in humour study has shown that 'incongruity' involves an explanation of how contradictory elements work together for the production of humour.

Broadly speaking, incongruity can be found on many occasions, whether humour is present or not. Even common sense may tell us that incongruity does not always generate humour. Then what is expected from the humour theorists is an explanation that can distinguish those humour-provoking mechanisms from non-humour-provoking mechanisms in incongruity. Among those very early explorers of humour who have discovered incongruity in humour, some already realised that not all incongruity produces humour. For example, Spencer stated that there can be laughter provoked by humour when "the conscious is unawares transferred from great things to small - only when there is a ... descending incongruity" (Spencer, 1860: 463). Hunt (1965) suggested that which is incongruous can only be so in relation to the subject's standards. He then indicated that boredom may derive from congruence, while pronounced incongruity generates fear (cf. Hunt, 1963). Berlyne (1960, 1972) placed incongruity among the "collative" variables of the stimulus capable of engendering the "activational" condition. He studied the relationship between collative variables (and hence incongruity) and arousal in relation to various aspects of human behaviour including humour itself. So, humour is only one possible effect that incongruity can provoke.

Accordingly, a fundamental task in the constitution of the humour theory to be used in this thesis is to find out and display a decisive mechanism in the functioning of incongruity that *will* result in humour, even if it is not the only answer.

2.1. Humour Incongruity Involves 'Contradiction'

According to some early proponents, incongruity is part of the nature of humour. Gerard in 1795 described that the objects of humour are uncommon mixtures of the contrarieties of things (cf. Gerard:, 1795). Then more sophisticated explanations of the role of incongruity come from Kant (1790) and Schopenhauer (1819), who both recognise the importance of contradiction in the production of humour. For example, Kant said that comic effects are

caused by originality of the spirit. A person is called comic if he possesses such spirit and is able to create vivid expression in the use of *contrast* (cf. Kant, 1790, French version 1993: 242).

In the early 20th century, Baillie (1921) asserted that we have the permanent conditions of laughter in a regulated society, since any departure from social standard is incongruous. Leacock (1935) gave a more precise interpretation and pointed out that humour incongruity lies in the contrast between the thing as it is or ought to be and a thing smashed out of shape as it ought not to be.

These are some preliminary attempts to interpret the nature of humour as message. Before narrative theory intervenes in humour research, there has been no developed explanation of how humour is constructed step by step or level by level, especially in a written text. This is however a major concern of the present thesis.

Some accounts of humour incongruity argue that the incongruity of humour more or less lies in the perception of a contrast. Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is not a book especially on humour. However, he indicates in this book that there exists a special device that may result in laughter. This device can set up a particular expectation in the audience and then undermine it or contradict it later. Such a contrast exists between the expectation created in the first instance and the humour message as eventually received (cf. Aristotle, 1973: 67-70). Palmer regards this formulation by Aristotle as "something approaching a theory of incongruity" in humour: an effective device capable of provoking laughter explained in *Rhetoric* is to "contradict or subvert" the expectation created in the first place: "'He walked, and under his feet were sores', where the audience would expect something like 'stones' as the last word." Then Palmer points out that "In general the theory of rhetoric found no place for an explanation of laughter, being content to note its effectiveness" (Palmer, 1994: 94).

Much later Neihardt outlined a model with twelve propositions which lead to the conclusion that "The greater the divergence of a stimulus (of humour) from expectation in one or many dimensions, the funnier the stimulus" (Neihardt, 1976: 59). Priesley also viewed the cause of laughter to be the perception of contrast (cf. Priesley, 1977). Koestler (1964) described the pattern underlying humour as the perception of a situation involving two habitually incompatible contexts. Research by Berkowits (1968) also underlines the motivational importance of incongruity, as it is remarked that individuals "search for" information that contrasts with their basic assumption. Aronson's account of "dissonance" in 1968 suggested that two elements must be considered in order to arrive at a valid definition of humour: the violation of expectations and self-concept. This latter element implies that when

information is incompatible with the concept of self, "dissonance" is produced. Forabosco (1987) suggested that a stimulus is incongruous when it differs from the cognitive model of reference. He then gave an advance to this description in 1992: every subject, in his cognitive history, will create models as the result of the contents of the experience and the process peculiar to learning. An incongruous stimulus is then a stimulus highly improbable in relation to the subject's expectation according to his precedent experiences or "cognitive models". An implication is that humour is based on the violation of conventions.

However, 'contradiction' alone is not sufficient for humour production (cf. Palmer, 1987: Chapters 2-3). Hence these explanations, though each has its special insight into humour phenomena, have pointed out merely one aspect of humour.

2.2. Humour Incongruity Involves 'Congruency'

According to some psychologists, there is in fact more than the perception of incongruity that allows the receiver to get the final humour message. Beattie (1776) expressed the belief that laughter arose when two or more inconsistent circumstances were united into one complex assemblage. Schaeffer even indicates that congruency within incongruity is more important for the interpretation of humour: "With incongruity we see two things which do not belong together, yet which we accept at least in this case as going together in some way. That is, when we notice something as incongruous, we also simultaneously understand it to be in some minor way congruous. Our mental task is to find this slender element of congruity amid the predominating elements of incongruity" (Schaeffer, 1981: 9).

To understand the human capacity of seeing congruence in incongruity, the following views can give us some enlightenment. In 1949, Brunner and Postman made some experiments on the understanding of humour incongruity. They asked their subjects to recognise some cards in spite of deliberate obstruction. The result revealed a special "perceptive defence" by the subjects, which is human beings' tendency to react to the incongruity with strategies aimed at not perceiving it (cf. Brunner and Postman, 1949: 206-233.).

The need to defend oneself from the perception of incongruity was also explored by Heider, who put forward a "balance theory". This theory explained that in human perception, balanced states are stable and unbalanced states are unstable. Man has the general tendency to re-establish the balance when it is disturbed (cf. Heider, 1969). "Balanced states" here obviously refer to "congruency" in the references obtained in human perception.

Osgood and Tannenbaum (1955) advanced a "congruence principle". According to this principle, they assert that there exists in the individual a frame of reference so that changes in his evaluations of any messages received always tend toward an increased congruency with it. On this basis, Festinger (1957) worked out a "cognitive theory". By cognition he refers to all human knowledge about his environment and about himself. According to him, dissonance (another variety of "incongruity") occurs when cognitive references go in opposition to each other. Much of his study was devoted to studying both the tendency to reduce dissonance, which he considered to be a primitive process in man, and the techniques for this purpose.

'Incongruity' as a concept is also very close to the semantic universe of Piaget's theory (1951,1952). He provided a notion of adaptation in the subject-environment relationship. Piaget's study is based on the observation of children's behaviour, in which he noticed that a pleasure or appreciation of humour can be obtained when children realise a reduced novelty and the possibility of assimilation in the initial incompatible references. As a result, man's mental development possesses an adaptation to reality, which comes about through an adjustment of thought to objects / or objects to thought. Such adaptation is the result of assimilation in which incongruity serves as the trigger for the process. McGhee (1972) also based his study of humour on some children's behaviour. His conclusion through his experiments is that congruency obtained from incongruity is obtained through some human fantasy: "Thus both reality assimilation and fantasy assimilation should contribute to the comprehension and appreciation of such humour stimuli" (McGhee, 1972: 68).

* * * * *

It may be observed that the above notes in part (1) and part (2) tend to group themselves around two poles: the first pole which highlights the importance of disrupting a state of balance engendered in relation to the perception of incongruity and the second pole which centres on the mechanisms (defensive) aimed at restoring a state of congruency. These are only a few examples of the early elaboration of the 'incongruity theory of humour'. What is important for this thesis from these early achievements is such a basic claim about humour: *incongruity* is an important element in humour; it necessitates however a certain *congruency* for the eventual comic effects to be possible.

2.3. The Perception of Humour Incongruity and Its Resolution

There have been a lot of debates that centre on two positions: one which describes humour as a two-stage process, namely the perception of an incongruity and the resolution of this incongruity ; and one which considers incongruity alone to be the necessary condition of the humour experience.

The first position is most notably sustained by Suls, who cites Schultz (1970), Jones (1970), and still earlier Willman (1940) as anticipating his theory. Suls suggested (1972) that a joke is found to be funny "as the result of two-stage process. In the first stage, the perceiver finds his expectations about the text to be disconfirmed by the ending of the joke ... In other words, the recipient encounters an incongruity - the "punch line". In the second stage, the perceiver engages in a form of problem solving to find a cognitive rule which makes the punch line follow from the main part of the joke and reconciles the incongruous parts. A cognitive rule is defined as a logical proposition, a definition ; or a fact of experience." (Suls, 1972: 82). This is his famous joke example: the waitress asks the fat Ethel whether she should cut the fruit cake into four or eight pieces, Ethel's answer is "Four. I am on a diet." The incongruity lies in Ethel's ignorance of the rule of conservation of quantity, i.e., whether the cake is cut into four pieces or eight, it remains the same amount of cake. However, humour occurs when the incongruity is made to follow by the heuristic rule that an increase in number frequently constitute an increase in total amount. Suls says that "humour derives from experiencing a sudden incongruity which is then made congruous", and "the perceiver must proceed through these two stages to find the joke funny" (Suls, 1972: 82).

'Resolution' is normally understood as a telic human activity destined to find a cognitive rule so as to reconcile the incongruous parts. Hence when applied to humour this term is and must be different from an explicit problem-solving activity in the usual sense. The vital point is that the resolution should not finally overcome the incongruity. A certain congruency is necessitated, or in McGhee's term, as mentioned earlier, "fantastic assimilation" is required. In this sense, resolution in humour is more or less treated by McGhee. McGhee also used "cognitive mastery" in his humour theory (1979). He observed, "The earliest form of resolution (in the two-year-old) may consist of a simple mental substitution of the normal or the expected elements of a situation for the funny incongruous ones. Thus, if a two- or three-year-old finds it funny to call another child or an object by the wrong name, the resolution may lie in the child's awareness of what the real name is" (McGhee, 1979: 38).

Forabosco (1992) tried to give a more flexible but more comprehensive consideration to the two-stage formula of the humour phenomenon itself. He says: "in general, this congruence criterion must not be looked for (as in the two-stage humour) insofar as it is contemporaneous with the incongruity aspect. The congruence and the incongruity aspects present themselves together in a uniconfigurational way. Furthermore, the congruence aspect is not normally brought to the awareness of the subject" (Forabosco, 1992: 58). According to Forabosco, those two-stage scheme authors have paid particular attention to the role of resolution but insufficient attention to the function of incongruity which is also and must be accessible to the perception of the subject at the end of the humour process. In order that the incongruity engenders funniness, it is both incongruous and congruent at the same time at the end. "In this case the conclusion is first perceived as congruent, then as incongruous, then as congruent (at least in one aspect), and last as congruent/incongruous" (Forabosco, 1992: 60).

Among those humour proponents who advocate both incongruity and its resolution in humour, I see that 'incongruity' in fact refers back to the 'contradiction' and its 'resolution' refers back to the 'congruence' we discussed above. If Forabosco concludes that both the congruent and the incongruous are important for humour (see the previous paragraph), he is in tune with such formulas about humour as Palmer's "logic of the absurd": each case of humour, whether it is the structure of verbal humour or that of the visual humour, must be "simultaneously plausible and implausible" (Palmer, 1987: 55).

I want to point out right here that a real person's perception of any congruency or incongruity may be largely related to exterior elements of a text. Since only the interior structure of a humorous text is the major study object here, the 'congruency' in humour is to be worked out from the general assumption of the text, and the 'incongruity' is likewise to be formulated from the text structure. It is certain that the reception of jokes or longer humorous texts may be very varied in an actual communication process: the real audience will be influenced by many factors such as their cultural background and personal experience[4]. These extra-textual factors are however not the major concern here because the focus of the present study is narrative form, and the real audience will be replaced by the implied audience in the later discussion, as it will be explained shortly.

2.4. Effect of Entertainment

Philosophically speaking, incongruity tends to produce threat. To explain how incongruity results in humour is, among other things, to show a process towards entertainment.

Schaeffer once pointed out: "laughter results from an incongruity presented in a ludicrous context. That is, an incongruity, if it is to cause laughter, must be accompanied or preceded by a sufficient number of cues that indicate to an audience the risible intention of the incongruity and prepare them for the appropriate response of laughter" (Schaeffer, 1981: 17). Of course, Schaeffer is here mainly referring to jokes when the joke-maker is facing an audience.

In 1977 and 1982, Apter and Smith provided a more sophisticated psychological version of incongruity in humour. They suggested that humour is the product of several psychological states. The first of these is what they called "synergy", a close term to incongruity. It refers to any phenomenon perceived as having two contradictory identities. Then Apter and Smith went on to give a distinction to humour synergies: in the first place, they are always based in the contrast between appearance and reality; second, when the reality becomes plain, the process of revelation is always to the detriment of whatever is in question.

On the basis of "synergies" (or 'incongruity'), Apter and Smith further explained that the creation of a playful state of mind is necessary for humour. According to them, all human activities are either goal-oriented (telic) or non-goal-oriented (para-telic); if the mind is in a para-telic state, a different set of expectations is applied to any phenomenon observed, and the tendency towards any rationality will be replaced by playfulness. In 1994, Palmer reaffirmed their contribution to the explanation of humour mechanism: "the playful state is their way of theorising both the stimulus to humour and the insulation from threat" (Palmer, 1994: 101). Then Palmer asserts that incongruity in humour is a para-telic human activity, whereas incongruity in a telic state will be perceived as a threat and will result in other effects than humour (cf. Palmer, 1994: 102).

As Palmer pointed out, the para-telic state (in the case of jokes) can be indicated by a series of interior and exterior cues, or simply by the assertion of the speaker that the occasion is "entertainment" (cf. Palmer, 1994: 102). Since the object of my study is humorous texts, all the elements that lead to humour incongruity rather than threatening incongruity are to be found only inside the text structure, whether it is Schaeffer's "cues" as an indication of risible intention, or the constitution of Apter and Smith's para-telic mind-set.

2.5. 'Incongruity' and Other Classic Humour Theories

Humour is a complex human phenomenon. Any of the above postulations of humour alone, even their proponents cannot deny, could turn out to be incomplete as the interpretation of the nature of humour. That is why there are also many other branches of theories which tried to analyse humour from a different point of view.

'Surprise theories' is one example we can cite here. We noticed that the word "sudden" is crucial in both Kant's (1790) and Schopenhauer's (1819) formula about humour. The former referred to humour as "*sudden* transformation of a strained expectation of nothing" (there will be more than "nothing" in my textual analysis later), while the latter referred to humour as "simply the *sudden* perception of incongruity between a concept and the real objects ...". As Keith-Spiegel summarised: "The elements of 'surprise,' 'shock,' 'suddenness,' or 'unexpectedness' have been regarded by many theorists as *necessary* (though not necessarily *sufficient*) conditions for humour experiences" (Keith-Spiegel, 1972: 9). The idea of 'surprise' could be a cultural reference with regard to what is common, normal, or cliché considered in the context of culture convention, which is then incompatible with my humorous text study. So I decide to include 'surprise' into the general term incongruity of humour, since "there is some similarity between the concepts of surprise and incongruity in that both involve an instantaneous breaking up of the routine of thought or action" (Keith-Spiegel, 1972: 9).

Other theorists like Freud intended to explain humour (though 'humour' is not exactly the word he adopted) in terms of the functioning of man's psychic energy. A famous claim made by Freud's is the "economy of psychical expenditure", i.e., the engendering of humour necessitates psychic economy, or a privation of emotions (cf. Freud, 1976). There are also 'superiority theories', which are defined by Keith-Spiegel as "triumph over other people (or circumstances)" (Keith-Spiegel, 1972: 6) seen as the roots of laughter provoked by humour. In the structure of my humour theory, I see all these theories as the necessary conditions for the realisation of the effect of entertainment in humour. In other words, instead of dwelling on the sophisticated classification of all the humour theories that ever existed, the essential task of the present thesis is to work out and analyse those narrative elements that constitute humour and its comic effects in the humour text. I do not intend to deny the other formulas about humour, though they will not be stressed in my narrative theory of humour. I do not pretend either that my eventual formulation of humour will be the best theory on humour. The principal objective of this thesis is to demonstrate how a narrative theory of humour, by

taking elements from the classic incongruity theory, can be valuable for the analysis of humorous texts.

3. The Structure of Humour - Paradox

Efforts have been made to explain the nature of humour, but less often to give a systematic account of the structure of humour. The basic ideas built around the theory of incongruity hold between the real situation and its simulation in play, which leads up to a certain conceptual *paradox* (cf. Fry, 1963: 126-7). What is 'paradox'? My "Oxford Encyclopaedic English Dictionary" defines it to be "self-contradictory". The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* more precisely defines it to exist in the kind of statement which is "impossible, but which has some truth in it", or just to be "an improbable combination of opposing qualities, ideas, etc."

Paradox as a concept used in humour study is first in accord with the claims made by Forabosco that we explored earlier: humour is both incongruous and congruent at the same time (see page 8). Besides, I want to add two points to the concept of *paradox in humour*: first, it indicates that there exists a paradox structure in humour, though it may not be a simple formula; second, paradox is not a concept referring to a static state; it is a dynamic mechanism that leads incongruous elements to produce humour. From now on, the discussion will concentrate on, among other terms with regard to 'incongruity', 'paradox' as the key element in humour structure and as a dynamic mechanism working in the process of humour production in humorous texts.

Raskin (1985) made a list of theorists that he thinks have made contribution to the analysis of humour structure, and the following are some of their formulations which resemble what I call 'paradox structure'.

According to Aubouin, the perception of humour incongruity can amount to the acceptance or justification of irreconcilable things, (cf. Aubouin, 1948: 102), and humour can be perceived as "an intellectual play which consists of the unexpected reconciliation of irreconcilable objects or of irreconcilable judgements of the same object." (Aubouin, 1948: 121) Aubouin also listed twelve cases of "oppositeness" capable of engendering humour:

> "The concrete and the abstract, the literal and the figurative
> The noble and the trivial, the decent and the indecent
> The known and the unknown

The similar and the different

The relevant and the absolute

The obscure-clair …allusion, emphasised omission

… the idea which is absurd to the point of plausibility

The absurd and the logical

The end and the means

The intentions and the realisation

The ease and the difficulty, or the realisation of the impossible

The aggressiveness and … the innoccuousness of an act" (Aubouin, 1948: 83)

This list of oppositions in humour shows that humour research has become very technical sometimes and numerous tools can be found for further exploration in this field. We will see that the narrative theory of humour can go very far in this direction. It will also be interesting to notice that the oppositions listed above are also closely related to the "registers" in my later analysis of the narrative structure of humour.

Aubouin just very informally mentioned the word "play", and what is lacking in his formula is a serious analysis of the "play" of these opposite elements. It is in fact this dynamic "play" that makes these opposite elements alive and drives them into the process towards a paradoxical reconciliation. Yet another problem may stand in the way now: 'play' in humour is not equal to 'play' in common sense, for 'play' in the usual sense does not always produce humour. Thus we must make this distinction while we use this word to explain humour. Next, I propose a close look at Fry's theory that might help us to clarify these questions.

Fry's analysis of humour (1963) can be very briefly termed as "a play of paradox", which is another and more precise reference to incongruity in humour. He says: "because of this playful nature, this metaphorical quality, humour must necessarily be paradoxical. We are confronted by the shimmering, endless oscillation of the paradoxes or 'real-unreal'. Humour becomes a vast structure of intermeshed, revolving rings of reality-fantasy, finite-infinite, presence-void" (Fry, 1963: 147). To distinguish 'play' in humour from 'play' in common sense, he introduces the concept of "punch line: "but play and games have no punch lines. In all that is regarded as humorous in the adult human world, there is a build-up of the process to a climax or punch line" (Fry, 1963: 147). An important point Fry is making here is the evocation of a *building-up process* and a *climax* involved in humour production. For the time being, this "process" and the eventual "climax" is very much related to what I am calling "humour" and "comic effects". "Punch line" is then Fry's term in reference to the climax in

humour process. But what is the quality of the punch line ? *"Punch lines* seem to divert the stream of thought ; they seem to call for a *switch* of ideas and expectations. It has been argued by some that the funniness of humour depends on this incongruity, that humour brings about laughter through the unexpectedness of its punch lines" (Fry, 1963: 148). Fry is well aware of the problem that the "simply incongruous or surprising is not necessarily funny", and he calls for the study of the "climax-process relationship", which according to him "is such as to create additional paradox and reverberate to the already established paradoxical nature of the humour-presenting situation." (Fry, 1963: 149). The third question he puts out is "what happens to the joke process at the delivery of the punch line" (Fry, 1963: 149). He points out that "it is important, however, that the content of the joke be recognised as the 'reality' of the moment. ... No matter how fantastic the explicit content of a joke may seem, it is the reality of the time it occupies." (Fry, 1963: 151). Then during the unfolding of humour, one is suddenly confronted by an "explicit-implicit reversal" at the delivery of the punch line and this reversal "helps distinguish humour from play, dreams, etc." (Fry, 1963: 153). What is more, with regard to the joke content this implicit-now-explicit punch-line material communicates the message "this is unreal", and "in so doing makes reference to the whole of which it is a part. We are thus again confronted with the paradox of the negative part defining the whole. Real is unreal, and unreal is real. The punch line precipitates internal paradox *specific to the joke content*, and stimulates a reverberation of the paradox generated by the surrounding play frame." (Fry, 1963: 153 - 154). As a result, nothing is hardly definite or definitely serious in this play structure. It is in this play structure of paradox that a humorous text constructs the effect of entertainment and prepares the "para-telic" state of mind for its receiver that we discussed earlier.

Based on analysis of jokes, Fry came to formulate the paradox structure of humour: "Its content may be thought of in terms of the 'everyday world' and will appear to be fantastic until the reversal at the punch line. Or the content may be considered as sensible within the context of humour until the introduction of the fantastic by the punch line.[5] And it is possible to have these two seemingly opposed orientations actually coexistent only because the whole episode presents paradox." (Fry, 1963: 151). This formulation is a good starting point towards my paradox structure of humour, though it is for the moment too simple to be adopted for the analysis of the narrative structure of humorous texts.

Fry's statement reminds us of O'Neill's formula about "humour text":

"Humour Text = (W^0 : (W^1 : This is not so (W^2 : This is so)))" (O'Neill, 1990: 99)

This formula indicates that first, "there is an extradiegetic and a diegetic world, the latter functioning as level to the metalevel of the former" (O'Neill, 1990: 99); second, there is the *incongruity perceived* by an extradiegetic level; third, "the evaluation of the new extradiegetic world (W^{e}) determines whether the humour text is experienced in pre-comic or comic terms" (O'Neill, 1990: 99-100).

This formula given by O'Neill shows a paradox structure of humour that is in its essence very close to Fry's postulation. O'Neill also gave a further explanation to this formula: "A perceived incongruity, however, as we know, is as yet only a *potential* humour situation. In order to be experienced as an actual humour situation (text) there must be a further process of perception that extradiegetically treats the perceived incongruity ... " (O'Neill, 1990: 99). Among other things, O'Neill searches to explain the humour production process "in terms of the relationship of participation and evaluation, story and discourse, level and metalevel", and these elements "are categorised relatively - that is to say by their difference from each other" (O'Neill, 1990, 98). In this case, O'Neill's research method is a fusion of narrative theory and humour theory. In other words, the paradox structure of humour formulated in some earlier humour theories is further illustrated by O'Neill in terms of narrative levels, which are usually considered as very important components of texture in narrative theory.

However, O'Neill's formulation still lacks precision in his definition of the narrative levels. For example, we still do not know exactly which narrative agent is responsible for a specified narrative world. A question we may ask is whether his "extra-diegetic" level corresponds to the implied reader's response or to the real reader's response. One of my major tasks next is to further define the narrative levels indicated by O'Neill and see how we can use these tools for the account of the paradox structure of humour in the humorous texts of our concern[6].

We have now seen how the *paradox structure of humour* emerges from the classic concept of humour incongruity. While humour is to be treated as a special narrative form in this thesis, and humorous texts of book-length are considered as a more complex form of humorous narrative than jokes, it is worthwhile to explore O'Neill's approach to humour, and some other humour theories in this direction. Next we must confront the second field of theory which is 'narrative', and understand some of the important elements to be used in our narrative theory of humour.

CHAPTER 2

NARRATIVE THEORY AND HUMOUR

1. Towards a 'Humorous Narrative'

Before we start to discuss humour in terms of narrative, we should once more remind ourselves that text analysis in a strict sense has previously remained foreign to the realm of humour study. To establish a narrative theory of humour, our primary concern has been the classic humour theories; our next concern will be theories on narrative and its analysis.

As we know, narrative theory is mainly rooted in structuralism. Scholes in 1974 wrote an introductory book to review how structuralism as a "movement of mind" was adopted in linguistic study and then was developed into a system of structuralist poetics of fiction for literary analysis. The main idea is that, granted that language is a system, and literary works are a form of language expression, it is then a matter of analysing their structure. When adapted to literary analysis, "structuralism equated the task of constructing a literary theory with that of formulating a methodology, a set of 'discovering procedures', those techniques of segmentation and classification that Saussure referred to" and narrative was thus "analysed into its constituent parts" (Banfield, 1982: 3-4).

As said in the previous part, conventional humour incongruity is considered for our purposes as the *paradox structure of humour* in narrative. In the light of the structuralist approach to literary works, humorous texts are to be treated in this thesis mainly as *structures* with multiple relationships between some narrative poles. In other words, this structure consists of primary narrative elements and necessitates a certain functioning of these elements.

Now it is time for us to ask the question 'what is narrative?' Chatman's book *Story and Discourse* (1978) is an important work of narrative theory. In its preface he tried to give an answer to "what narrative is in itself" (Chatman, 1978: 10). With regard to all questions concerning the essence of narrative, he says: "I posit a 'what' and a 'way'. The 'what' of narrative I call its 'story', the 'way' I call its 'discourse'" (Chatman, 1978: 10). Genette is one of the most important figures among the French narrative theorists. His narrative theory is mainly expounded in his *Figures III* (1972) and *Nouveau Discours* (1983). He rather denied such a two-fold nature of the narrative and proposed a triad of narrative levels: story, text and

narration.[7] For Genette, "our study object is then 'récit'" ... "it is "récit", and "récit" only, that informs us on one hand of the events narrated, and on the other hand, of the activities that give life to these events..." ("notre objet est donc ici le *récit* ... C'est donc le récit, et lui seul, qui nous informe ici, d'une part sur les événements qu'il relate, et d'autre part sur l'activité qui est censé les mettre au jour ..." Genette, 1972: 73). Rimmon-Kenan labels "récit" as "text" in English and this "'text' is a spoken or written discourse[8] which undertakes their telling" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 3). If Genette's "récit" is in any way related to this thesis, it is because "récit" above all emphasises text study, which is also my approach to humour here.

Ten years later, Genette gave an additional interpretation to the concept of "récit": "In fact, there are no 'narrative contents': there is a chain of actions or events that we can qualify as 'narratifs' ... only because we come upon them in narrative representation." ("En effet, il n'y a pas de 'contenus narratifs': il y a des enchaînements d'actions ou d'événements...et que l'on ne qualifie de 'narratifs' que parce qu'on les rencontre dans une représentation narrative. Genette, 1983: 12) Scholes pointed out a danger of structuralist treatment of literary works which is "formalistic fallacy: a lack of concern for the 'meaning' or 'content' of literary works" (Scholes, 1974: 10). Genette has gone quite far in this "fallacy", if it can be taken as a fallacy, and we shall treat this problem towards the end of this thesis. However, for the present thesis, Genette's new interpretation is significant in that it has provided a perspective on some of the fundamental problems concerning narrative. In other words, in spite of his denial, even the "what" of narrative can exist and can be detected in the "narrative representation" ("représentation narrative") of the text.

In response to Rimmon-Kenan's criticism about his poor development in the theory of 'character' ("personnage"), which is related to the concept of the 'comic heroes' to be analysed in this thesis, Genette's answer is that "The discourse of a text refers to narrative discourse and does not refer to its objects ... and characters belong to the latter category" ("Le discours du récit porte sur le discours narratif et non sur ses objets ... le personnage appartient à cette dernière catégorie") (Genette, 1983: 93) If Genette argues that by his narrative theory he intends to examine "respects of the mechanisms of the test ("respect des méchanismes du texte". Genette, 1983: 8), I by this thesis intend to illustrate the merits of both the 'mechanisms' of text as displayed in the narrative form as well as its power of 'narrative representation'. What I am trying to do here is an attempt at a new, if not better, balance between the two-fold information a humour narrative carries with it. I shall devote chapter 6 of Part I to further develop the theory of character, which will be a narrative theory of comic heroes.

Despite their differences, all the above narrative theories tend to centre their arguments on the existence and the distinction between a presumed 'way' and a presumed 'what' of the narrative. Such arguments in fact do not quite match the objective of a narrative theory of humour. In humour study, the central problem is rather an account of the 'why' and 'what' of humour. If we need to use narrative theories for humour study, they must be devoted to the study of the central problems of humour. Besides, as we shall see in our later humorous text analysis, the distinction between the 'what' and 'way' in narrative in general fade away when we deal with the 'what' and 'way' of humour. For example, the images of our comic heroes should belong to Chatman's "story existents: character" (Chatman, 1978: 107) and is not directly related to the discussion of the 'way' of a narrative. But the comic heroes in the story world can be an important element in the humour structure of narrative and contribute to the 'why' of humour. We shall notice that some humour theorists like O'Neill have ignored how the 'what' of narrative can also contribute to the 'why' of humour, though it may not be sufficient to produce the general effect of humour.

Palmer is one of the theorists who have tried to combine conventional humour theory with contemporary narrative study in his humour study. He once tried to distinguish isolated jokes from "comedy", which is his term that could be used to refer to my humorous texts. One idea he tried to put is that funniness in jokes is no more than a passing pleasure, "whereas comedy is a narrative form that in itself tells us something about the world around us. In short, narrative can have a truth value, whereas jokes are devoid of it." (Palmer, 1994: 114) This definition is not quite comprehensive for some jokes can also have a truth value. However, an interesting point contained in this statement is the two-fold nature of humorous text as a narrative form: *it involves both a process of funniness production and a process of message revelation.* And I think this is a better postulation of the two-fold information carried by humorous texts particularly. Then I shall use Palmer's idea of "truth" to mean some potentially serious statement about the nature of our world, or something like this. This assertion made by Palmer can help us to address other issues than just the "funniness" of humorous narrative, while humorous narrative study (relatively a new research field itself) up till today has scarcely surpassed this limitation. What we can do then is to see how the 'way' and the 'what' of narrative can be utilised to treat some of the elementary problems of humorous texts.

In the use of narrative theory, the humour study carried out in this thesis will then centre on text study. There are mainly two objects in my humour study, which are quite in tune with Palmer's postulation mentioned above. The first objective is the exploration of the paradox structure of humour in the narrative, which is then the process of funniness production with

regard to the comic heroes in question. My second object is to work out the serious meaning regarding our comic heroes as revealed by the humour structure.

In the following part, we shall study some important narrative elements that are to become the constituents of our narrative structure of humour.

2. The Major Constituents in Humorous Narrative

Our preceding discussion of humour structure presumes a certain play relationship among narrative elements. Though narrative theory has long been a stranger in humour discussion, its interest in the "system of relations" in narrative (cf. Culler, 1979: 12) is a good starting point for the marriage between these two fields of study. Rimmon-Kenan once offered an explanation of the nature of narrative: "the term *narrative* suggests (1) a communication process in which the narrative as message is transmitted by addresser to addressee and (2) the verbal nature of the medium used to transmit the message" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 2).

In a famous diagram Chatman shows the participants in the narrative communication situation:

"Real author ···> implied author→(narrator)→(narratee)→implied reader ···> real reader" (Chatman, 1978: 151)

In the context of the narrative study, of the six participants, the real author and his counterpart the real reader are in principle left outside of the narrative transaction proper. As we argued à propos O'Neill's formula of the "humour text", a narrative understood without considering the evaluation of its many real readers is only a *potential humour situation*, and potential humour constructed in texts is the main concern of the present thesis. In fact, O'Neill's formula about the "humour text" is just based on the 'play' among the multiple worlds inhabited by these narrative agents. If O'Neill sees all literary works characterised by a mechanism of uncertainty, then humorous texts are more typical cases of dynamic play in the relationship between these narrative elements and their comic effects are intended to be recognised and appreciated at the communication destination. In this sense, our humour structure necessitates these narrative agents and their special functioning in the narrative. Now we shall take a closer look at the most important narrative agents to be involved in our paradox structure of humour.

2.1. The 'Implied Author' and the 'Text'

The "implied author" is often difficult to grasp in many theories, for this narrative agent is "depersonified" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 88), "voiceless and silent" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 87), and is the "mental construction of the totality of the text" ("construction mentale sur l'ensemble du texte") (G. Genette, 1983: 94). Genette once said: "I propose to accept the definition of the implied author as the author's image in the text." ("je propose d'accepter la définition de l'auteur impliqué comme image de l'auteur dans le texte." Genette, 1983: 97) This definition is rather abstract, for we can further ask: what is the author's image *in the text*? Chatman gave a more precise explanation of the notion of the 'implied author': "the implied author established the norms of the narrative" (Chatman, 1978: 149) and "we can grasp the notion of implied author most clearly by comparing different narratives written by the real author but proposing different implied authors" (Chatman, 1978: 148). As Cobley summarises, "the implied author is the organising principle of the text, the guiding star responsible for the presentation of the text's materials in a specific way: the ordering of scenes..." (Cobley, 2001: 139). What I want to add is that, for the same reason, different real authors can write the same type of narratives by postulating similar norms through their implied authors. Three humorous texts are chosen for analysis in Part II of the thesis, and it is in fact based on the similar norms of these narratives that I group them together for study.

What is then the narrative behaviour of the implied author in an actual text? Many theorists lay stress on the voiceless nature of the implied author, but the functioning of this narrative agent is *there* through the general design of the text: "He, or better, *it* has no voice, no direct means of communicating. It instructs us silently, through the design of the whole, with all the voices, by all the means it has chosen to let us learn." (Chatman, 1978: 148). With regard to our humorous texts, the paradox structure of humour in question is then an important design of the implied author. And it is through this general design that the implied reader, implied author's addressee, is invited to receive the potential humour and comprehend the humour text.

In spite of the voiceless nature of this narrative agent, the implied author's design of the text is however something graspable, and there are possibilities for us to study its narrative behaviour. Rimmon-Kenan once pointed out that without an implied author it will be difficult to analyse the "norms" of a text, especially when they are different from the norms of the narrator's discourse world (cf. Rimmon-Kenan, 1976: 58) It happens that the incongruity

between the implied author's "norms" and that of the narrator is an important component of the humour structure in some of the humorous texts we are going to study. It is for this reason that I do not agree with Genette's decision to exclude "implied author" from the realm of narrative study[9]. The Implied author will be considered as the *designer* of the whole narrative structure of humour that governs all the narrative relations in the humorous texts. As I already said, the limit of study in the main body of this thesis is potential humour, which is the product of the implied author's design. The diagram of the narrative situation above shows that the narrative persona are symmetrically divided into two parts: the sending end and the receiving end of the narrative message. According to this symmetric diagram, the implied author's counterpart is the 'implied reader'. Therefore, the potential humour and its serious meaning in our humour discussion is the narrative message intended for the implied reader by the implied author.

2.2. 'Narrator' and 'Character'

Though there have been arguments about whether the implied author is part of the fictional creation, the narrator is no doubt the fictional creation of an author.

In many cases, 'narrator' as a narrative agent is perhaps easier to catch in the narrative than the previous one. For Rimmon-Kenan, the "narrator can only be defined circularly as the narrative 'voice' or 'speaker' of a text" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 87). There are different opinions about whether there always exists a narrator in a narrative. For example, Chatman considers that "narrator" can be either present or absent, and a case of its absence is Hemingway's short novel *The Killers*. But Rimmon-Kenan thinks that narrator is "constructive, not just optional" in the narrative, and the difference is only in the "forms and degrees of perceptibility of the narrator in the text" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 89). Chatman in 1990 modified his previous view and also confirmed the indispensable presence of a narrator in a narrative. When dealing with cases like *The Killers* in which there is almost no trail of the narrator's existence, Chatman asserts this claim by attributing the narrator to a non-human agent.[10] As a result, he disagrees with many theorists who see the narrator's behaviour in the narrative as a human voice. Chatman's new interpretation of "narrator" allows more freedom in the analysis of this narrative agent.

In our humorous texts to be analysed, this narrative agent not only 'shows up', the narrator's discourse also plays an important role in the paradox structure of humour. In fact, the play between the narrator's discourse world and the character in the story world is an

important constituent of the general paradox structure of humour, which is in turn the implied author's design actualised in the texture. In other words, the message to be received by the narratee can be divergent from the character's perception in his story world, and can be also divergent from the message to be received by the implied reader. Such divergence among the multiple worlds of narrative is the basis of the paradox structure of humorous narrative I shall display in my text analysis. In this case, a delicate work in our text analysis is to locate the narrator in relation to the character and vice-versa in the narrative. I shall devote Chapter 5 to the discussion of 'character' and try to build up a narrative theory of comic heroes in particular. But first we must make a survey of the narrator-character relationship in terms of narrative.

With regard to the narrator-character relationship, we should first know that there is the possibility for one literary figure to assume both the 'narrator' and 'character' roles in a text. An example is when the narrator tells the story about himself, like in Camus' short novel *L'étranger* or in Dicken's novel *Great Expectations*. It is however not the case in the three humorous texts I will analyse, and there should be no confusion of character and narrator here, which would involve some other sophisticated explanation about such narrative[11]. However, it is not a problem that their narrative positions may appear quite tangled up, especially when they are in a dynamic play relationship in the paradox structure of humour.

Using Aristotle's terms "diegesis" and "mimesis", theorists like Genette suggest that there are basically two opposing modes of narrative representation. Genette reaffirmed this conclusion in 1983 and said: "... text is almost always a mixed genre, with the opposition between its purely narrative aspects (diegesis) and its dramatic aspects through dialogue (mimesis in Plato's sense)" ("... le récit est presque toujours un genre mixé, l'opposition entre ses aspects purement narratifs (diégesis) et, par le dialogue (mimèsis au sens platonicien), ses aspects dramatiques.") (Genette, 1983: 28) The English equivalents of these two terms are usually 'telling' (for "diegesis") and 'showing' (for "mimesis"). Rimmon-Kenan is against such a clear-cut division of these two concepts. She reasons that "all that narrative can do is create an illusion, an effect, a semblance of mimesis, but it does so through diegesis ... . The crucial distinction, therefore, is not between telling and showing, but between different degrees and kinds of telling" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 108). In this sense, the narrator is then responsible for everything actualised in a text, even when he has created the illusion of "showing" to the point that certain sentences appear to be totally empty of all subjectivity.

A central point in these arguments is about whether every sentence has a speaker and whether each text has a narrator. What is interesting for this thesis is the systematic discussion

in these theories about the narrator's presence in relation to character: whether character is regarded as story existent apart from the narrator, or as mimetic illusion created by the narrator's discourse. For example, Genette postulated seven forms of "mimesis" in an increasing order to show character's presence in speech in relation to the narrator's report of this speech (cf. Genette, 1983: 38); Rimmon-Kenan postulated six degrees of the narrator's perceptivity in a mounting order to show the narrator's presence in relation to character's presence in the story world (among other story existents, of course) (cf. Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 96-100); she also listed seven types of speech representations to show the narrator's presence in relation to character's presence in speech acts (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 109-110), which are close to Genette's formulation mentioned above.

While Genette proposes a typology according to the criterion of how much narrators see and know in relation to characters[12], a significant move is made by Chatman who abandons Genette's formulation with its conflation of the 'who' and 'what' and shifts to the distinction between who perceives and who speaks. A further distinction between the narrator's presence and that of the character came when Chatman (1990) proposed narrator's "slant" and character's "filter" to replace the singular term "point of view" or "focalisation" used up till then. According to Chatman, "'slant' well captures the psychological, sociological and ideological ramifications of the narrator's attitudes, which may range from neutral to highly charged" (Chatman, 1990: 143); and "'filter' seems a good term for capturing something of the mediating function of a character's consciousness - perception, cognition, emotion, reverie - as experienced from a space within the story world. ... Further, the terms "slant" and "filter" correspond to the vital distinction originally made by Genette between who 'tells' and who 'sees'. In my view, the latter could only mean that character, that occupant of the story world, who has perceived the events that transpire. The narrator can only report events: he does not literally 'see' them at the moment of speaking them" (Chatman, 1990: 144).

In the present discussion of humour structure in the narrative, we prefer to take 'character' as a relatively independent entity in relation to the other narrative worlds occupied by the other narrative agents. Of course, the formulations about the narrator and the character discussed above are not especially for interpreting humour narrative. Nevertheless they can facilitate our search for the respective narrative positions of these two narrative agents in the humour structure in our later discussion.

The above illustration has provided a brief view of narrative and some of its important components, which will serve as the foundation of our analysis of the narrative structure of

humour. Next we shall look into some recent humour theories, which are attempts made to study humour on linguistic basis.

CHAPTER 3

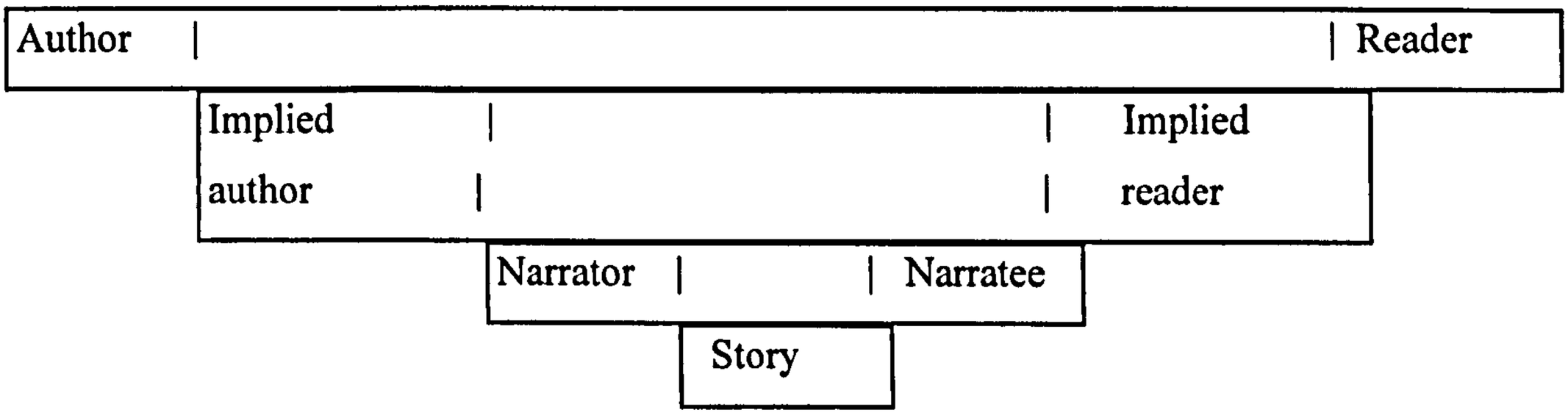
THE PARADOX STRUCTURE OF HUMOUR IN NARRATIVE

Having reviewed the elementary principles of narrative theory, we can now explore some current achievements in the linguistic study of humour, and we shall start with O'Neill's formulations of humour that we left above.

1. O'Neill's Narrative Theory of Humour

O'Neill's theory is in the vanguard of the narrative approach to humour in literary works. What is interesting for this thesis is his analysis of humour incongruity among the "possible worlds" of narrative, which are relevant to the narrative agents and their function in the texts we discussed above.

To account for humour in terms of narrative is O'Neill's objective. O'Neill first introduced his "possible-worlds model" (O'Neill, 1990: 83) which is his new version of the humour incongruity theory. He says: "The Creator, we note, is by definition external to his creation. As observers, we too remain by definition external to the possible worlds we project and contemplate, ... just as a fictional narrator remains external to the narrated state of affairs (or possible world) that he presents." (O'Neill, 1990: 80). Then he attributed spatial dimensions to the diagram of the narrative situation which highlight the play relationship between the participants of narration (O'Neill, 1990: 95):



These different narrative levels are all play worlds: "to the degree that narrative is always a multiple play of levels and metalevels it is also always a form both of play and of (pre-comic) humour." (O'Neill, 1990: 93). Then he tries to interpret humour in terms of his multiple worlds of narrative: in all the major traditional theories of humour, "the initial spark

is always an incongruity -- or more accurately, a *perceived* incongruity under appropriate contextual restraints. ... In terms of the possible-worlds model, then, a *potential* humour situation is always generated by every projection of an alternative possible world, and at this point appropriate contextual restraints come into play, dominating all that follows: if the relationship of the possible worlds is perceived as incongruous it becomes an actual humour situation ..." (O'Neill, 1990: 83). As the above diagram shows, the spatial dimension of O'Neill's humour structure refers to the space where the narrative agents exert their different functions in the narrative. O'Neill also borrowed some terms from Genette to interpret his humour structure. He says, the play structure in a humour text has primarily two narrative levels: "The former level has to do primarily with the content plane of the narrative expression, the *story;* the latter level has to do primarily with the formal plane of narrative expression, the *discourse*" (O'Neill, 1990: 86). These two levels in the narrative structure are respectively the "diegetic story" and the "extradiegetic discourse."[13] (O'Neill, 1990: 96). Furthermore, O'Neill explains that the constitution of humour lies in the intersection or interaction of these multiple narrative elements: " the comic potential increases proportionally, each of the narrative levels serving as metalevel to the one immediately below it" (O'Neill, 1990: 94). In other words, the character's world is the 'story' to narrator, and narrator's discourse is itself the 'story' to the implied author. Each narrative level then can play with another narrative level, and humour structure is then built up through the paradox relationship among narrative levels in the text (cf. O'Neill, 1990: 89-94).

Up till now, O'Neill is trying to prove that "play" and "game" or "exploitation of uncertainty ... is the key technique of humour and narrative alike" (O'Neill, 1990: 10). Next, O'Neill invites us to attempt the reverse procedure and look more closely at the extent to which play and humour situations can be read as constituting narrative situations (cf. O'Neill, 1990: 96).

For O'Neill, the narrative of humorous texts should be seen as a "game", which "we will assume, has a diegetic story (the encounter between opponents, or between a single player and the rules), and an extradiegetic discourse (the game is interpreted, or analysed, or framed, as *being* a game ...)" (O'Neill, 1990: 96). It is on this base that O'Neill postulated a series of formulas to show the distinction between the "play" in narrative in general and the "play" in humorous narrative in particular. A serious work in a strict sense is given the formula:

Work text = (This is serious (This is real)) (O'Neill, 1990: 98)

O'Neill used a story to interpret this formula: "a professional football player whose commitment to the game ensures that as player he sees the diegetic world text as very real,

while his stockbroker ensures that as extradiegetic observer he also interprets the game as a very serious form of work" (O'Neill, 1990: 98). Supplemented by O'Neill's narrative diagram with spatial dimensions (see above), we can imagine that these different roles can be very typically assumed in a narrative by the character in the diegetic story world and the narrator in a relatively meta-level as an extradiegetic observer. In the case of reliable narration when the implied author and the narrator take a similar position (see Chapter 5. 3), we can presume that such a text is a serious work, or in O'Neill's term, it is a "work text".

In the case of humour, there may be first a perceived incongruity, meanwhile there should be a further process that treats the perceived incongruity, which then results in the formula of "humour text" that we presented earlier:

"Humour Text = (W^0: (W^1: This is not so (W^2: This is so))) (O'Neill, 1990: 99)

As I showed earlier, this formula is further interpreted in terms of narrative levels by O'Neill himself. To complement this formula of the "humour text" with O'Neill's *spatial* diagram of the narrative situation, we can locate the narrative agents who are responsible for the discourse of each narrative level and examine their respective narrative behaviour (also cf. Chapter 2. 2. above). For example, we can imagine a typical case of humour when the narrator (W^1) takes advantage of his "superior" position to poke fun at the character (W^2) imprisoned in his story world. If the text is designed to emit rich humour in the portrayal of the main character, we may also find an implied author (W^0) using various narrative strategies to hyper-determine the general narrative structure so that the character's story is narrated with abundant comic effects. All these hypotheses will be concretised and developed in our later humorous text analysis. For the time being, we can construe from O'Neill's formulas some important features of humorous narrative (or "humour text") as different from serious narrative (or "work text") in theoretical terms. Humorous narrative necessitates significant incongruity among the discourses of different narrative levels; the ultimate treatment of the story material as designed by the implied author has the major purpose of humour production.

What I want to further clarify is that a "humour situation text" which does not yet involve a real reader's response should still be considered as a potential humour situation, which constitutes the limits in the case study part of this thesis. O'Neill's formulations are very close to what we are approaching: first, these formulas can clearly show the different narrative elements working in the humour structure; second, these formulas also show the special paradox structure in humour narrative. Nonetheless, with regard to my research, O'Neill's theorisation is still weak in at least two respects:

(1) The difference between the 'play' in the paradox structure of humour and the 'play' in non-humour narrative is not his focal point and its exposition is thus not profound enough. An example is that O'Neill blurs the distinction between humour situations and non-humour situations when he classifies paradox, irony, metaphor etc. all as versions of the pre-comic text (O'Neill, 1990: 100). However, O'Neill is not the only one to have made this error. For me, the usage of language in the form of paradox, irony or/and metaphor can either produce or not produce humour, and we shall treat this problem in the next chapter.

(2) He only showed the paradox relationship among the multiple worlds of narrative, which is of course important in the narrative structure of humour; but he left out a more elementary case: the paradox structure of humour can also exist in a single narrative level; and when it does, how does it contribute to the general humour structure?

The principal objective of this thesis is to see how far we can make use of the narrative theory of humour in humorous text analysis. In this investigation, I shall rely on some of O'Neill's key ideas introduced above, though I will not directly adopt his formula of humour. To be more precise, *first*, O'Neill's book *The Comedy of Entropy : Humour / Narrative / Reality* (1990) does not account for humour structure only; it analyses the qualities of humour also to argue that uncertainty or ambivalence is the essence of all language phenomena. It is on this basis that O'Neill worked out a series of formulas to exhibit the difference between humorous texts and other forms of narrative. I will draw on two important suggestions from O'Neill's theory: the 'paradox' structure of humour in terms of narrative levels and the 'spatial' dimension that accounts for this humour structure. *Second*, 'potential humour' as structured in humorous texts is our main concern, while "an actual humour situation (text)" involving the explanation of extra-textual elements will be less considered in our discussion. *Third*, in my humorous text study, 'response' to humour and to the texts at large is not a concern as I focus on the narrative structure as designed by the implied author and actualised in the text. *Fourth*, the narrative levels indicated in O'Neill's formula of humour will be further defined and explored mostly in my discussion of the function of the narrative agents as well as their play relationship.

Generally speaking, O'Neill's formulation of humour as well as many other theorists' account of humour will be tested and further developed in the later humorous text analysis.

2. Greimas' Isotopy-Disjunction Model

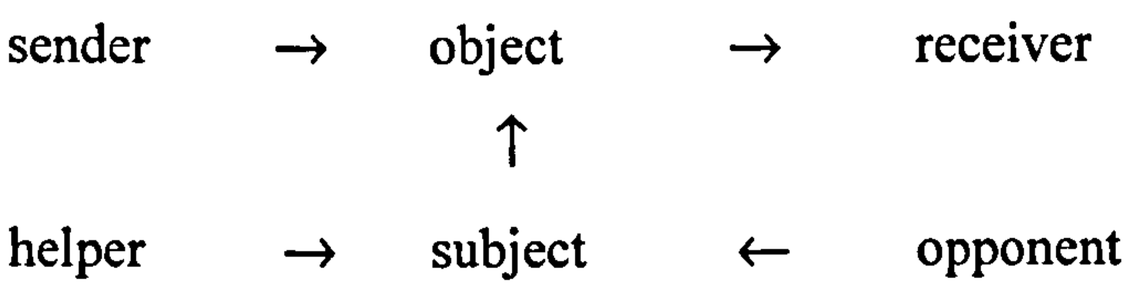
Greimas' interest in humour is limited to two pages (1966: 70-71) where he deals with the structure of jokes. Greimas' remarks about jokes are in fact meant to serve as an example for the discussion of the concept of "isotopy", which is a morphological unit in his theory. Greimas' exposition is interesting for our discussion in two respects: (1) his analysis of jokes is among other things a postulation of the paradoxical structure of humour; (2) his isotopy-disjunction model is also linked to his theory of 'character' (the traditional term) which he labels "acteurs" and "actants" and to which he gave a new interpretation in the context of narrative analysis.

Greimas' illustration of "isotopy" is organised around the definition of semantic units and/or categories that proceeds from the smallest units of meaning ("sème") to larger units of meaning. Isotopies are defined as the repetition of "classemes", or in other words, they are units of lower-category meanings that make up the general the meaning of the text.

According to Greimas, there must be two parts present in jokes: the *narration/ presentation* and the *dialogue*. The former has the function of establishing the first isotopy; the latter has the function of breaking this isotopy and suddenly opposing the first isotopy to the second one. Then the two isotopies are united through a connecting term, which is both the disjunction and the conjunction of the two isotopies. The spiritual pleasure caused by the joke is due to its paradoxical nature when we discover two different isotopies within a harmonious narrative (cf. Attardo, 1994: 70-71). This theory is largely in line with other theories of incongruity as I have already shown.

Greimas offered two terms to replace the traditional 'characters': *acteurs* are invested with special qualities and they are numerous; *actants* are general categories underlying all narratives and are reduced to six types in subordination to the general action of the whole story: sender, receiver, helper, opponent, subject, and object (cf.: Greimas, 1981: 51).

The importance of these actants lies in their respective positions in the organisation of the whole story; on the other hand, a classification of actants emphasises the difference and even opposing relations among the acteurs (cf. Greimas, 1981: 51). The relationship among the six types of actant is:



What is interesting for our research is to see how Greimas associated his humour structure with the function of literary persona in humour narrative. According to Greimas, one possibility for the participation of actants in comic narrative is through the oppositional relationship of their functions. A further classification of these actants could then be "adults vs. children; majorities vs. minorities; normal vs. mad; human vs. animals or objects; etc." (cf. Greimas, 1966: 71). This is in fact only one possible way in which literary figures can act upon the humour structure in a narrative, and examples of other kinds will be presented in the later textual analyses of this thesis.

At an initial level, isotopies are semantic disparities in the text[14]. As Attardo summarises: "all the phenomena that can be incorporated within the notion of isotopy end up being part of the processes that establish the 'topic' of a text." (Attardo, 1994: 80). As for the few humorous texts that I choose for analysis, the semantic interpretation is with regard to the contradictory personality of the comic figures. Greimas' isotopy-disjunction model is significant for my investigation of humour narrative in certain respects. First, the disjunction and the conjunction of different isotopies in the case of humour is in accordance with the interpretation of the paradox structure of humour narrative. Second, this model can also cast light on the personality of our comic heroes. In other words, the different and even contradictory actantial functions of our comic heroes can show the typical characteristics of this type of character. Morin developed Greimas' claim about the two-part composition of jokes in her analysis of some short humorous narratives taken from *France Soir*. Morin's joke study does not lay stress on the isotopy-disjunction mechanism, but is more interested in the two parts of the text. She also refines the two parts into four subdivisions[15]. Another interesting point she made is the *neutralisation* of the opposed elements for humour production (cf. Morin, 1981: 110-111). Another version of this hypothesis about humour will be discussed in my introduction of Cohen's theory about the difference between humour and non-humour narrative (Cf. Chapter 4 1. 2.).

We see by now that Greimas' isotopy disjunction model as well as Morin's joke study are basically in accord with the general assumption about the paradox structure of humour narrative under discussion.

3. Script Theory and Its Enlarged Use in Humorous Text Analysis

The "semantic script theory of humour" was first outlined in Raskin (1979) and then expounded at book-length in 1985. By "script" Raskin means "an organised chunk of information about something (in the broadest sense)" (Attardo, 1994: 198). Based on Raskin's humour theory mainly, Attardo's summary about the main hypothesis of the "semantic script theory of humour" is as follows:

> "A text can be characterised as single-joke-carrying-text if both of the (following) conditions are satisfied:
>
> 1) The text is compatible, fully or in part, with two different scripts,
>
> 2) The two scripts with which the text is compatible are opposite. ... The two scripts with which some text is compatible are said to fully or in part in this text." (Attardo, 1994: 196)

Parallel to Greimas' remarks about joke structure, Raskin first asserts that in joke texts there exist two different scripts. According to the "semantic script theory of humour", evoking humour necessitates two scripts either in an overlapping or an opposed relation, which are subdivided into three first-level pairs of real/unreal situations (actual vs. non-actual, normal vs. abnormal, and possible vs. impossible) and five second level pairs (good/bad, life/death, obscene/non-obscene, money/no-money, and high/low status) (cf. Attardo, 1994: 203-204) Second, all jokes are essentially the same since they are all based on oppositions between scripts, and all oppositions can be reduced to the above categories (cf. Attardo, 1994: 220). Third, the humorous text will be found compatible almost entirely with the two opposed scripts (cf. Attardo, 1994: 207). Hence the "semantic script theory of humour" is also a formulation of the paradox structure of humour.

Then subsequently Raskin introduced the notion of the "semantic script-switch trigger" (Raskin: 1985:114): "The usual effect of the trigger is exactly this: by introducing the second script it casts a shadow on the first script and the part of the text which introduced it, and imposes a different interpretation on it, which is different from the most obvious one." (Raskin: 1985:114). Attardo confirms this definition by saying that "trigger" is "the element of text that causes the passage from the first to the second script actualised in the text."

(Attardo, 1994: 203). Raskin also further points out that there are two major types of humour trigger, which are the "ambiguity trigger" and the "contradiction trigger". In case of the ambiguity trigger, "due to the ambiguity, ... the second script changes the interpretation of the first part of the text of the joke" (Raskin, 1985: 114); while in case of contradiction trigger, a term used may be perfectly congruous with the surface meaning of the sentence, but actually means just the contrary of the surface meaning, which in consequence leads to the second humour script (cf. Raskin, 1985: 116).

The first expansion of "semantic script theory of humour" is by Chlopicki (1987) which is however limited to a longer list of basic binary oppositions with an emphasis on "shadow opposition". Chlopicki's analysis of short stories showed that there may be more than two script oppositions in humorous texts, with differences between main scripts and deeper script oppositions or "shadow oppositions" (cf. Attardo, 1994: 208).

An important development of Raskin's research is by Attardo and Raskin (1991). Their revised version of "semantic script theory of humour" is called "general theory of verbal humour" by which they introduced five other Knowledge Resources as necessary for generating a joke: in addition to script opposition (SO), there are logical mechanism (LM), the target (TA), the narrative strategy (NS), the language (LA), and the situation (SI). The "semantic script theory of humour" is a semantic theory of humour while GTVH is meant to account for the semantic aspects of humour as well as its other linguistic (and non-linguistic) features (cf. Attardo, 1994: 222- 223).

GTVH can provide a broader linguistic basis for my research and enables us to find other elements that, together with "script opposition", constitute the humour structure in the narrative. In my later humorous text analysis, the "narrative strategy", or "form of narrative organisation" (Attardo, 1994: 224) in their theory is first related to my discussion about the implied author's design, which above all concerns the texture and the play among the multiple worlds of narrative in the humorous texts under discussion. The notion of "target", which refers to the "butt" of the joke in their theory, can be linked to our analysis of the texts' aggressiveness with regard to the comic heroes. I shall however develop this notion and use some other terms to show the shades of meaning in this notion. For example, the modern comic heroes of my choice tend to be both the ironist and the "butt" of their own humour, which is a manifestation of their split personality. "Situation" in their theory for us is often related to the discussion of the ironic situation the comic hero is trapped in. As for the aspect of "language", especially the problem of "interlingual translation" (Attardo, 1994: 223) Attardo and Raskin evoked, this will not be a central point for our discussion, and I shall

define its limits in terms of "comparative study" in Chapter 6. By taking into consideration all these additional elements, we can better illustrate the general humour structure and the comic effects of more sophisticated humour narratives. In consequence, we can also surmise that script opposition is not the sole constituent of the humour structure in question.

For Attardo and Raskin, "the *logic mechanism* is the parameter that accounts for the way in which the two senses (scripts, isotopies, ...) in the joke are brought together. It can range from straightforward juxtapositions, ... to more complex errors in reasoning, such as false analogies" (Attardo, 1994: 225). In 1997 Attardo further explored *script opposition* in association with *logic mechanism* by proposing an "incongruity-resolution model" preceded by a "setup phase" as a parallelism of "general theory of verbal humour". Attardo's "setup phase" refers to the expectation-building stage and is "the instantiation of the first script" (Attardo, 1997: 431). *Incongruity* in the case of humour is found to correspond to *script opposition.* Script opposition is then reconsidered according to "accessibility" based on such important notions as "informativeness" and "salience". "Informativeness" is defined in terms of reduction in the number of alternatives." (Attardo, 1997: 402). "Salience" then, is defined in terms of levels of importance concerning all parts of the meaning of a word (cf. Attardo, 1997: 401). Such terms are proposed to further explore the relationship in script opposition of humour. The incongruity of script opposition lies in the fact that the two scripts are both relevant and inappropriate to the context. "Informativeness" and "salience" may result from an "abrupt" passage from the first to the second sense/interpretation of the text (cf: Attardo, 1997: 402) and that accounts for the surprise theory of humour when it is the case. His "resolution phase" is argued to be "identical to the logical mechanism" (Attardo, 1997: 395). This model is then largely used in his later theories and practices concerning the analysis of humorous narratives. So in the incongruity-resolution model, the concept of humour incongruity is very much discussed in relation with script opposition, while logic mechanism as resolution brings elements of explanation to such incongruity.

On the basis of his early assumption that logic mechanisms can range from straightforward to more complex errors in reasoning, Attardo attempted in 2002 a first classification, and presented a partial modeling, using set theory[16] and graphs. Attardo's new classification of logic mechanism is a corroboration and further development of some of the previous attempts in the account of humour incongruity. In fact, Jean Sareil in 1984 wrote a whole book mainly to expound various forms of "comic writing" skills; Walter Nash examined the language of humour and offered a long list of "productive formula" of humour (Nash, 1985: 47). When we take a close look, these ideas about 'forms', 'formula' or any

'mechanism' in humour production are essentially very close to each other. An example is that both 'exaggeration' and 'false reasoning' have been listed by these three theorists as a kind humour production technique involving humour incongruity.

Attardo's further development logic mechanism has certainly provided new insight into various forms of humour production. Though neither sets nor graphs are my chosen analytical method, both humour incongruity and logic mechanism are important aspects to be explored in the humour structure of my humorous texts. I shall then refer to Attardo and some other theorists (as mentioned above) where relevant in my interpretation of local and general humour structures in those humorous texts to be analysed. In other words, Attardo's ideas about the "incongruity-resolution model", together with other theorists' formulation about humour production, will be used as the key apparatus for the account of all the important humour incongruity and the functioning of various humour registers in and among any narrative aspect(s). I should emphasise right here that the sense of humour registers in this thesis is 'larger' than scripts in Raskin and Attardo's theories (see explanation in "5" below).

4. Attardo's Linear Analysis of Humorous Texts[17]

On the basis of the preceding linguistic theories of humour, Attardo has made special efforts to address the issue of analysing longer humorous texts.

In 1998, Attardo provided a "significant extension to the GTVH (general theory of verbal humour), namely a component which allows the combination of individual 'small' texts into larger units" (Attardo, 1998: 233). The goal is "to present a method for the analysis of the humorous element of narratives in texts of some complexity" (Attardo, 1998: 231). When he expanded this theory to book length in 2001, he emphasised that "the study of humorous texts reduces them to the location of all lines … along the text *vector* (i.e., its linear presentation)" (Attardo, 2001: 29). His linear presentation, as he explains, is "not in the sense that it is organised as a line, but in the sense that you can get one item at a time" (Attardo, 1997: 417). In other words, although he may be aware that the organisation of the humorous text could be presented as other than linear, it is not the main point of the humorous text analysis method he is proposing.

In the central part of his theory he introduced such new concepts as a distinction between *micro-* and *macronarratives*, *jab* and *punch lines*, *strands, combs* and *bridges.*

"A *micronarrative* is the simplest possible narrative, in the sense that it consists of one action/event. … A *macronarrative* is defined as any combination of micronarratives."

(Attardo, 1998: 234). His segmentation of the humorous text stands by three standards: "explicit metatextual authorial cues (e.g., 'end of act one'); changes in setting; exits (or entries) of major character." (Attardo, 1998: 235). Attardo then introduced the concept of *jab line* to distinguish between punch lines. The initial assumption is that a joke has a text that is serious and then *a punch line* at the end, in which the script built in the first part of the text is rejected in favour of another script. A longer humorous text has many "punch lines" along its development. However, punch lines behave in a particular way in terms of a text: they completely disrupt the development of the text (in favour of another script). A punch line in fact "closes the scene with a sudden outburst of humour" (Attardo, 1994: 263). Obviously, a novel (say) can not have a series of punch lines, since the development of the text would be interrupted repeatedly. It then entails the necessity to introduce the *jab line*, which narratively differs from *the punch line* because it does not disrupt the text; it may in fact help its development. So, semantically speaking, a punch line is similar to a jab line; narratively speaking, a punch line is disruptive while a jab line is not. The second distinction between the two is that a punch line occurs only at the end while a jab line may occur in any other position in the text (except the end) (cf. Attardo, 1996).[18]

Attardo's *strand* is then "a (non-necessarily contiguous) sequence of (punch or jab) lines formally or thematically linked." (Attardo 2001: 83). Significant patterns of strands are *combs* and *bridges*, a subcategorization introduced by Attardo and Vigliotti (1999). *Combs* are constituted by the recurrence of jabs across a narrow stretch of text, while *bridges* span jabs or combs that are relatively distant from another.[19] We can then relate *strands* (significant jabs) to a theme (my "axis"[20]) of a text. When several jab lines occur for example within 100 words of one another, and meanwhile share the same butt or are related to the same logic mechanism for humour, these jabs form a *comb*. "Combs, by their very nature, tend to create areas of the text where there is a concentration of humour" (Attardo, 2001: 88). When a jab line can recall another jab line that occurs relatively very far away, these two jabs then form a *bridge*. An example given by Attardo is from Woody Allen's "Kugelmass Episode": there's a place where a psychiatrist says: "I am a psychiatrist, not a magician." Several pages later, a magician (Kugelmass), says "I am a magician, not a psychiatrist." That is a *bridge* because the two jabs occur far from one another and there is at least an echo of sentence structure form between the two jabs.

Attardo's new method is, at least theoretically speaking, significant "for the analysis of the humorous elements in texts of some complexity" (Attardo, 1998: 231). The above concepts are proposed to help locate various humorous elements of a text, which can be very

helpful in the analysis of my humorous texts. I need to clarify here the relationship between Attardo's *linear formula* of humour and the humour structure I will explore. **First**, Attardo's new method also means "no part of the text is left unanalysed or given less attention" (Attardo, 1998: 256). My segmentation of the texts for analysis, as I mentioned earlier, is based on "significant" choice with regard to the portrayal of the intellectual characters in question. Since my text analysis should also achieve the goal of analysing this type of comic heroes, the humorous texts will be segmented for this purpose. Therefore, unlike Attardo's approach, some parts of the texts for me *will* be given more attention and some other parts less or little attention according to their relationship with the subject of my study. **Second**, as we know, Attardo's proposal lays stress on the linear structure of humorous texts. My humour structure, however, will lay stress on the position and the relationship of certain items of the text with regard to a *spatial* play structure. As said earlier, such a play structure is considered to involve the play among different narrative elements, and above all, the play that has the effect of paradox among different narrative levels. As a result, only a few of Attardo's new concepts in his linear analysis of humorous text will be adopted in my later texts analysis for the sole purpose of better locating some of the humorous elements in the texts analysed: my segmented narratives taken for analysis under different axes will also be considered as *strands* which in turn may contain *combs* and *bridges*. These elements will be considered as *part of* the constituents of the *spatial humour structure* in question and are in addition used for the examination of this spatial humour structure. This then leads us to see another less important point in Attardo's theory.

Attardo also raised "the issue of multiple levels of embedding of narratives" (Attardo, 1998: 235). According to him, each narrative is said to occur at a given level *n*, if one character delivers an impromptu speech, the speech qualifies it for the narrative of level *-1;* if within the speech the speaker quotes another character's song, the song qualifies as level-*2* (Cf. Attardo, 1998: 235-236). 'Narratives levels' is an important component of the paradox structure of humorous narrative in my later text analysis. I shall then use other related theories to enrich as well as limiting this discussion for the analysis of our comic heroes. Among such theories, Chatman's diagram of narrative agents (cf. chapter 3) and his later theory of the narrative behaviour of these narrative agents (cf. chapter 5) as well as O'Neill's idea about the play structure in humorous narrative (cf. chapter 2) count for the major source of my theory of narrative levels.

5. Register-Based Humour

"Register humour" theory is one of the early linguistic theories of humour which has based the analysis of humour on extended texts instead of merely on jokes. Nevertheless, even with Attardo's recently published book (in 2001) which is entirely dedicated to developing theories for humorous text analysis, "register humour" theory still remains a comparatively less (if not weakly) explored area.

What is interesting for this thesis are those elements in this theory that can be preliminarily associated with the spatial humour structure I shall investigate. For Attardo, the starting point of register humour theory is an observation of such cases when "humorous techniques ... do not have clear punch lines" (Attardo, 2001: 103). Another observation comes from Chlopicki who is conscious of such occasions when "not any single word, but the formulation of the whole phrase or two, or even the whole text of the joke is responsible for causing the script overlap" (Chlopicki, 1987: 14; cf. Attardo, 2001: 103). I think such awareness is wise and I am afraid that, unfortunately perhaps, these observations correspond to the cases of many complex humorous texts. So let us see what are the suggestions made in the theory of register humour so as to deal with these cases.

In the centre of register humour is the idea of multiple (rather than single) decisive factors in humour which is reduced to the term "diffuse disjunctor". As Attardo defined it, "a diffuse disjunctor is any type of disjunctor which does not occur alone in a humorous (micro)narrative, insofar as it is unable to trigger the script-switch by its mere presence" (Attardo, 2001: 103). Then what are the components of this diffusion? 'Registers' pre-theoretically means "language varieties associated with a given situation, role, or social aspect of the speaker's experience." (Attardo, 1994: 230). The concept of register is further defined as related to contextual factors: some define it as "subject matter" (i.e., what the text is about), others see it as "field of discourse" (i.e., what the text is for, like discussing, insulting, etc.)[21], and some others define it in terms of linguistic features. What stylistics deals with is the affective, emotional side of language which is measured against the "intellectual or logical expression mode" (Attardo, 1994: 232), a sort of 'zero degree of writing' that would not betray any emotional involvement on the part of the speaker" (cf. Barthes, 1972; Attardo, 1994: 232 - 238). Theoretically speaking, "script theory explains connotation by showing that scripts weakly activate distant scripts. Register is explained with a generalisation of this idea" (Attardo, 1994: 252). In their application to humour analysis, the opposition in the "semantic

script theory of humour" must be between two scripts; in case of register humour, they suggest that besides the direct scripts in difference[22], we may also find a series of connotative scripts which are all locally incompatible with the first script.

Also relevant in Attardo's account of register theory is that his register humour is discussed in association with irony. For Attardo the ground of this association is that "Register humor and irony are good examples of diffuse disjunctors since the incompatibility/inappropriateness between the context and some elements of the utterance is the sole necessary and sufficient marker of humorous or ironical intention." (Attardo, 2001: 103) Ironic humour happens to be the dominant feature in the portrayal of the comic heroes in the humorous texts of my choice and thus another important topic in my discussion (see the discussion in Chapter 5 below). Attardo calls attention to at least two points worthy of note regarding the relationship between register humour and irony. First, "Irony shares with register humor the feature that it does not have a clear, unique disjunctor located in a predictable position in the text, as jokes do." It is also the central point of the spatial humour structure I shall focus on. As for their difference, "register humor is satisfied, so to speak, to generate a much vaguer incongruous clash which may have some degree of resolution/justification, but need not do so. Therefore, irony has a higher degree of resolution (insofar as irony must 'mean' something" (Attardo, 2001: 124-125). This idea is compatible with my approach to the humorous texts in the common concern that the investigation of the humour structure goes in parallel with the search for the serious meaning of the ironic humour (see Chapter 5 below).

I have already hinted (and I shall further explore) that a humour narrative at book length is a rich network of play among multiple narrative elements. According to the above definitions, 'register', compared with 'script' or 'line', is a less limited term of reference to humour structure. To repeat, searching for multiple decisive factors in humour is a major point of "register humour"; it is also an important task of my spatial humour structure study. In consequence, *register* is to be used to refer to certain key links in the paradox structure of humour in the humorous texts to be analysed. While register as "subject matter" can be related to our "axis" (cf. Chapter 5 below) discussion, and register as "field of discourse" can be related to the analysis of different narrative levels, the stylistics' approach (cf. Attardo, 1994: 232) can also help us to observe the clashes in language style, or restraint of emotion in the case of humour engendering in our humorous texts. The application of register humour to script theory will also enable us to explore the ambiguous but rich meanings that humour can evoke.

Of course, the term "register" is still to be further developed, and Attardo also realises that much remains to be accounted for in this theory (cf. Attardo, 2001: 104). What is important for our research is the association between the notion of "register" and the discussion of some complex humorous texts, and I am particularly interested in those aspects that, according to Attardo, need to be further defined in the "script-based theory" of register. A general question is that, according to the "semantic script theory of humour", a script-switch must be present for the passage from the first to the second isotopy. But how to address the issue of script-switch when there is no evident trigger present? (cf. Attardo, 1994: 267-268) Among other things, the notion of "register" is to be further explored in terms of narrative levels in my humorous text analysis. An example is, Attardo used the term "hyper-determined humour" to refer to the cases characterised by the simultaneous activity of more than one active source or of different contexts (cf. Attardo, 2001: 100-101). We can see that this idea becomes more concrete with my analysis of the implied author's design and its actualisation in every narrative level of the text analysed.

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A Narrative Approach to Humorous Text Analysis

My study of humour incongruity will be a narrative approach to the paradox structure to be found in some humorous texts. The present thesis is a *test* in the sense that I will show how far we can go in our pursuit of humour with narrative theory, and I will show both the perspective and the limits of this approach in the discussion.

In my textual analyses, the classic notion of humour incongruity and the "punch-line" are now renewed and enriched. In the context of the three humorous texts I have chosen for analysis, I will use *register* to refer to the incongruous narrative elements which serve as the basis in the humour structure, and *switching* to refer to the active mechanism that serves to engender the switch of registers at the comic moments of the narrative. 'Registers' may refer to any narrative aspects that are in an incongruous relationship, whether in subject matter, the discourse of a certain narrative level, or any linguistic or stylistic feature of narrative. In my analysis 'switching' is no longer restricted to a simple linguistic element, as 'trigger' usually indicates. Like 'punch line', my 'switching' is also a reference to those instances of climax in a humorous narrative. Above all, my 'switching' is intended to cast light on a spatial structure

rather than on some linear formula in those humorous texts. Such humour structure involves a network of play relationships among various narrative elements. *Logic mechanism* then seeks a sense in nonsense or appeals to an error in reasoning so as to bring some kind of explanation to the incongruity (cf. Attardo, 1997: 406-407). 'Registers' and 'switching' working together according to various 'logic mechanisms' will constitute the 'paradox structure of humour' in the humorous texts analysed.[23]

CHAPTER 4

HUMOROUS FIGURES IN NARRATIVE

1. 'Figure' and 'Humour'

1.1. Common Ground

It is inconceivable that the human race could exist without either language or humour. In man's utilisation of language, 'figure' is an old concept related to the art of effective speaking or writing. While figures are usually word or phrase length, there exist some other extended forms of language play or narratives forms capable of humour emission. There are a variety of recognised forms of figure like 'metaphor', 'paradox' or 'irony'. An initial reading of our humorous texts can make us realise that certain means of expression effective in humour production are also related to certain forms of figure. We may also recognise some other forms of humour production like 'parody' or 'pastiche' (see Part II *Candide* and *The British Museum is Falling Down* analysis) either as a local language play form or a narrative form. In this chapter, we need to seek for a common ground between 'figure' and 'humour' first so that we can associate figure with our humour discussion. On this basis, we may seek to extend our discussion of humour in the context of humorous texts, with their various local narrative tactics and general narrative strategies.

The *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences du language* says that "the most widespread and long-lasting definition of figure is a moving-away or a change from an initial expression which is considered 'normal'" ("la définition la plus répandue, la plus tenace de la Figure, est celle d'un *écart,* de la modification d'une expression première, considérée comme 'normale'".)[24] The meaning of "écart" in French (gap, difference, or moving-away from a reference point) is very close to that of incongruity, which is an explanation of humour phenomena we presented earlier. In a large sense, as Mahadev L. Apte asserts, "at the basis of linguistic humour are the various types of linguistic units and their interrelationship. The notion of incongruity is crucial to such humour" (Mahadev L. Apte, 1985: 179). Humour production in use of language then involves various twisting of the relationship between form and meaning, the original use of familiar words and phrases, and the overall misuse of

language (cf. Mahadev L. Apte, 1985: 179). Hence these formulations about language use can be a starting point to bring figure and humour together for our narrative study. As a matter of fact, figures and language play in general can be used to produce humour, and it is often the case in my humorous texts.

1. 2. A Wrong Question

Some humour theorists have tried to seek the difference between humour and figure, and they even have provided some answers. I think it is fundamentally wrong to put forward the question 'what is the difference between humour and figure'. A brief recall of our life experiences is enough to make us realise that a figurative speech can either be a form of humour or devoid of humour. That is, in practical life, a figure of speech may or may not provoke laughter and trigger off comic effects. Strictly speaking, it should not be a question of the difference, for example, between metaphor and humour as Palmer tried to show (1987), but a question of the difference between humour and non-humour cases in any kind of language utilisation, including the utilisation of figures.

Raskin's humour theory, later undertaken and developed by Attardo, shows the awareness that "ambiguous, metaphorical, figurative, allegorical, mythical, allusive ... texts present overlapping scripts, but they are not necessarily funny" (Attardo, 1994: 202). Though the idea of "scripts" are to be further developed in our later discussion of humour registers, this statement made by Attardo pointed out a basic feature of many play forms of language. "Not necessarily funny" necessarily means that these language phenomena are sometimes funny, and are less funny or not funny at all under some other circumstances. What is incoherent is that all the above named language phenomena are later placed under the "non-opposed script category", "because the second and necessary condition in the "semantic script theory of humour" is not fulfilled in these non-humorous texts." (Attardo, 1994: 204). In this case, according to Attardo's definition of the humorous text, these language phenomena are incapable of humour. We shall shortly see, on the basis of examples, that this is not so.

O'Neill also classified "paradox, irony, metaphor, etc." in the category of "pre-comic text" so as to distinguish it from "comic text":

"Pre-comic text = (This is serious (This is not so (This is so)))" (O'Neill, 1990: 100)

"Comic text = This is non-serious (This is not so (This is so)))" (O'Neill, 1990: 100)

For O'Neill, "comic texts differ from pre-comic texts only in that the evaluation in the extradiegetic W• is 'This is not serious" rather than "This is serious'"(O'Neill, 1990: 100). I

think what is improper is his clear-cut division between the narrative form producing comic effects and the narrative which has used "paradox, irony, metaphor, etc." in non-comic ways. Besides, it is not quite clear which narrative agent exactly undertakes "the evaluation in the extradiegetic W◦" in these formulas. For example, in the context of a narrative, O'Neill is never quite clear about whether it is the real reader as the extra-textual entity or the implied reader as the intra-textual narrative entity that is responsible for the extradiegetic W° and performs the last evaluation in these formulas. This point is ambiguous in his other formulas, too.

Palmer also positioned 'joke' and 'metaphor' in separate categories. His account of the difference between joke and metaphor is based on "the logic of the absurd", which is his formulation of the joke that we introduced earlier (see page 6-7). He said: "it is perfectly possible to provide an account of the difference between joke and metaphor which derives from the fundamental nature of both. Since the nature of metaphor is that the plausibility of the predication is greater than the implausibility, and that of the joke that the opposite is true, the distinction is necessarily intrinsic to their forms." (Palmer, 1987: 73). But we shall see in our later text analysis that metaphor can also be effective in humour production, and when it does, metaphor also fits the humour structure formula. Hence, Palmer's distinction between joke and metaphor holds merely with regard to non-humour metaphor compared to jokes of any kind.

Only a few humour theorists are aware that figures may or may not be a form of humour. Even fewer theorists can point out the mechanism that decides whether a figure functions to produce humour. Now it is worthwhile to introduce J. Cohen's theory of the "comic" ("comique") and the "poetic" ("poétique") (1985), which is his formulation of the distinction between humour and non-humour cases in the narrative of poetic form.

He studied two example of similes in his article "Comic and Poetic" ("comique et poétique") (1985):

(1) The earth is as blue as an orange ("La terre est bleue comme une orange")[25]

(2) The earth is as blue as a tomato (La terre est bleue comme une tomate)

(J. Cohen, 1985: 58)

For J. Cohen, the first simile is "poétique" or a non-humour simile, while the second is a humorous simile. He then tried to explain their difference: in (1), the diversion is reduced by

an analogy among the three words "earth", "blue", and "orange". On the contrary, in (2) what the word "tomato" presents is just the opposite to what the other two words present. ... We can say that, "orange" presents noble or high qualities, while "tomato" presents the contrary qualities. Comic effects then result from the opposition between "tomato" and the other two terms "earth" and "blue" which are associated with "tomato" in this special form. Hence we see heteropathy instead of isopathy in the case of humour" ("en (1), la déviation est réduite par l'analogie des pathèmes dégagés par les trois termes 'terre', 'bleue', 'orange'. Au contraire, en (2), le terme 'tomate' présente un pathème exactement antithétique des deux autres. Ces pathèmes, je n'entreprendrai pas de les décrire. Disons seulement que, à l'évidence, l'orange présente le trait inverse. D'où l'effet comique qu'elle produit par opposition aux deux autres termes, 'terre' et 'bleue', qui lui sont associés dans la formule. Hétéropathie, donc, à la place d'une isopathie." J. Cohen, 1985: 58-59). J. Cohen also theorised the distinction between non-humour similes and humour similes: "poetisation" is the destruction of the opposition structure by eliminating the negation, which otherwise could be the neutralising term. This explains how the constituent element of "poeticity" is rendered pathetic. It is the contrary in the case of the comic in which the object is de-pathetised, *for the two opposing values co-exist and neutralise each other*." ("La poétisation est une destruction de la structure oppositive par élimination de la négation, donc du terme neutralisant, ce qui explique la pathétisation de l'objet constitutive de la poéticité. ... Le comique est l'inverse. Il est l'objet dépathétisé ... En lui, deux valeurs contraires coexistent qui se neutralisent mutuellement." J. Cohen, 1985: 58; emphasis added).

Near the end of this article, J. Cohen described the relationship between the opposition or contradiction and the congruency that co-exist in humour. He stated that the very fact that two aspects in opposition belong to the same entity and are eventually united in harmony "produces the effect of 'congruence' (Osgood's term)[26], that is, a mutual neutralisation." ("... produit un effet de 'congruence' (Osgood), c'est-à-dire de neutralisation mutuelle." J. Cohen, 1985: 60) J. Cohen's formulation about the paradox in humour is similar to what we have done earlier. I will further improve and develop this formula of humour in the later discussion of humorous narrative.

An important conclusion we can draw from this part is that figures of any kind may or may not be a form of humour. On the basis of this acknowledgement, J. Cohen's formulation of humorous figures are to be further completed by some other humour theorists' views in my later humour discussion in the context of certain humorous text. An example is the notion of 'logic mechanism' and its function as promoted by Attardo (see previous section). Hence we

are led to construe that for any figure, or even for language play form in general to become humorous, it necessitates at least two conditions: *incongruity (in fact not necessarily opposition) and a certain mechanism that functions to neutralise the incongruous in order to achieve a certain congruency according to some humorous logic*. It is clear that only humorous figures are the object of study in this thesis. Since humour is studied in terms of narrative here, humorous figures will also be explored in relationship to narrative.

2. Humorous Irony

Various forms of figure and extended play form in terms of narrative are effective means for humour production in our humorous texts. In our discussion of the particular humour with respect to presentation of the intellectual characters, I decide to use 'humorous irony' as a general term to include all the important humorous figures and play forms of language use (metaphor, parody, paradox, etc.) in the portrayal of the intellectual characters in the humorous texts. First, humorous irony implies a special narrative structure. An example is that it involves the general humour registers that comprise the major themes of each text and contribute to the main features of the intellectual characters. Second, humorous irony also implies that the narrative structure of the humorous texts transmits a special message or 'serious meaning' (see 2.3. below) including certain evaluation of the intellectual characters in question.

2.1. Towards a New Definition

There have been several definitions of irony. According to *The Barnhart Dictionary of Etymology* (1988), 'irony' in ancient Greek is "*eironeia*, from *eiron* dissembler, perhaps related to *eirein* speak, (as if saying it without meaning it)." Since then, 'irony' has variously been interpreted in rhetorical, moral, psychological, philosophical and metaphysical terms (cf. Yaari, 1988: 15). Almost all the definitions that have ever existed have emphasised the *double nature* of irony. For example, Jankelevitch defines "irony" as "thinking of one thing, but in its own way saying something else." ("elle pense une chose et, à sa manière, en dit une autre." Jankelevitch, 1936: 33); Freud then says that "irony says the contrary of what one wants to suggest" ("L'ironie consist à dire le contraire de ce que l'on veut suggérer." Freud, 1969: 202). Muecke summarizes that irony is a "double-layered or two-storey phenomenon" with "some

kind of opposition between the two levels, an opposition that may take the form of contradiction, incongruity, or incompatibility." (Muecke, 1969: 19). Besides, the incongruous elements act on each other: "One term of the ironic duality is seen, more or less immediately, as effectively contradicting, invalidating, exposing, or at the very least, modifying the other." (Muecke, 1969: 23).

Yaari (1988) analyses humour in André Gide's novel *Paludes*. Among other things in this book, he exhibited how irony functions to produce humour in narrative. Yaari first related the double nature of irony to the concept of *humour incongruity*: "... incongruity, that is, the juxtaposition of two or several elements which, in a certain context, do not 'go' together." ("c'est l'incongruité, c'est-à-dire la juxtaposition de deux ou plusieurs éléments qui, dans un certain contexte, ne 'vont' pas ensemble" Yaari, 1988: 16). Incongruity in irony is then interpreted as a paradox structure in humour: "the very structure of irony, because of the opposition of its two meanings, one on the surface and the other hidden in depth, and because of the fact that we should surpass and go beyond (*para*) the first meaning (*doxa*) in order to obtain the second meaning, can be described as *paradoxical.*" ("la structure même de l'ironie, à cause de l'opposition des deux sens, superficiel et profond, et à cause du fait qu'on doit dépasser, passer au-delà (*para*) du premier (*doxa*) pour arriver au deuxième, est pourrait-on dire, paradoxale." Yaari, 1988: 126). However, the relationship between humour and irony here still remains superficial. What Yaari explains here is mainly 'what' happens in case of irony, but it brings little explanation of 'how' irony emerges or how irony provokes humour.

In 2000, Attardo presented a theory of irony which claims that an ironical utterance is both *inappropriate* and *relevant* to its context. This is of course another claim about the paradoxical nature of irony. An example he gave is:

Someone uttered "What nice weather (context: it is raining.)."

This ironic utterance is contextually inappropriate since rainy weather is the context; meanwhile "the utterance is relevant to the condition of the weather, and not to, say, the location of our cat" (Attardo, 2000: 814).

When discussing the similarities between humour and irony, Attardo agrees with the claim that in irony "the passage from the least- to the most-informative[27] message is abrupt and surprising" (Attardo, 2000: 821). In this case, the least appropriate element will tend to be the most informative. This feature of irony reminds us of the punch line (unexpected/inappropriate element) in humour which is also the location of "the last sentence of the text, hence the most informative element" (Attardo, 2000: 821). Then he suggested "that when we encounter a contextually inappropriate element in the text, that element

becomes highly informative and hence salient[28]" (Attardo, 2000: 821). By this argument Attardo declares that his interest is here limited to "establishing that contextual inappropriateness may trigger salience" (Attardo, 2000: 821). Attardo's formulation about irony concerns this thesis only when irony functions to produce humour, as it is in the realm of study of this thesis. This formulation has in fact provided a new insight into the humour production process in the case of humorous irony. Attardo's account of irony here clearly recalls his account of humour (cf. chapter 3. 5.).

In 2001, Attardo tried to work out "how humour and irony correlate" (Attardo, 2001, 1: 8.). He first realises that "The study of humour, irony, and other playful forms is plagued by definitional problems" (Attardo, 2001, 1: 2.). After a display of some other theorists' formulations concerning this point, he seems to conclude that in neither humour nor irony can the subclasses of these phenomena be kept distinct. This indeterminacy is reduced to the indeterminacy of indirect speech, on which irony entirely and humour at least largely rely (cf. Attardo, 2001: 1). I need to clarify here, that since irony is considered as a humour phenomenon in this thesis, I would rather say that for current purposes irony entirely and *other* humour phenomena largely rely on this "indeterminacy". In fact, what is unclear in Attardo's arguments is whether his "irony" always means humour irony or irony in humour and non-humour cases without distinction. Certain theorists would tend to refer to the latter case with terms like 'satire' etc.. For the present thesis, especially in the context of the analysis of comic heroes, 'irony' is considered exclusively in the context of funniness and playfulness (see my 2.3. below). And to repeat, this consideration is based on the assumption that their native speakers/readers have granted their consent.

Attardo emphasises the indirect nature of irony: it implies rather than speaks directly. For Attardo irony is similar to other forms of indirect speech or "implicatures"[29]. As a result, "in context, an ironical sentence will acquire (inferentially) a meaning that is minimally different and in fact in most cases opposed to that which the sentence would have in a 'neutral' context." (Attardo, 2001: 7.2.2.) Attardo also supposes that irony "goes from marked meaning to unmarked meaning while jokes are on the contrary" (Attardo, 2001: 7.2.2.3.). My paradox structure of humour can confirm Attardo's first assertion, at least in the context of my humorous texts to be analysed, while the truthfulness of his latter assertion does not concern this thesis. Of course, my test of Attardo's formulation will be in terms of narrative. In other words, I shall show how, in the case of humorous irony, the unmarked meaning (corresponding to the second humour register) gradually overshadows the marked meaning

(corresponding to the first humour register) through the play structure of different narrative elements.

With regard to indirect speech in irony, Attardo mentioned that there are arguments about whether or not irony involves processing time from literal meaning to implied meaning. Leaving aside the question of scientific verification, we shall see in the case studies that the indirectness of irony in humour narrative is not restricted to a measure of time. It should be above all a measure of play among various narrative elements which work together to reveal the intended meaning. This can be explored in terms of narrative and the deferment of meaning: i.e. narrative conventionally retards meaning until the closure of the narrative element in question. As Cobley says, "even the most 'simple' of stories is embedded in a network of relations that are sometimes astounding in their complexity" (Cobley, 2001: 2). Besides, narrative can set up relations in such a way as to effect "a movement from a start point to an end point characterised by *detour* in between" (Cobley, 2001: 227).

Attardo then goes on to distinguish irony and implicatures: “If irony is described as noticing contextual inappropriateness and calculating via relevance the intended meaning, and so are implicatures in general, what distinguishes irony and other forms of implicature? The answer is nothing, textually speaking” (Attardo: 2001: 7.2.2.2. p.6). However, at least in the context of the humorous texts to be discussed, humorous irony usually involves a 'victim', while it is not a necessary condition for other kinds of humour. I shall give a theoretical elucidation in 2.3. below, and return to it in the case studies.

To sum up, as humour is considered with regard to narrative in this thesis, the structure of humour irony is naturally considered as a special narrative structure. It is in fact a change of viewpoint in figure study, affirmed by many other modern literary or linguistic critics. As Allemann asserts: "it is better to replace the notion of ironic opposition with a field of tension ... or sphere of ironic play, for this opposition can easily be understood in an excessively narrow fashion." ("Il vaux mieux remplacer la notion d'opposition ironique, qui risque d'être prise facilement dans un sens trop étroit, par celle d'un champs de tension ... ou d'une aire de jeu ironique". Allemann, 1978: 396) In this context, if irony originally refers to a special wording and phrasing of speeches only, it now refers to *the play among various narrative elements within and among the multiple worlds undertaken by the narrative agents* that we illustrated earlier.

2.2. The Play Structure of Ironic Humour

In general, ironic humour can involve play among any of the narrative elements, including the ironic play within one narrative level. In a complex humorous text, we can find some major registers as well as their sub-register relationship; we can find some major logic mechanism as well as some sub-logic mechanism that co-operate to unite and neutralise the incongruous elements for humour production. The five items in addition to the register opposition in the revised version of "semantic script theory of humour" together with the location and analysis of logic mechanism (see Chapter 3. 3. above) can help us to find the network in which this play relationship functions, and such narrative structure of humour can be different according to the humorous text presented. However, what I intend to expose here, is the general macrostructure of ironic humour concerning the humorous texts to be analysed.

Jankelevitch once explained that "irony, which is also capable of creating surprises, *plays* with danger. Danger, this time, is confined in a cage, irony sees it, imitates it, provokes it and turns it to something ridiculous. Irony maintains it for its own creative purposes" ("L'ironie, qui ne craint plus les surprises, *joue* avec le danger. Le danger, cette fois, est dans un cage; l'ironie va le voir, elle l'imite, le provoque, le tourne en ridicule, elle l'entretient pour sa création." (Jankelevitch, 1936: 1). In association with our later analysis of humour text, we may already infer from Jankelevitch's formulation two questions: just *who* "sees" or "provokes" and *who* (or what) is "confined in a cage" as the victim in this ironic play?

This play structure in irony can fit into Yaari's formulation of the 'trinity' in irony: an object, an observer, and the ironist (cf. Yaari, 1988: 20). With regard to our humorous texts, the general ironist is then the *implied author* which, as we discussed earlier, is the designer of the humour narrative. The actualisation of this ironic project is then the *narrator's discourse world.*

With regard to the story world, the narrator is first the *observer* of the story. In the case of ironic humour, the narrator can most conveniently play the role of ironist at the expense of the characters confined to the story world. In other words, the comic heroes in the story world are usually the object that the narrative structure of humour irony plays upon. Self-irony is a special kind of irony in which the ironist consciously pokes fun at himself. We can find this phenomenon in the two more recent humorous texts chosen, and it is usually located in the story world. In this case, the ironist is both the subject and the object in the narrative structure of humour irony.

Yaari says, "irony can exist in *expression* (active irony) or in *situation* presented (passive irony ...), depending on whether the incongruity is in the communication vehicle or in the facts given.)" (L'ironie peut donc exister ou bien au niveau de l'*expression* (ironie active), ou bien au niveau de la *situation* (ironie passive ...), selon que l'incongruité est dans la véhicule de la communication ou dans les faits. Yaari: 1988: 20). In the narrative structure of our humorous texts, the former case can be found in both the narrator's discourse world and the story world, while the latter case, strictly speaking, is located (see above) only in the story world, which is a trap laid by a superior narrative agent.

In the discussion of irony in narrative, many theorists evoke the problem of 'reliable' or 'unreliable narration'. Booth in 1961 postulated the difference between reliable and unreliable narrators, which is confirmed and developed by theorists like Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 100-103) and Chatman (1978: 228-237). Then Chatman (1991) further made the distinction between "narrator's slant" and "character's filter". He says, "we must distinguish two kinds of 'untrustworthiness'. In the first, the narrator's account of events ... seems at odds with what the text implies to be the facts. That is generally meant by *'unreliable narration'*. In the second, a character's perceptions and conceptions of the story events ... seem at odds with what the narrator is telling or showing. I propose that we call the latter effect *'fallible*'" (Chatman, 1990: 149). "Unreliable narration" and "fallible filtration" of course result in different ironic effects: "In unreliable narration, the implied author constructs a narration that the implied reader must call into question. ... In fallibility, on the other hand, the narrator asks the narratee, his or her interlocutor in the discourse, to enjoy an irony at the expense of a filter character" (Chatman, 1990: 150). In our humorous texts, the ironic play sometimes involves "fallible filtration". In this case, the narrator represents the implied author to play the role of the ironist at the expense of the character. What is put in the Jankelevitch's "cage", or in terms of narrative, confined into the story world is our comic heroes, who are unaware of the ironic play of which they are victims in the narrator's discourse as designed by the implied author.

2.3. The Serious Meaning of Ironic Humour

Now it is time to explain why I give the label 'irony' to the general effect of our humorous texts with regard to the intellectual characters. In fact, it is principally a question of the second layer of humour narrative study, which, as Palmer formulates, refers to the "serious meaning" of the humorous text. In other words, the narrative structure of humour in

these texts also reveals an evaluative attitude (also see Chapter 5 below) towards these characters which is a restrained mockery rather than harsh satire and severe criticism.

In humour study in general, even in more recent attempts of 'longer' humorous texts analysis, most theorists limit their attention to the problem of 'funniness' of various humour cases, but seldom address the issue of their serious intention. Palmer is one of the very few theorists who has realised this problem in his humour study. Palmer (1994) proposed the study of the "serious meaning" contained in many humorous narratives next to the study of their humour structure. He calls our attention to such phenomena and some debates around them: "first, that many texts labelled comedies - and that include funny moments - are not primarily laughter-evoking machines, but have some other purpose which is arguably more fundamental to their structure; second, that even if some texts are primarily designed to evoke laughter, not all of each of the narratives in question has this purpose" (Palmer, 1994: 112). These arguments then lead to an intuitive assumption that many humorous texts may have a very different purpose besides the creation of mirth. Palmer then goes on to distinguish a simple joke and more complex narrative on the basis of some humorous text examples. Then a conclusion Palmer draws is that "in them funniness is subordinate to some other meaning, or at lease interwoven with it in a way that makes the non-funny meaning at least as important as the process of mirth creation" (Palmer, 1994: 113-114). Since humorous texts are the sole concern of the present thesis, I shall adopt Palmer's notion of "serious meaning" to label an important aspect of those humorous texts to be analysed.

Another interesting point Palmer hinted at is that "meaning is organised by the interaction between narrative and the structure (of the joke)" (Palmer, 1994: 120). On the basis of this claim, I shall go much further to explore the relationship between these two important layers in those humorous texts. To be more precise, I shall display how the 'serious meaning' is revealed little by little from a certain spatial humorous structure in action.

Next, we should consider what kind of serious meaning or truth value the humour irony of our humorous texts is supposed to contain. This leads to a review of certain theoretical classifications related to the concept of irony.

'Irony' has often been studied together with 'satire'. Fry once said "the chief distinction between irony and satire is that satire is militant irony: its moral norms are relatively clear, and it assumes standards against which the grotesque and absurd are measured" (Fry, 1957: 223). If Muecke further labels irony as a typical modern attitude reflected in contemporary literature, I should say that ironic humour has ever been one of the striking features in humour works with intellectual characters as comic heroes. Such ironic humour is "less satirical and

more subjective, less rhetorical and more 'atmospheric', less aggressive and more defensive" (Muecke, 1969: 11). "Less satirical" because of the moderately critical attitude - if there is any - towards the comic heroes as revealed in the serious meaning; "more atmospheric" because of the ironic play in the overall narrative structure; "more defensive" because of the particular significance of "general irony" (Muecke, 1969).

"General irony" is a subdivision of irony made by Muecke: "General irony is not primarily corrective or normative; we are all in the same hole and there is no way of getting out of it ... General irony lies in those contradictions, apparently fundamental and irremediable, that confront men when they speculate upon such topics as the origin and purpose of the universe, ... the meaning of meaning, the value of value" (Muecke, 1969: 120-121). In this case, we often notice a suppression of attitude on the part of (implied) author that avoids criticism of his characters. The serious meaning revealed can help us to understand the implied author's reticence or an ambiguous attitude which expresses the "fatalistic" phase of life and "stresses the humanity of its heroes" (Fry, 1957: 237). The narrator can be an ironist, but he does not act as a militant. "General irony" is also a convenient means for the portrayal of intellectual characters in the story world, who usually carry out intellectual activities. As the display of ironic situations prevails over any indication of moral norms, the portrait of intellectual characters appears to be "more self-conscious, more tentative (lacking the element of resolution), and more open to dialectical exposition." (Muecke, 1969: 27) Through this portrait, the philosophical colour of irony (cf. Muecke, 1969: 27) is highlighted, for the "subject matter is frequently the basic contradictions of human nature and the human condition" (Muecke, 1969: 27). In brief, the "the indecision of paradox" of the ironic humour structure (cf. Yaari, 1990: 126) reveals multiple referential dimensions rather than announcing a definite and aggressive standard. As a result, the comic heroes are presented more or less as the victims of the "natural circle, the steady unbroken turning of the wheel of fate or fortune" (Fry, 1957: 237).

Muecke used two terms, "victim" and "object", to refer to the personae who are trapped in the ironic play, and his discussion of "the element of innocence" in irony is very much associated with the victim of irony. According to Muecke, "the victim of irony is the person whose 'confident unawareness' has directly involved him in an ironic situation." (Muecke, 1969: 34). When he relates "victim" to the question of "innocence" in irony, he says: "the typical victim of an ironic situation or event is essentially an innocent." (Muecke, 1969: 30). On the other hand, "the object of irony is what one is ironic about... The object of irony may be a person ..., an attitude, a belief, a social custom or institution, a philosophical system, a

religion, even a whole civilization, even life itself." (Muecke, 1969: 34). Of course, Muecke's pursuit of irony does not particularly involve the study of humour, nor does he take a narrative-based view of irony. Mucke's definitions can hardly be directly adopted for our humour discussion. However, if we adopt Palmer's formulation about the two essential problems in humour narrative study to re-scan Muecke's formula, we may obtain a new perspective in the pursuit of our humorous irony. As a matter of fact, Muecke's definition about the "victim" of irony is more related to the ironic structure of humour, while his "object of irony" is more related to the serious meaning of some of our humorous texts which have a target aimed at for criticism. Hence I decide to use "victim of irony" to refer to what is caught in the narrative structure of humour for the production of comic effects, and "object of irony" to refer to the eventual target of any critical attitude in the serious meaning of the humorous text. As far as our comic heroes are concerned, they mostly fall into the former category.

Self-irony has a special significance, especially when it is undertaken by some of our comic heroes. In this case, as Muecke points out, "the victim is also the ironical observer or the ironist". Hence "self-irony implies a 'splitting of ego'" (Muecke, 1969: 20). It is in fact their way of expressing their self-consciousness: the consciousness of their incompetent position in front of the contradictory condition of the universe. So self-irony also implies "an ability to see and to present oneself as an 'innocent'" (Muecke, 1969: 20): since, after all, everything may not be his fault. If this view is not in sharp contrast with the attitude of the extra-narrative levels, it may contribute to the eventual serious meaning of the humorous text.

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To summarise briefly, the humorous irony in the humorous texts to be analysed first refers to a kind of *narrative structure* effective in showing through the story world and treating (by the extra-story levels) the subject of dilemmas or impossible situations, which is the story of our comic heroes. Meanwhile, irony implies a *paradox structure of humour* that involves both the story narrated and the narrative agents that narrate the story. The ironic play between the 'narrating' and 'the narrated' then constitute a general network of humour registers that governs the humorous texts. In this humour structure, the incongruity between or among the multiple phases of irony will be, as J. Cohen has explained, gradually "neutralised" so as to produce comic effects. Each humorous text to be analysed also has one special figure (which is now provided with both a humorous and a narrative dimension) that leads to the

general humorous irony. Second, the humour irony in question also refers to the *serious meaning* eventually revealed by such narrative structure of humorous irony.

CHAPTER 5

THE NARRATIVE THEORY OF COMIC HEROES

Intellectual characters as comic heroes is the focal point of our analysis. Nevertheless, treatment of 'character' is a weak point in narrative theory, for structuralism has paid least attention to it and has been least successful in treating it (cf. Culler, 1975: 230). Our pursuit of the narrative theory of comic heroes contains two steps: we should first be able to capture the character as a story existent in the narrative; and then we should be able to capture comic heroes as a constituent of the paradox structure of humour narrative in particular.

1. Capture of 'Character' in the Narrative

We may say that there exist two broad categories of viewpoint about character: one is plot-centred or apsychological and the other is character-centred or psychological. As Rimmon-Kenan put it, the former kind sees character as "doing" while the latter sees character as "being" (cf. Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 34). The first kind may be traced back to Aristotle, who sees characters as "agents" or performers of action. Formalists and some structuralists like Propp and Tomashevsky resemble Aristotle in submitting characters to 'action' and seeing them as mere products of plot. Structuralist treatment of character as 'doing' mainly started with Propp's book *Morphologie du conte* (1965) in which he summed up seven types of characters according to the roles of action assumed by characters: "the villain, the donor, the helper, the sought-for-person and her father, the dispatcher, the hero and the false hero". In this case, the role of characters is only to support the "functions", which are the constituents of the tale. Hence the characters are designated simply by the name of an action. French narratologists followed the formalist position to say that characters are means rather than ends of the story (cf. Chatman, 1978: 112). An example is Greimas' 'actantial model' that we introduced briefly earlier, in which characters are classified into "sender, object, receiver, helper, subject and opponent".

As for the second kind, we do not have to review all the early theories that emphasise the psychology of characters, as typified by James' view which subordinates everything in a narrative to the psychology of characters. The psychological view of character is re-adopted by the poststructuralist Barthes who treats the character as a Proper Name to whom we

attribute various features in the course of reading. Barthes' pursuit of character appears to be more open compared to the rigid structuralist treatment precedent to him. We shall further discuss the merits of his method in Part III of the thesis.

In the structuralist school, Todorov defended the Proppian position, but also made a distinction between psychological narratives and apsychological narratives. He discovered that in the former case, actions are presented more as symptoms of the character's personality, while in the latter case characters are usually deprived of choice and their actions are hence reduced to certain functions merely to serve the plot (cf. Todorov, 1971). While talking about the study of character, Chatman once said, "it is legitimate to subordinate character to action when we study action but equally legitimate to subordinate action to character when the latter is the focus of our study" (Chatman, 1983: 36). These remarks have allowed more flexibility in our approach to this notion. In our humour research, humorous narrative study is our main purpose, and in the centre of this study is the analysis of our comic heroes. Some of the preceding achievements in narrative theory will be adopted for the purpose of our humorous text analysis while certain limitations of these methods will also be analysed. For example, we shall use an 'actantial model' in our discussion even though the intellectual characters under discussion are for the most part marked by their incapability of or inefficiency in action. As a result, we can discover that this structuralist view, even it is action-centred, can be also used to cast some light on the complexity of certain characters' personalities. Besides, it is the intention of the present thesis to show the force as well as the limits of the narrative approach to humour.

A typical structuralist definition of character usually takes it as "a space in which forces and events meet" and as "nodes in the verbal structure of the work, whose identity is relatively precarious" (Culler, 1975: 230-231). A sophisticated method for character analysis is created by Hamon, which, with regard to our humour cases, is effective in exhibiting the diverse forces acting on the characters in the narrative and the complexity of the characters' personalities as well.

In 1977 Hamon summed up three categories of persona ("personnage") that could be involved in the constitution of the narrative. His first category is "referential" or "historic" characters, which can be referred to genuine historical figures, mythological figures, etc.. This category is not directly linked to our "comic heroes" (cf. Hamon, 1977: 122).

His second category is called "clutch-characters" ("personnages-embrayeurs"). They are the sign of the presence of an author, or its delegates in the text. In some classic works, this category has been present as the chorus in ancient tragedy, interlocutors in Socrates'

dialogues, Watson next to Sherlock Holmes, etc. (cf. Hamon, 1977: 123). Among other things, this category refers to the author's "spokesmen" typified by "narrator" and his counterpart the "narratee"(cf. Hamon, 1977: 122-123). The relationship between such "spokesmen" and the central "hero" is also in part illustrated by Chatman's diagram of the narrative agents that we explored earlier. To make use of this classification for our analysis, our comic heroes then are located in the centre of this symmetrically corresponding set of personages (see below) and belong to the 'what' of the narrative:

implied author→(narrator) → *story (incl. character)*→(narratee)→implied reader

(cf. Chatman, 1978: 151)

According to Jardon, there have been many comic scenes in which a character believes that he is speaking and acting freely; and in consequence believes himself to be the master of life. But once observed from a different angle, the character turns out to be a simple toy of someone else who takes joy in manipulating him." ("Innombrables sont les scènes de comédie où un personnage croit parler et agir librement, où ce personnage conserve par conséquent l'essentiel de la vie, alors qu'envisagé d'un coté, il apparaît comme un simple jouet entre les mains d'un autre qui s'en amuse." Jardon, 1988: 29). Bergson called these comic characters "puppets with strings" ("pantin à ficelle" Bergson, 1900: 59). In terms of narrative, such manipulation is related to the play structure of irony among the multiple worlds occupied by the narrative agents we have discussed. The portrait of our characters will in these instances be unfolded in the development of this humour structure.

Hamon in his structuralist treatment of "personnage" laid special emphasis on the third category of narrative persona, which he called the "anaphora-characters" ("personnages-anaphores"). In this category he means "reference to the system of the text alone is indispensable" ("une référence au système propre de l'oeuvre est seule indispensable." Hamon, 1977: 123). His third category is more directly related to our central interest which is the comic heroes of our humorous texts. Hamon (1983) worked out a method of character analysis that he put to use in his analysis of some of Zola's novels.

In his theory, he used the term "axis" to refer to a general theme or aspect by which the characters are informed (cf. Hamon, 1977: 130; 1983: 187). Such an "axis" is of course designed by the implied author by which we can grasp the frame of the story about the comic heroes. Hamon's "axis" is often discussed in pairs, which for us is effective in the display of

the paradox structure of humour within the story world as well as in the narrative structure exterior to the story world.

Then characters are further discussed by Hamon according to the actantial model, including the roles played by the characters in the "three modal spheres (trois champs modaux): knowing (savoir), longing (vouloir) and power (pouvoir)". "Knowing" refers to the character's knowledge about the world, about himself and about people around; "longing" refers to the character's will, desire and impulsion; and "power" refers to the character's capacity and power or impotence in doing something (cf. Hamon, 1983: 236, 260, 274). This is a formula by which we can approach the personality and even the psychological characteristics of some of the comic heroes to be studied.

Hamon has also suggested an *evaluative* item under which the character is to be examined around the positive or the negative pole (Hamon: 1983: 184). This examination is then related to our discussion of the serious meaning with regard to the portrait of our comic heroes.

In the later analysis, I will use the term 'character' to refer to my comic heroes. However I do not mean by this term that these literary figures are viewed as submitting to plot or action, as the term 'actant' usually indicates. I will make use of the theory of actant where relevant for the sole purpose of exposing the paradox structure of humour with regard to the comic heroes. Of course, compared to the classic psychological notion of character, this term in the present thesis is endowed with a narrative dimension, and refers to the intellectual comic heroes in particular.

2. The Evolution from Classic to Modern Comic Heroes

"Comic character" according to the classic definition is usually limited to one or a few simple features which are *typical* for the comic type. Sareil once said that "the description of the protagonists in the comic novels is brief and limited to a few traits" ("la description des protagonistes de romans comiques est brève et se limite à quelques traits," Sareil, 1984: 67) Jardon also stated that "critics have always recognised that characters in comedies or in comic novels are a special type, that is, they are monolithic with *one dominant feature* that does not evolve in the course of action" ("Depuis toujours, les critiques reconnaissent aux personnages des comédies et des romans comiques un caractère typé, c'est-à-dire, monolithique avec *un trait dominant* qui n'évolue aucunement durant l'action." Jardon, 1988: 27-28). In Part II of the thesis we shall analyse three comic novels, the first one is classic and the other two are

contemporary works. The three humorous texts demonstrate an evolution of comic heroes which is no longer monolithic. If the classic comic characters usually possess one dominant feature, modern comic heroes are rather characterised by their 'uncertainty'. Of course, 'uncertainty' does not mean ungraspable for analysis, for uncertainly itself is a feature; and this feature is also linked to the paradox in the very portrait of our modern comic heroes.

Another point is that the uncertainty and the complexity of characters is also linked to the degree of the psychological revelation of the characters in the narrative. For Sareil, in the classic comic works, "the tragic hero is lucid, and the comic hero is blind." (Sareil, 1984: 87). We shall see that this definition is also called into question with the analysis of certain modern comic heroes. In fact, the revelation of their complex interior world has become important for the narrative portrayal of our modern comic heroes.

3. Comic Heroes in Humorous Narrative

In this thesis, 'character' is considered as a narrative element whose existence is confined to the text and is constituted in the narrative structure of the humour narrative.

Palmer once analysed some comic characters in Woody Allen's movies which he takes as a form of narrative. Then he tried to summarise the "relationship between comedy and character". He indicated that the comic hero "is a result of the comedy of what he does and says, in other words a result of the selection of discourses about the world which are mobilised in the process of the absurd ... " so that the elements of the situation narrated will appear to be "partially comprehensible" and "monstrously implausible" (Palmer, 1987: 166). Palmer's postulation about characters in comedy is based on his "logic of the absurd" that we introduced earlier, which is rather close to my formula of "the paradox structure of humour". Palmer in this statement showed an awareness of the existence of a play structure among the discourses (my "multiple worlds of narrative"). However, his argument lacks sufficient development with respect to the 'play structure', and I shall pay special attention to this matter in my later humorous texts analysis.

As the cause of humour with regard to 'comic heroes', the paradox structure of humour, among other things, involves play among the multiple worlds of narrative. The main constituents in this 'play' are the implied author's design, the narrator's discourse (and their addressees' of course) and the character confined in the story world.

Palmer says that "comedy is not just mirth creation, it also has serious, important themes" (Palmer, 1994: 120). The "axes" we discussed earlier (see Hamon's theory, Chapter

5.1. above) are the serious themes around which the story is to be narrated according to the implied author's design. In the paradox structure of humour of the humorous texts to be analysed, the implied author's design governs both the 'how' and the 'what' of the narration. The narrator, who is the implied author's spokesman in a reliable narration, functions to actualise ironic play around the intellectual characters through its various "forms and degrees of perception" (cf. Chatman, 1978: chapter 5) into these characters. The words and deeds of the comic heroes, whether presented as 'actantial beings' or as 'psychological beings', are confined to the story world[30]. Therefore, comic heroes in the story-level are at the mercy of the ironic play of the superior narrative levels.

What we have attempted to achieve in this chapter is a narrative theory for the analysis of comic heroes. In the next short chapter, attempts will be made to draw a 'borderline' for our research in consideration of the different origins of our humorous texts as well as its comic heroes.

CHAPTER 6

A COMPARATIVE STUDY?

Now we have almost laid the theoretical foundation for humorous text analysis. There is however still one point to cover. Though we avoid going beyond the narrative form of humour, we must be aware that the three humorous texts to be discussed are respectively in three different languages, which imply three different cultural sources. Accordingly, we are stepping into the realm of *comparative study.*

We share the same territory with comparative study in that our pursuit of humour is a "study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country" (Stallknecht and Frenz, 1971:1). A much more recent definition of "comparative study" also expresses the same principle: "It is a comparative study dissertation if the study is based on the grouping of texts belonging to different linguistic and cultural domains" ("Dissertation de littérature comparée, s'il s'agit d'un groupement de textes appartenant à différents domaines linguistiques et culturels. Brunel, 1996: 9). Below is a definition of my humour research in terms of comparative study given in two small parts.

1. The Territory of the 'Comparative Study'

If narrative is by nature a "communication process" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 2; see Chapter 2.2.), these humorous texts in reality involve 'senders' of messages originating from different cultures and by implication 'receivers' from these different cultures in priority. A comparative study of such humorous texts could be carried out with emphasis on the analysis of cultural references, and there are humour specialists like Stora (1984) who have a preference for this method. Since our approach to humour is narrative theory, the real author and his counterpart the real reader are left out, and this is also the foundation of my comparative study. To be more precise, in the main part of the textual analyses, I will not consider the problems that might occur in the actual communication process between the real author and the real reader, nor shall I deal with those problems that can be caused by translation in a real communication process. To repeat, my research on humour narrative will

be limited to text study. All the references with regard to the humorous texts are considered as literary conventions contained in the text and commonly accepted by their native speakers/readers. As a result, my study is based on the reading of the texts *in their original languages*, though all texts will be presented in English in this thesis. Therefore, certain published English translation versions will be used only as reference books in my presentation of the non-English humorous texts, and certain modifications will be made to these versions if I consider the translation is too far from the original text, especially in relation to our humour discussion.

2. The Objective of the 'Comparative Study'

Comparative study, in extreme cases, may imply the search for and the discovery of either 'differences' or 'similarities' between the entities compared. Brunel proposes three subjects for study in a dissertation of comparative literature: (1) "ambiguity"; (2)"contradiction"; (3) "paradox". (cf.: Brunel, 1996: 17). Brunel manifests a special favour for the study of 'paradox', for it can simultaneously be a pertinent subject and also touch a wide range of other subjects, which contains both 'ambiguity' and 'contradiction'. There is something surprising - and at the same time exciting - in paradox, for it is often a formula that unites the contradictions, that plays upon the fine distinctions and the unexpected. (cf. "C'est certainement la question la plus pertinente et la plus large à la fois, celle qui peut contenir les deux autres et en particulier la précédente, ... s'il y a quelque chose de surprenant - et en même temps de stimulant - dans le paradoxe, c'est bien souvent le fait d'une formule qui réunit des contraires, qui joue sur des distinctions fines et inattendues." Brunel, 1996: 20). If 'paradox' is for Brunel such an interesting subject, our humour research with regard to the intellectual characters indeed involves some exciting questions. For example, since intellectuals are the pretentious owners of knowledge, why are they always clumsy in life? Since the stories are always about the dilemma and frustration of its characters, what makes the characters comic? These are stories of paradox, and they are narrated with humorous irony built up with a paradox structure of narrative. Though this thesis does not pretend to suggest a common cognitive formula shared by the whole human kind through this thesis, it does try to find some common points shared by some peoples in spite of their language and cultural differences. As a confession, this curiosity is indeed a strong motive lain behind the current pursuit of humour.

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In the second part of the thesis, the narrative theory of humour is to be tested in actual humorous text analysis, which entails above all an analysis of the comic heroes in these texts. There is a last point that needs to be clarified here. Albeit that all the text samples are taken from the literary domain, this thesis is an investigation based in the narrative theory of humour rather than an attempt at literary criticism, though these realms may sometimes confront and overlap each other.

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[1]See Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 for detailed explanation.

[2]Björk's book *Campus Clowns and Canon* is devoted to the study of 'campus fiction', which is a special type of comic novel in the English literary tradition and which frequently have university men as "pathetic clowns"(Björk, 1993: 9). See the analysis of *The British Museum Is Falling Down*.

[3] Cf. Palmer, 1994, Chapter 7 for the account of offensive or in-offensive humour.

[4] See Part III for the extended discussion.

[5]This statement can also refer back to McGhee's postulation about the "fantasy assimilation" in humour. See page 5.

[6] See Chapter 3. 1. below for an explanation of how and how far O'Neill's ideas will be used for the texual analyses in this thesis.

[7] Genette's distinction between "histoire" and "recit" does not match with Chatman's distinction, while Chatman's "story" is close to Genette's "histoire + recit". For a better understanding of these two theorists' ideas about narrative, see Fludernik (1996): 333-344.

[8]"Discourse" according to Scholes "is used in a number of related but far from identical ways. It can refer to the words or text of a narrative as opposed to the story or diegesis. It can also refer more precisely to those aspects of a text which are appraisive, evaluative, persuasive or rhetorical, as opposed to those which simply name, locate, and recount." (Scholes, 1982: 144) "Discourse" used by Rimmon-Kenan in this quotation is close to Scholes' first definition. In our later discussion, I shall also use this word in this sense, and "discourse" for me refers to in particular narrator's narrative behaviour in the humour text. See the following parts of this chapter.

[9]For Genette, "a convenient answer is not only to exclude the 'real author' but also the 'implied author' from the realm of narrathology, or more exactly the question (since for me it is still a question) concerning its existence." ("Une réponse commode consisterait sans doute à exclure du champ narratologique non seulement l'auteur réel mais aussi l'auteur 'impliqué', ou plus exactement la question (car pour moi c'en est une) de son existence.") (Genette, 1983: 94).

[10]Chatman defined the narrator's omnipresence in all narratives by attributing to it some non-human qualities: "I would argue that every narrative is by definition narrated - that is, narratively *presented* - and that narration, narrative presentation, entails an agent even when the agent bears no signs of human personality." (Chatman, 1990: 115).

[11]Genette has a sophisticated explanation of the narrator's relation to the story narrated. Here is an important postulation made by him about this relationship: "we should distinguish two types of text: one is when the narrator is absent from the story he tells ... ; the other is when the narrator is present as a character in the story he tells ... . For obvious reasons, I name the first type *heterodiegetic*, and the second type *homodiegetc*". ("On distinguera donc ici deux types de récits : l'un à narrateur absent de l'histoire qu'il raconte ... l'autre à narrateur présent comme personnage dans l'histoire qu'il raconte ... . Je nomme le premier type, pour des raisons évidentes, *hétérodiégétique,* et le second *homodiégétique.*" Genette, 1972: 252).

[12] Genette (1983) describes three kinds of "focalisation": 1) zero focalisation: omniscient narrator when the narrator perceives and knows more than any character; 2) internal focalisation: objective narration, when the narrator perceives and knows only what the central consciousness perceives and

knows; 3) external focalisation: centre of consciousness narration, when the narrator perceives and knows less than the protagonist.

[13]I avoid using Genette's terms to refer to the narrative levels for there is certain confusion between the English usage and the French usage of these terms. Genette once tried to clarify this confusion by pointing out that the English word "diegesis" in fact unites both "diegesis" and "diegese", whereas he uses "diegetic" only as the adjective of "diegese", which refers to the story world narrated, and never as the adjective of "diegesis", which is "telling", the second mode of narrative with regard to "showing" (cf. Genette, 1983: 13).

[14]There are various definitions of the term "isotopy", including an evolution of its definition given by Greimas himself. Attardo once commented: "a definition of semantic isotopy as the repetition of semantic features proves the most fruitful. This definition submits a large number of semantic phenomena, all related to the coherence of the text and the establishment of its topic" (Attardo, 1994 : 81).

[15] Morin's four subdivision of the two-part composition of jokes are: 1) the function of normalisation "qui met en situation les personnages"; 2) the locutory function "qui pose le problème à résoudre, ou questionne"; 3) the locutory function of disjunction "qui répond 'drôlement' à 'la question"; 4) the interlocutive function of disjunction "qui dénoue 'drôlement' le problème, qui répond 'drôlement' à la question". She explains that the disjunction system in jokes lies in the opposition of meaning between two locutions. However, the interlocution may repeat the same terms from the first locution and show a formal respect for what it is actually in opposition. The result is a neutralisation of the opposed elements (cf. Morin, 1981: 108)

[16] In "set theory", a set is a collection of entities, and sets are indicated with capital letters. A subset is also a set. So a set A may have B as a subset if some or all of its elements are also members of B (cf. Attardo, 2002:22).

Set theory is used, for example, to represent the script overlap condition of the "semantic script theory of humour" as the intersection of two sets; or to represent a saliency hierarchy within the material of a script. For example, in the script for doctor, intuitively, cure patients is more salient than study medicine which is itself more salient than human (cf. Attardo, 2002:23-24).

A set theoretic definition of logic mechanism is given by Christian F. Hempelmann: "at a very abstract level there exists only one LM which is a mapping function between a proper subset of a set A and a proper subset of a set B, such that A B 0 (i.e., the sets overlap) and A B A B (i.e., the proper subsets are not identical to their intersection, or to put it differently, their complementary sets are not empty. We will indicate this function as M. Thus, if A = { a, b, c, ..., n } and B = { 1, ..., n } we will have M(AB) = {{a, 1}, {b, 2},{c, 3},..., {n, n}}"(Christian F. Hempelmann, 2000: 109. URL.).

[17] This part has drawn its source from Salvatore Attardo's recent publications as well as direct correspondence with him, and I want to express my thanks for his help here. Also see a comparison between Attardo's 'linear' formula of humour and my 'spatial structure' of humour in Part III of this thesis.

[18] The "text" here means a "segmentation" of a humorous text according to Attardo's micro- and macro-narrative concepts.

[19] Cf. Christian F. Hempelmann's unfinished master degree thesis supervised by Salvatore Attardo (2000), page 109, URL.

[20] The term "axis" is taken from Hamon's theory for the capture of 'character' in a narrative. See Chapter 5 below.

[21]We may notice that the term "discourse" used here is again different from any of the definitions given by Scholes. See Chapter 2.1.

[22] Following Attardo's more recent interpretation of SO (script opposition) according to different forms of "accessibility" into the triggered meaning/second script, my view of incongruity in humour cases rather argues that 1) no strong evidence for the two scripts being *opposed* is necessary - sometimes they need only be different (see "5" below); 2) the idea of SO will also be discussed in terms of 'humour registers' in the context of the humorous texts analysed in this thesis.

[23] "Register", "switching" and "logic mechanism" are the major terms to be used for the account of the humour structure in discussion, but they are certainly not meant to be the only and exclusive constituents of such humour structure.

[24] But see the criticism made by Donald Davidson and Palmer, who point out that in metaphor words are used absolutely in their normal sense, it is the context that creates the "divergence between the normal sense of a word and the transferred, extended or deviant sense in which it was used when employed in a metaphor" (Palmer, 1987: 62).

[25]A line from a famous poem written by the French surrealistic poet Paul Eluard (1895-1952).

[26] Cf. Chapter 1, 2.2. above.

[27] In 1997, when Attardo discussed the surprise theory of humour, he introduced the concept of "informativeness": "informativeness is defined in terms of reduction in the number of alternatives." (Attardo, 1997: 402). This concept, like "salience" (see below) is explored to propose a specific definition of "script opposition" in humour.

[28] "Salience", as "informativeness" above, is explored to propose specific definition of script *opposition* in the case of humour. "Salience" then, is defined in terms of levels of importance concerning all parts of the meaning of a word (cf: Attardo, 1997: 401).

[29] "Implicature" stems from Grice's Cooperative Principle. This states that following conversational maxims (of which 'Be relevant' is considered to be the most significant) means that people can understand even indirect utterances by 'computing implicatures' (i.e. making inferences). See Grice (1975).

[30]There exist "unusual cases" where a character's behaviour goes beyond the confines of the narrative. For example, it may happen that a character on the stage breaks out of the confines of his fictional world and suddenly starts to address to the public directly. Such phenomena can also happen in other forms of narrative including novels. Genette named this kind of narrative phenomena "paralepse" (cf. Genette, 1972: 213).

PART II

THE ANALYSIS OF INTELLECTUAL HEROES

IN THREE HUMOROUS TEXTS

In Part II of the thesis we shall analyse three humorous texts, especially the comic heroes of these texts. We attempt to explore the paradox structure of humour and the serious meaning of these texts with regard to these comic heroes. These two objectives, as we discussed in the previous part, are the two primary questions in our humour narrative study.

As I have mentioned, the grouping of these three humorous texts is based on the similar norms designed by their implied authors. In other words, despite the different languages used and the different cultural background, these humorous texts presume the same kind of implied author: they all seem to know well the academic circles and are familiar with both the professional activities and the eccentricity of those who live in these circles; they all tend to adopt an ironic attitude towards the intellectual heroes in their works; and they all tend to focus on certain "literary conventions" for the portrayal of their characters. As we introduced in Chapter 1 of the previous part, the literary conventions in question include above all the "romantic spirit" which is transformed into an (awkward) *man-woman relationship*, and the "scientism" spirit which is transformed into an *obsession for knowledge* that ironically leads to their frustration in practical life.

CHAPTER 1

CANDIDE[1]

Candide is a classic comic novel in French literature which appeared in 1759. It tells the story of a naïve young man's adventures during which he travels around the world and above all forms his philosophical view about the world. The comic hero Candide as "a young philosopher utterly ignorant of the way of the world" ("un jeune métaphysicien fort ignorant des choses de ce monde" (Voltaire, 1995: 51) belongs to the type of comic hero under discussion in this thesis. This view is based on the serious meaning (cf. Chapter 5.2.3., Part I) regarding the main character of the story that we can draw from the paradox structure of humour of the text. In other words, besides humour emission, the narrative structure of humour in the text also unfolds the portrait of an intellectual character who is revealed to be the victim of irony but not the object for definite criticism.

Candide is chosen as the first humorous text example to be analysed principally for two reasons. First, the comic hero in this text has only one dominant feature - he is naïve ('candide'). Second, the whole text is a miniature of perfect narrative structure. Therefore, as a starting point, I expect to present a comparatively simple and comprehensive narrative structure for humorous text analysis.

* * * * *

The paradox structure of humorous irony in *Candide* is realised mainly through *parody*. 'Parody' is then an important 'narrative strategy' that governs the narrative structure of the text; it is also a major 'logic mechanism' by which the two principal humour registers are brought together in this humour text.

The Greek term *parodia* signifies 'singing against something'. 'Against' (or 'facing') suggests a relationship of comparison, or even contrast, which is the basic meaning contained in the term parody as accepted today (cf. Hutcheon, 1978: 468). Genette further explains the subtle

relationship between the two phases involved in parody. For Genette, "to sing by the side of or against something" could mean singing out of tune, i.e., to sing in another voice and in another tone, to distort and to transpose a melody. ("le fait de chanter à côté, donc de chanter faux, ou dans une autre voix, en contre chant - en contrepoint -, ou encore de chanter dans un autre ton: déformer, donc ou transposer une mélodie" Genette, 1982: 17). Culler also says that "when a text cites or parodies the conventions of a genre one interprets it by moving to another level of interpretation where both terms of the opposition can be held together by the theme of literature itself" (Culler, 1975: 152). Nash tried to explain how parody can be related to humour: "there is parody in the most usual sense, as the mocking imitation of a particular work or a well-known style ... when humorous effects are derived from the juxtaposition of the grand and the vulgar, the sublime and pedestrian, or from the application of a high style to a lowly theme" (Nash, 1978: 167). Nash's explanation of humour parody is quite in accordance with Raskin and Attardo's formulation about the humour script or register opposition that we introduced earlier (cf. Part I, Chapter 3. 3 and 5). In this case, the paradox of humour lies in the fact that both the two incongruous elements co-exist and co-operate in the creation of a new text. Meanwhile we should know that parody is not necessarily a form of mockery, as there are non-mocking parodies. Also, when parody is played against a "well-known style", the mocking object may not be this literary style or literary form, as it is the case of *Candide*, though in the context of this text there are other mocking purposes[2].

In our humour discussion, parody is considered as an extra layer of humorous irony as embodied in the humorous text *Candide*. Many theorists also discuss parody in relation to irony. In fact, like irony, parody also "involves the opposition between two modes of *vraisemblance*" (Culler, 1975: 152). Besides a particular text, parody also cites or parodies the conventions of a genre, or a well-known style, which is mostly the case in *Candide*. According to Culler, parody depends more on formal effects, i.e., it is necessarily dependent on the *form* against which it builds up its ironic play (cf. Culler 1975: 154). As Perrin says, "parody is just a special kind of irony that abuses not only the content but also the linguistic form" ("La parodie ne serait ainsi qu'une forme particulière d'ironie qui s'en prend non seulement au contenu mais également à la forme linguistique ..." Perrin, 1996: 132).

The Implied Author's Design

As we have concluded in the previous part, the implied author is the designer of the whole in a narrative. In the actual reading and analysis of a text, the notion of the 'implied author' can serve us as a "guiding intelligence" (Chatman, 1990: 119), i.e., we can seize the framework of a text according to how "it instructs us ... through the designing of the whole, with all the voices, by all the means it has chosen to let us learn." (Chatman, 1978: 148).

In *Candide*, the implied author first creates a kind of suspense or challenge with the title and the naming of the comic hero; the answer to this suspense is unfolded gradually by the narrative structure governed by the general logic mechanism of parody; and the narration of the comic hero's story contains two major axes.

1. The Title of the book and the Naming of the Comic Hero

Yaari in his book on the paradox and poetics of irony proposed to see the title of a(n ironic) book as "the rights and the essence of the author" from which we can draw ironic clues (cf. Yaari, 1988: 142). Booth also suggested that certain book titles either directly or indirectly provide ironic clues in the "author's own voice" (Booth, 1974: 53-54). It should be remembered here that their term "author" is more precisely considered as the implied author in the present discussion.

The complete title of *Candide* has two parts: "Candide or Optimism". "Candide" is the main character's name. The second part of the title "optimism" is grammatically an appositive to "Candide" and semantically a possible synonym of "Candide". By this title the implied author is announcing in brief the main feature of his comic hero: a naïve person who believes in the philosophy of optimism in life.

As a typical classic comic novel, "naïveté" as the *main feature* of the comic hero presumes a certain literary convention[3]. While talking about the "naïveté" of a typical comic character, Sareil says: "he is never ready to confront the tests destiny or his own blindness have reserved for him. He is never able to predict, always surprised at whatever happens. ... Far from being worried about any difficulties that might happen to him in the future, he minimises them, he shrinks them,

not out of vanity, but due to an excessive confidence ... which rests upon an utterly optimistic credulity. ... Hence the hero of these misadventures is characterised by his credulity and over-trust which is always turned to ridicule." ("il n'est pas préparé aux grandes épreuves que le sort ou son propre aveuglement lui réservent. Il est d'ailleurs incapable de prévoir et se montre toujours surpris par la tournure que prennent les événements. ... Loin de s'inquiéter des difficultés futurs, il les minimise, il les rapetisse, moins par vanité que par excès de confiance ... et ne repose que sur une crédulité follement optimiste. ... Le héros de ces mésaventures possède donc un côté crédule et confiant qui sera chaque fois bafoué." Sareil, 1984: 73 - 74). But who is to turn the comic hero to ridicule and how is it done? In fact we have given a general answer to this question when we explored the paradox structure of humour. As a story existent in a humour narrative, this kind of character is to be caught in the ironic play of the multiple worlds of narrative.

By the title the implied author announced the first message: the (comic)[4] hero is a naïve optimist. But is the title a plain statement of the implied author's view or is it suspense that may lead to something else? In other words, what will be the last voice with regard to this philosophy and with regard to the comic hero Candide? The implied reader is to realise however that it is the philosophy of optimism that is at stake in the text. The eventual answer to these questions then concerns the serious meaning of the humour text. In this aspect there also exist certain presumptions according to the literary conventions regarding such comic heroes. Sareil further explains, "comic naïveté can be expressed in two different ways: 1) by showing the comic hero's intelligence in spite of his naïveté. The comic hero asks questions, shows the desire to understand, and in consequence leads his interlocutor to expose the deceit and the dishonesty of his group or his contemporaries[5]. 2) By asserting that the comic hero is a real dupe. In this case, it is the comic hero instead of the interlocutor who is conceited and therefore the target of mockery... " ("le naïveté comique peut se manifester de deux façons contraires: 1) intelligent en dépit de son ingénuité. Il pose des questions, désire comprendre et amène ainsi son interlocuteur à révéler les fourberies et les manoeuvres malhonnêtes de sa clique ou de ses contemporains. 2) une dupe. Ce n'est plus cette fois l'interlocuteur qui est vaniteux et sur qui tombe en conséquence la moquerie, c'est le héros lui-même, ... " (Sareil, 1984: 74). In our investigation of *Candide*, one suspense set off by the title is just which of two categories of comic heroes Candide will fall into. Will the main character Candide be merely the victim of some local irony or the eventual

mocking object aimed at by the whole text? The serious meaning of the text concerning the "evaluation"[6] of this intellectual character is to be unfolded gradually by the paradox structure of humour as designed by the implied author.

2. 'Parody' as the Logic Mechanism of the Major Humour Registers

Parody as the implied author's design is an intended disruption of 'norms'. Such norms may involve cultural analysis, which the structuralist approach excludes. I shall develop this point in Part III. 2. However, for the present text study, such norms can be considered as literary conventions for discussion, as we concluded earlier.

As we said above, parody necessarily involves dependence on the form of a certain literary norm and the disruption of this norm at the same time. Parody then plays with the ambiguity between two orientations. In the case of *Candide*, the parody is based on a well-known style called the 'picaresque novel', which is derived from the ancient Greek novel and became a major genre in the 18th century. It was "an episodic kind, describing the multifarious adventures of a central character or a small group of characters ... full of rapid movement, ...and with little psychological interest" (Barber, 1977: 14). *Candide* imitates this literary genre mainly in two respects. First, its narrative structure is modelled on the style of a typical picaresque novel. The novel is divided into 30 chapters, with a summary of content at the head of each chapter following the literary fashion at the time (cf. Valette, 1982: 61). The text contains repeated story sequences from an initial situation to a climax/new challenge. This structure also falls into what Sareil calls the comic pattern of "fake relationships between effect and cause" ("rapports fausseés entre les effets et les causes" Sareil, 1984: 143). In this case, the humour incongruity is between the initial expectation and its surprising result (cf. Sareil, 1984: 143). Second, the novel also adopts the same story elements as in a typical picaresque novel: "a young man and a young girl of nubile age, of mysterious origin, both are exceptionally beautiful. They fall in love with each other immediately and suddenly and their passion lasts forever. However they can not get married immediately. They will encounter numerous obstacles that will delay their union. The young lovers become separated, then they look for each other, and find each other, and become separated again till they refind each other again ... " ("un jeune homme et une jeune fille d'âge

nubile, leur origine est ..mystérieuse... Ils sont dotés d'une beauté exceptionnel.... Ils s'enflamme d'une passion mutuelle, soudaine et instantanée. ...Toutefois, ils ne peuvent pas se marier aussitôt. Ils rencontrent des obstacles qui retardent ou empêchent leur union. Les amoureux sont séparés, ils se cherchent, se retrouvent, se séparent, se retrouvent encore ..." Bakhtine, 1978: 240)

According to the literary convention, the presumed story should tell the hero and the heroine's adventures from their sudden passion for each other in the beginning to their happy union at the end of the story. The happy union of the lovers as presupposed by the story structure will in turn confirm the surface meaning of the title, i.e. the philosophy of optimism will triumph. This is the expectation that the implied author initially creates for the implied reader. This expectation also forms the first register of the humour structure. However, humour necessitates incongruity, though incongruity does not necessarily produce humour. In other words, in the paradox structure of humour, some other elements will gradually undermine the first register while a second register will come to light.

As a humorous text, the design of parodying the episodic adventure novel, with its simplicity and mechanical rhythm, also "makes it easier for the (implied) reader to withdraw from that sympathetic participation"(Barber, 1960: 19) and to prepare for the effect of entertainment. In this case, "if the reader is not to take too seriously the adventures of the people in the story, where does the book's real centre of interest lie?" (Barber, 1960: 19). When the implied reader starts to ask such questions, (s)he is also ready to abandon the first humour register for the second humour register and ready to search for the genuine serious meaning of the humour text.

3. The Two Axes of Candide's Story

The story about Candide is designed to be narrated mainly around two axes: *love quest* and *philosophical quest*. These two axes are the major clues that enable the implied reader to conceive the portrait of the comic hero. With regard to the humour structure, these two axes are the two major macro-narratives with a series of micro-narratives that I shall select for analysis. Under each axis, most of the quoted passages for analysis are the location where strong comic effects are engendered. Such passages are considered to form a main 'strand' (cf. Part I, Chapter 3. 4.) as they are related to the general subject matter which is the axis title.

Axis I: Love Quest

Axis I. 1. The Paradox Structure of Humour in the Story World

Under the axis of 'love quest', the 'what' as revealed by the story world alone is more tragic than comic: it tells how a "fond lover" ("tendre amant", Voltaire, 1947: 137) goes through countless misfortunes in search of his fair lover, but only to find his beloved "as ugly as a witch" (Voltaire, 1947: 138) in the end. The purpose of our story world study is to locate in this narrative level the humorous narrative elements and see how they work together for the initial neutralisation of the incongruous registers for comic effects[7].

Axis I. 1. 1. In Terms Of the Actantial Model

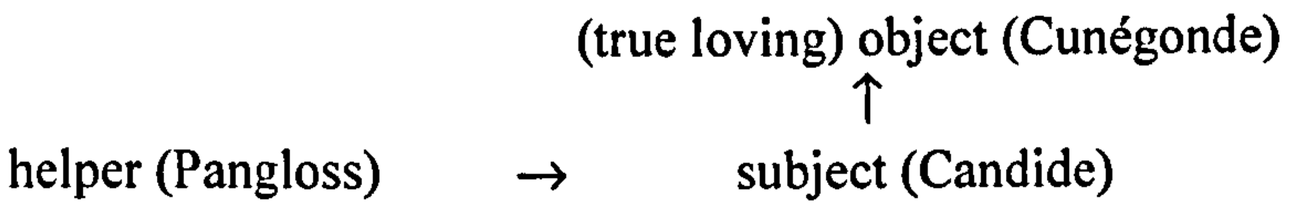
We can find abundant incongruous relationships in the story world of this humorous text. Such relationships constitute numerous sub-humour registers in the general humour structure.

According to Chatman, the *setting* of the story is "the place and collection of objects against which his (the character's) actions and passions appropriately emerge" and "it 'sets the character off' in the usual figurative sense of the expression" (Chatman, 1978: 138). In his theory of character, Hamon termed the same story entity the "territory of the character" which he considers as an important element in the actantial model that helps to "qualify" the character (cf. Hamon, 1983: 205).

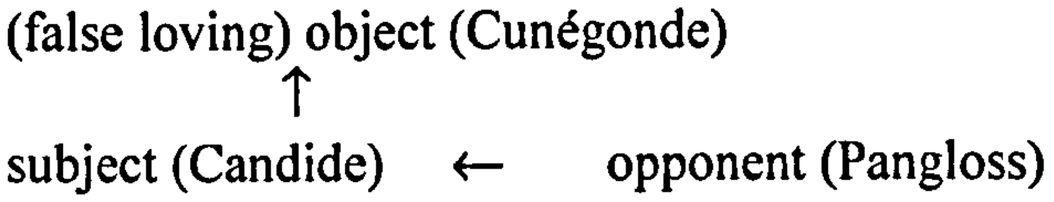
The setting of the story in the beginning of *Candide* is the Baron's castle, which Candide at first takes as the paradise of love and the promised land of happiness. But it is also the place where he experiences his first love frustration.

Two other important characters are involved in Candide's search for love. One is Cunégonde, the Baron's daughter. She is the girl that Candide falls in love with. The other is Pangloss[8], Candide's philosophy teacher. The evolution of their relationship contributes to an important pair of humour registers within the story level. This pair of major humour registers is composed of an initial 'appearance' and an eventual 'truth' as below:

Register 1 (initial appearance):



Register 2 (eventual truth):



Hamon in his analysis of certain characters in Emile Zola's novels further used three "actantial spheres". These spheres are "knowing" (savoir), "longing" (vouloir) and "power" (pouvoir). According to Hamon, the "actantial roles"(1983: 235) played by characters in the three actantial spheres can enrich the actantial model, for these aspects can further display a character's movement and development throughout the text (cf. Hamon, 1983: 236, see Part I, Chapter 5. 1.). In terms of the actantial spheres, the comic hero in this text can be interpreted as below:

In the sphere of **knowing**, Candide is the passionate 'subject' of love. Meanwhile, he is also the 'subject' of 'not-knowing' of his beloved idol, and the 'object' of 'cheat'.

In the sphere of **longing**, Candide is the 'subject' of 'longing' for true love. Meanwhile, he is also the 'subject' of misadventures that will lead him away from his love ideal.

In the sphere of **power**, Candide is the 'subject' of action chasing after his beloved. Meanwhile, he is also the 'subject' of 'non-power' in a world beyond his understanding, chased by a destiny that is beyond his control.

The network of humour registers displayed above are in a paradoxical relationship. The principal logic mechanism that unites and neutralises these humour registers is juxtaposition of sharp (humorous) incongruity. We see that the actantial model in a sense is capable of reducing a complex text into a simple outline. Thus we can use the above schema as a guideline to approach the portrayal of the comic hero.

Axis I. 1. 2. Initial Neutralisation of the Humour Registers

Humour necessitates the neutralisation of the incongruous. An important logic mechanism

that helps to neutralise the incongruous humour registers in the story world is the presentation of a **fantastic world** deprived of realistic dimensions.

The word *fantastic*, which derives from the ancient Greek *phantastikos* ("to create images"), was current for many centuries in many European languages before becoming established as a specifically literary term. Its basic meaning is "existing only in the imagination, unreal" (cf. Parkinson, 2003: HTML). A key text is Todorov's *Introduction à la Littérature Fantastique*. Briefly, Todorov defines it in terms of the implied reader being suspended between belief and disbelief in a rational explanation of the events portrayed[9]. The art of narration then consists in sustaining this hesitation through the work.

There exist two different tendencies in the study of 'fantastic'. The French approach and especially Todorov's version of it is that the fantastic may be so narrowly defined that many challenging works may be excluded from fruitful comparisons. For Todorov, the role of the narrator is so important that the fantastic is possible almost only in fiction. It is true that Todorov's narrow approach excludes many works which mingle realistic details with non-natural events, and in his terms, *Candide* is not a real "fantastic" text, although of course in the common sense of the word, it is. In the meantime, as Parkinson points out, "the danger of those broader definitions so far advanced is that the term 'fantastic' risks becoming a dustbin for all works of fiction which use a non-realistic or partly realistic mode, from Homer to surrealism, from Goethe's *Faust* to science fiction. Little has so far been done by those who prefer a broader sense of fantastic to make significant distinction between different kinds of fantastic writing" (Parkinson, 2003).

The idea of 'fantasy' or 'fantastic world' used for my humorous texts analysis mainly comes from Barber, and his usage of these terms is in accordance with the basic definition of fantastic which refers to its *unrealistic* dimension. He employs these terms to explain a series of writing skills used in *Candide* as "a deliberate attempt to undermine the illusion of reality" (Barber, 1977: 15), and such writing skills in turn are effective in assisting the humour production in this text.

As Barber explains, in *Candide*, story information is provided "with little psychological interest", and "facts are mixed with fantasy" (Barber, 1977: 14-15). The characters are hurried on at breakneck speed from one country to another, from one misfortune to another, events which are accompanied by their endless magic death and resurrection. Story events are thus presented with

an artificial high speed, which contributes to the general parody of the adventure novel with comic effects.

Following the picaresque novel tradition, Candide the hero is a young lad in love whose origins are somewhat obscure. Once driven out of the castle, he is launched into a series of adventures and misfortunes mainly in search of his lost love. His misadventures are haphazardly linked together, taking him from Westphalia to Constantinople by way of Portugal and Paraguay. Many of the most banal incidents of the traditional adventure fiction are duly and briefly introduced: shipwreck (Chapter 5), being captured by pirates (Chapter 12 and 27) and by cannibals (chapter 16), being sold into slavery (Chapters 12 and 27) imprisoned and condemned by arbitrary rulers (Chapter 6 and 28), etc. The hero and the heroine are parted from and then re-encounter each other by the strangest coincidences, and in the most unexpected disguises (Chapter 1, 7, 13, 29). Cunégonde's magic reappearance is never provided with a plausible explanation of her survival either. With such an abundance of events and fast rhythm of movement presented by a short novel, the story narrated is practically deprived of credibility. In this case, though many of the story events and the characters' misadventures in the mimetic illusion are hardly comic materials, the logic mechanism of 'the fantastic' helps to transform these materials and produce effects other than tragic ones. As a result, the register of 'seriousness' is initially about to be switched to 'non-seriousness'.

Another important logic mechanism often used in *Candide* is **exaggeration**. This is also an important element of parody in this text. Such exaggeration may consist of violent emotions that the characters display in the conventional situations of fiction (cf. Barber, 1960: 17). It is in fact an effective means to deprive the story world of the illusion of reality. An example is the following passage. The story event is the secret meeting between Candide and Cunégonde in Don Issachar's house in Lisbon, a stock recognition scene with effects highlighted till they topple over:

> The young man approached, and timidly lifted the veil. He had the surprise of his life, for to his astonished gaze it seemed that Lady Cunégonde stood before him. And so, in fact, she did. Candide's strength left him and he fell at her feet unable to speak a word. Cunégonde, too, was equally affected, and sank on to the couch. The

old woman took some rose water and sprinkled it over them. This brought them to their senses and they began to speak. Broken words came first, then half-uttered questions and answers, followed by sighs, tears and groans. (Le jeune homme approche; il lève le voile une main timide. Quel moment! Quelle surprise! il croit voir mademoiselle Cunégonde; il la voyait en effet, c'était elle-même. La force lui manque, il ne peut proférer une parole, il tombe à ses pieds. Cunégonde tombe sur le canapé. La vieille les accable d'eaux spiritueuses, ils reprennent leurs sens, ils se parle; ce sont d'abord des mots entrecoupés, des demandes et des réponses qui se croisent, des soupirs, des larmes, des cris.)

(Voltaire, 1991: 66)

Then the bubble of emotions is immediately pricked by a matter-of-fact recall of common prudence:

Then the old woman left them to themselves, advising them to make as little noise as possible. (La vieille leur recommande de faire moins de bruits; et les laisse en liberté.)

(Voltaire, 1991: 66)

In terms of humour structure, here is the turning point to the second register. The incongruity between the two registers is not only the change of a subject matter. It lies more in the sudden change of the emotional side of the language: the first register is in high-pitched emotion and the second register is indifference[10].

The above quoted passage is mainly the provision of story information in which the narrator has little overt presence. Common sense tells us that there is a certain exaggeration in what happens in the first part of the story. What accompanies the exaggeration is a certain *pathetic contrast*. Attardo mentioned 'exaggeration' as one kind of "faulty reasoning" in his classification of logic mechanisms (cf. Attardo, 1002: 14), though he did not give a detailed explanation of its functioning. Sareil once gave a more detailed explanation of 'exaggeration' in his discussion of comic writing. Besides, he cited *Candide* as a text with abundant exaggeration for comic effects.

He says that no melodramatic story has so many catastrophes piled up; the story is so full of breath-taking moments and the text is so full of various exclamations that, actually, they often have lost any genuine afflictive effects (cf. Sareil, 1984: 181). The result is neutralisation of the incongruity to produce the effect of *indifference*[11]. Accordingly, the implied reader will feel detached from the pathetic story information instead of being carried away by any emotions. The sudden change both in subject and in tone in the last sentence is then an elaborated form of humour production. Here is an example that shows that the clash of emotions can also constitute different humour registers.

A third effective logical mechanism is **juxtaposition**[12]. In the story world, the characters are constantly caught in their endless misfortunes; meanwhile the characters are portrayed with little psychological interest. For example, In Chapter 7, Candide, who heard that Cunégonde had been "ravished" and "disembowelled", can not believe that the girl standing in the flesh in front of him is his beloved girl. But Cunégonde just answered that "but people don't always die of those mishaps." ("mais on ne meurt pas toujours de ces deux accidents." Voltaire, 1991: 66). When referring to the death of her family members, Cunégonde shows no further emotion but just reports how her parents and brother "had their throats cut" ("égorgèrent" Voltaire, 1991: 67) or "made mincemeat" ("coupèrent ... par morceaux" Voltaire, 1991: 67) by the Bulgars.

These logic mechanisms in the presentation of the story world suggest a deliberate attempt to undermine the illusion of reality and to facilitate comic effects. As a result, the 'what' revealed by the story world cannot easily be taken seriously or as 'true' by the implied reader, which corresponds in principle with O'Neill's formula about the treatment of the story world in a humorous narrative (see Part I, Chapter 1. 3.). In this case, it becomes easier for the implied reader to withdraw from the sympathetic participation which is a major obstacle for the reception of the comic effects of the narrative. Here I want to point out that due to the different writing skills adopted, the degree of the illusion of reality is different regarding the story information provided in the three humorous texts I am analysing. Consequently, the humour structure and the resulting degree of funniness of these texts are also various. My detailed text analysis will gradually demonstrate both the common features as well as the differences in the texture of these three works.

As we see from the above examples, the story world in *Candide* provides mostly humour

registers without apparent humour triggers. They serve mostly to create a general non-realistic atmosphere. This is the initial condition for humour production, for it favours entertainment[13] rather than serious emotional involvement as the impact on the implied reader.

Of course, we can also find 'humour triggers' (cf. Part I, Chapter 3. 3) in the story world. In this case, the location of the switch from the initial register to the non-serious register is more precise. We can see an example from chapter XXVIIII. It is near the end of the text when the two lovers have found each other again after having undergone numerous adventures. In spite of Cunégonde's transformation, Candide still decides to keep his word and to marry Cunégonde. Here is the dialogue between Candide and Cunégonde's brother the Baron:

> "I found her washing dishes, and she's as ugly as a witch. Yet when I have the decency to make her my wife, you still pretend to raise objections. I should kill you again if my anger got the better of me." "You can kill me again if you like," said the Baron, "but while I live, you never marry my sister. (... "elle lavait ici des écuelles, elle est laide, j'ai la bonté d'en faire ma femme; et tu prétends encore t'y opposer! Je te retuerais si j'en croyais ma colère. - Tu peux me tuer encore, dit le baron, mais tu n'épouseras pas ma soeur de mon vivant." Voltaire, 1991: 162)

Chatman, like many other narrative theorists, points out that "pure dialogue between characters" is a common source of narrative information about the story world (cf. Chatman, 1978: 175). The effect that this dialogue produces is rather comic. According to the logic of the realistic world, is there anything more serious than a question of "life and death"? Is it possible to "kill" and then to "kill someone again"? Yet in the fantastic world of the story here, "life and death" is reduced to a totally nonserious game. This passage forms a *comb* (cf. Part I, Chapter 3. 4.) playing on the word "kill": "kill" ("Tuer"), with its variation "kill again" ("retuer") and the further detail "while I live" ("de mon vivant"), has turned life into a mere joke. This is a moment when the tragic theme of the story material is switched to produce non-seriousness and hence the comic effects are delivered. We notice that the humour production process has been triggered more than once and the comic effects are enhanced time and again..

The story world of *Candide* relates Candide's misfortune in his search for love. It is what

Muecke called an "impossible situation" that could be a good subject for ironic treatment. In this case, irony necessitates "an ironist who sees the situation as ironic" (Muecke, 1969: 28), and this ironic treatment of the story material in *Candide* mainly comes from the narrator's discourse world.

Axis I. 2. The Narrator's Discourse World Playing Upon The Story World

The 'love story' of Candide is narrated in conformity with the general narrative structure of parody we introduced earlier. Just like the traditional picaresque novel, it starts with the 'falling-in-love scene' between the hero and the heroine in Chapter I and ends with their 'final union' in the last chapter. In between are their numerous adventures that have led to their reunion/re-separation in chapters 7-11. The following will be our analysis of the ironic play of the narrator's discourse world on the characters in the story world. Our discussion will also be organised according to the story sequences as indicated by the related chapters.

According to Muecke, the ironist who sees "an impossible situation" as ironic "must be aware of a victim's confident unawareness even though he sees himself as the victim" (Muecke, 1969: 28). This is the foundation of the narrator's ironic discourse in *Candide*. Besides, humour is largely due to the narrator's ironic voice with regard to the comic character imprisoned in the story world[14].

There will be frequent text quotations in the following analysis. I shall use italics to indicate the narrator's presence, especially those narrative means used for the building of humour irony in the narrator's discourse.

Chapter 1

1. Definition of Characters

According to Rimmon-Kenan (1983) and Chatman (1978), there are many signs of the narrator's existence that can be detected in a text. Based on Chatman's listing, Rimmon-Kenan classifies such signs under the title of "degree of perceptibility" to describe the different "overtness" or "covertness" of the narrator's presence in a text (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 96). Among the seven degrees of the narrator's "perceptibility" listed in mounting order, "definition of

characters" is then ranged as the fourth degree of the narrator's manifestation (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 98). For Rimmon-Kenan, "an identification of a character implies only the narrator's prior knowledge about or acquaintance with him", and it is "an abstraction, generalisation or summing up on the part of the narrator as well as a desire to present such labelling as authoritative characterisation" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 98). In the presentation of characters, a delicate distinction we should make is between what Chatman called "direct character depiction" and the narrator's authoritative "interpretation" (cf. Chatman, 1978: 239). The former is shown as a story event belonging to story world and should be thus considered unquestionable, "for the author must be granted, by convention, the right to posit all those entities and actions necessary to his narrative" (Chatman, 1978: 164); whereas the latter "bears on the outside world, opining, in the strict speech-act sense, makes an apparent truth-claim; one can reasonably ask whether the narrator is right or wrong on independent grounds" (Chatman, 1978: 164-165). In our following analysis of the narrator's narrative behaviour, the latter case will be the focus of our interest, and it will be discussed in association with all the narrative means used in the narrator's discourse to move the narrative from a neutral presentation of the story to the effect of *humorous irony*.

The following is the presentation of the two main characters of the love scheme.

Candide is presented as a naïve young man born to an unfortunate father who was despised by the aristocracy:

> There lived in Westphalia, at the country seat of Baron Thunder-ten-tronckh, a young lad blessed with the most agreeable manners. You could read his character in his face. He combined sound judgement with unaffected simplicity; and that, I suppose, was why he was called Candide. (Il y avait en Vestphalie, dans le château de monsieur le baron de Thunder-ten-tronckh, un jeune garçon à qui la nature avait donné les moeurs les plus douces. Sa physionomie annonçait son âme. Il avait le jugement assez droit, avec l'esprit le plus simple; c'est, je crois, pour cette raison qu'on le nommait Candide.)
>
> (Voltaire, 1991: 45-46)

At the first explicit level, the humour registers are built upon the possible/impossible opposition contained in the 'exaggeration'. We should notice that, in the version of the original language, the superlatives of adjectives are used twice to modify Candide's personality. It is plausible if someone is qualified as "agreeable" or "simple". But it is exaggeration that someone should be qualified with the highest degree without proper justification. So what is stated is only partially possible in this case. As we mentioned earlier, 'exaggeration' is a kind of logic mechanism that can bring together incongruous registers for humour production. According to Sareil, exaggeration is one of the effective means for the production of comic effects. Sareil notices that, in the case of humour, exaggeration can be found in both character depiction and story presentation. He explains that such exaggeration is used for the purpose of eliminating the dramatic elements of the text, since, if these elements are rendered acceptably un-dramatic, we shall not be emotionally overwhelmed by them (cf. Sareil, 1984: 181). "That, I suppose, was why ..." is an overt demonstration of the narrator's presence. The use of exaggeration in the narrator's discourse can further play up to the fantastic atmosphere initially created in the story world. Besides, when repeated exaggerations amount to comic elements in the narrator's discourse here, the adjectives in superlatives are also the location of the 'switching'[15] from seriousness to total non-seriousness in the story world. Since the exaggeration leads to 'the impossible', the narrator's reasoning also results in humorous irony directed at the literally praised character. Of course, the implied author's real intention is not yet clear at this stage of the narrative.

While the text starts with an exaggeration in the presentation of its comic hero for humour, more examples of this kind with greater comic effects can be found afterwards.

The introduction to **Cunégonde** starts with her family. Cunégonde's father, though rich and powerful, is in fact a laughing-stock: "People laugh when he speaks." ("ils riaient quand il faisait des contes."). Her mother, "The baroness, whose weight of about twenty-five stone made her a person of great importance, entertained with a dignity which won her still more respect." ("qui pesait trois cent cinquante livres, s'attirait par-là une très grande considération, et faisait les honneurs de la maison avec une dignité qui la rendait encore plus respectable." Voltaire, 1991: 46). With the contrast between Cunégonde's mother's obesity and her "dignity" or the "respect"

she won, we see the typical comic writing that Bergson once explained: "We laugh each time when our attention is turned to the physical feature when it is in fact the moral feature called into question. ... In this case, most of the words have both a physical references or a moral references, depending whether we take the surface meaning or the figurative meaning." (Bergson, 1997: 87). The humour registers are in the opposition noble/base. While the description of the obesity of a noble lady can not be other than "depreciation", the narrator's discourse then delivers a humorous 'switching' to non-seriousness and enhances the comic tone. Next, the narrator starts to present the heroine Cunégonde:

> Her daughter, Cunégonde, was a buxom girl of seventeen, with high-coloured cheeks, quite fresh, fat and appetising. (Sa fille âgée de dix-sept ans, était haute en couleur, fraîche, grasse, appétissante.)
>
> (Voltaire, 1991: 46)

Here the opposition of the humour registers is still noble/base. With adjectives which usually refer to animals, the narrator's 'compliments' to Cunégonde's beauty certainly turn out to be ironical. From the context, especially from the presentation of her family members, the narratee is led to surmise that the beauty of Cunégonde will bring her disgrace rather than any honour. It is just the beginning of the text, and the narrator's discourse already indicates a divergence from what a typical story of a genuine picaresque novel should be: a love story between a good-natured young man and his fair lady of high qualities.

We notice that the presentation of the hero and the heroine of the 'love story scheme' is brief. As a typical classic comic book, **Candide,** the comic hero, is presented with only one major trait[16] and little interior world revelation. **Cunégonde**'s image also remains quite abstract: she is in fact nothing but the object of the hero's quest for love. These characters all fit into the simple-minded "puppets" that Sareil and Bergson define when they discuss a certain kind of classic comic character (cf. Sareil, 1984: 65-90; Bergson, 1997: 59; see Axis II. 2. below). Indeed, the beginning of the text already prevents the narratee from regarding these characters as human beings that can be conceived after the complex pattern of reality and from investing any true

emotions in their story eventually.

We also notice that in the presentation of the main characters, qualities attributed by the narrator to the characters prevail over the provision of the contents of the story world. With each adjective, adverb or detail added, the story presentation is made less objective (cf. Booth, 1983: 202). Character presentation here is thus primarily abstraction and deliberate authoritative characterisation from the part of the narrator (cf. Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 98) that prepares the narratee for the message of humorous irony.

2. Interpretation of the Story Events

"Commentary" is considered by Rimmon-Kenon as the highest degree of the narrator's "perceptibility". She says: "commentary can be either on the story or on the narration. One form of commentary on the story is *interpretation*. ... Interpretations often provide information not only about their direct object but also about the interpreter" (Rimmon-Kenon, 1983: 98). In the following examples to be analysed, the double-layered information provided by "interpretation" first refers to what happens to the characters in the story world, on the second level, it also exposes the narrator's ironic attitude towards the story events.

The climax of the first chapter in *Candide* is a *comb* that presents the falling-in-love scene between the hero and the heroine and its dramatic ending:

> Cunégonde and Candide happened to meet behind a screen. Cunégonde dropped her handkerchief, and Candide picked it up. She quite innocently took his hand, he as innocently kissed hers with singular grace and ardour. Their lips met, their eyes flashed, their knees trembled, and their hands would not keep still. Baron Thunder-en-tronckh, happened to pass the screen, noticed both cause and effect, and drove Candide from the house with powerful kicks to his behind." ("...Cunégonde et Candide se trouvèrent dernière un paravent; Cunégonde laissa tomber son mouchoir, Candide le ramassa; elle lui prit innocemment la main; le jeune homme baisa innocemment la main de la jeune demoisellle avec une vivacité, une sensibilité, une grâce toute particulière; leurs bouches se rencontrèrent, leurs yeux s'enflammèrent,

leurs genoux tremblèrent, leurs mains s'égarèrent. Monsieur le Baron de Thunder-en-tronckh passa auprès du paravent, et voyant cette cause et cet effet, chassa Candide du château à grands coups de pièd dans le derrière; ...")

(Voltaire, 1991: 48)

In terms of the story "events" narrated (cf. Chatman, 1978: 43), there is the degradation from a happy love affair to the tragic ending of this adventure. It is in accordance with the transition from the 'first' humour register (cf. Chapter 4. 2.1. and Chapter 3. 5., Part I) to the 'second' one. "Cause and effect" as in the first humour register is in a reference to a philosophical notion taught by Pangloss. Thus it represents high and noble qualities. The second register (cf. Chapter 4. 2.1. and Chapter 3. 5., Part I) becomes plain when Candide's "behind" is placed in the limelight. "Behind" here of course is in reference to that part of the body and can be anything but "high and noble". Thus the second humour register indicates sexual intercourse (low and ungracious). In this context, "cause and effect" as the story event noticed by Baron Thunder-en-tronckh, also serves as a local humorous 'switching' to the comic effect. This *comb* mainly plays with the ambiguity between a philosophical notion and a sexual attempt between the two main characters. This passage is the comic climax of the first chapter. Comic effects come from the sharp divergence between the two domains respectively implied by "cause and effect" and "powerful kicks on his behind" as well as the register switching in time.

We notice that the set-up phase is relatively long and emphasised with details. The relationship between the first main register and the second corresponding register is 'suspense' and the eventual 'surprise'. As Sareil explains, "the game of waiting for the surprise, or the false relationship between cause and effect is in the centre of the comic universe, since what turns out finally is never what one expects first." ("Le jeu d'attentes de surprise, ou de rapports faussés entre les effets et les causes, puisque ce ne sont jamais ceux que l'on escompte qui se produisent, est au centre même de l'univers comique." Sareil, 1984: 143)[17] The falling-in-love scene on the first level provides story information; but a story "cannot occur independently ... of some actualisation or embodiment in a medium", i.e., the *way* that narrator chooses (according to the implied author's design, of course) for the presentation of the story. To heighten the comic effects, the narrator here provides an abundance of details to the "falling-in-love scene". As Sareil once

explained, "dwelling on details" in the building of the suspense ("*souci du concret*" et "l'abondance", Sareil, 1984: 98) can be an effective form of comic writing. The logic mechanism in this comb involves 'false analogy': Candide and Cunégonde's love adventure is in analogy with the "cause and effect" law taught by the philosopher Pangloss, whereas this hazardous occurrence can not represent any coherent law about the world in a realistic sense. According to Attardo, "false analogy can be analysed as: a and b (possibly multiple elements) are alike in respect to x (whereas they are not in all respects, or x does not exist, or is a marginal aspect of a and b)" (Attardo, 2002: 13). The comic effects are enhanced when the above quoted combs form a 'bridge' (cf. Part I, Chapter 3. 4) with a previous passage where Pangloss' philosophical teaching is the local butt of irony in the narrator's discourse:

> Pangloss taught metaphisico-theologo-cosmolo-nicology. He proved incontestably that there is no effect without cause,... (Pangloss enseignait la métaphysico-théologo-cosmolo-nicologie. Il prouvait admirablement qu'il n'y a point d'effet sans cause, ...)
> (Voltaire, 1991:47)

Of course, we are at present only discussing Candide's love quest. Now we should see how such comic writing is also linked with the creation of humour irony: "For the unexpected to be ironic, then it seems that there must be some stress upon or some positive assumption of its unlikeness ... Perhaps there is a rule here which can be generally applied: to maintain the same level of irony the degree of disparity between the ironic opposites should be in inverse proportion to the degree of confident unawareness felt by the victim or pretended by the ironist. Or putting it another way, the irony may be made more striking either by stressing the ironic incongruity or by stressing the ironic 'innocence'" (Muecke, 1969: 32). Here, the "innocence" is on the part of Candide who, confined to the story world, is unable to predict what will eventually turn out. The "dwelling on details" reveals a conscious ironist, the narrator, who takes advantage of the character's blindness to build up "dramatic irony", i.e., "the irony is more striking when an observer already knows what the victim has yet to find out" (Muecke, 1969: 104). Thus, the dramatised comic effects in the above quoted passage is not only due to the incongruity between

the humour registers involved, but also due to the special comic writing in the narrator's discourse that intensifies this humour incongruity for irony.

Chapter 7 - Chapter 13

It is around the middle of the text that the hero and the heroine experienced the emotional storm of their reunion, and we have already analysed a passage in our previous discussion of the story world. Just between the scene where Candide was saved by an old woman and the scene of Candide and Cunégonde's exciting reunion, an implicit voice deriving from the narrator could be overheard that not only presents the story but also indicates the true nature of the story information:

> Candide could scarcely believe that he was awake; his whole life seemed like a nightmare and the present moment a happy dream. (Candide croyait rêver, et regardait toute sa vie comme un songe funeste, et le moment présent un songe agréable.)
>
> (Voltaire, 1991: 66)

At this moment of the story, Candide, having being "preached at, flogged, absolved, and blessed", would be hardly capable of meditating on his "whole life". The story, though presented from Candide's point of view, is rather narrated and indirectly commented with the narrator's words. It is a delicate narrative case when the narrator transmits his message through the indirect thought of the character. The difference, as Chatman explains, is between the character's perception and the narrator's conception, i.e., the character experiences and "perceives" the story events while the narrator "conceives" and forms comparatively detached opinions about the story events (cf. Chatman, 1990: 147). Also, this distinction is in conformity with the general difference in the narrative behaviour between the narrator and the main character: it is often the narrator rather than Candide, the naïve character, that casts a lucid look on the story world and makes ironic remarks on it.

In regard to the whole humorous text, this passage is more or less a "serious relief". Attardo explains that "essentially a serious relief section in a humorous text is merely a patch of text with

little or no humour in it" (Attardo, 2002: 19). This passage confirms the message that the story world is a "dream" and is not intended to be taken seriously. Thus it is one of the instances in the text when the narrator's voice prevails over the story information so as to lay the foundation for the construction of the serious meaning.

During the exciting meeting between Candide and Cunégonde, they also told each other their respective misadventures. What happened next is that Candide killed Issachar and the Inquisitor out of jealousy. In order to escape from the police, Candide had to leave Cunégonde again and run away for new adventures. They would not find each other till in Chapter 27, near the end of the novel, where a happy marriage of the hero and his unchanged fair lover is expected in the conventional picaresque novel.

Chapter 29 - Chapter 30

In spite of the numerous misadventures they had experienced, both Candide and Cunégonde survived. Under the axis of 'love quest', the last two chapters of the novel is the 'grand union' of the hero and the heroine. Candide at last found Cunégonde in Turkey, and here is how his "fair lady" appeared to him:

> The fond lover Candide, seeing how weather beaten his lovely Cunégonde had become, how her eyes were bloodshot, her throat was wizened, her cheeks were wrinkled, and her arms were red and scaly, drew back three steps, was seized with horror, but advanced again out of courtesy. (Le tendre amant Candide, en voyant sa belle Cunégonde rembrunie, les yeux éraillés, la gorge sèche, les joues ridées, les bras rouges et écaillés, recula trois pas, saisi d'horreur, et avança ensuite par bon procédé.)
>
> (Voltaire 1991: 161)

The humour registers of this *comb* are first composed of "lovely Cunégonde" and the horrible "ugliness" of her transformation, with the second register emphasised by a series of efficient adjectives to invalidate the first register for comic effects. Another pair of humour registers in parallel are made of "fond lover" and the reaction of this lover "with horror" at the

sight of his beloved, with the second register effectively emphasised with a series of verbal phrases to invalidate the first register for comic effects. The description of how Candide "drew back" out of "horror" and then "advanced" "out of courtesy" provides actually an effect resembling that of a comic acting. The juxtaposition ("logic mechanism") of these very different humour registers is certainly the narrator's contribution to the ironic effect.

We notice that the constituents of the humour registers here are mainly some relevant adjectives, adverbs and adverbial phrases. We have already discussed how the narrator can make use of these grammatical elements to offer his "abstraction and deliberate authoritative characterisation" to play on the character confined into the story world above (see the end of Chapter 1. 1. above), and here is another typical case.

The contrast between Candide as a "fond lover" and all the strong adjectives that describe Cunégonde's ugly appearance is locally ironic; Candide's supposed expectation for his fair lady as a "fond lover" and his reaction before the actual transformed Cunégonde is also locally ironic. What is strategically ironic to the whole text is Cunégonde's horrible ugliness at the moment of the grand happy reunion of the lovers as supposed by the picaresque novel structure.

In spite of his disappointment, Candide still decides to marry Cunégonde, just to be faithful to his promise. The result is of course the continued irony in this parodied romantic story: Cunégonde, "His wife daily grew uglier, and became more and more cantankerous and insufferable;" ("tous les jours plus laide, devint acariâtre et insupportable;" Voltaire, 1991: 163)

The general humour structure under the axis of 'love quest' involves the constant play of the multiple worlds of narrative: the story structure designed by the implied author plays irony over the story content; the narrator's telling, in accordance with the implied author's design, narrates the story with an ironic voice by means of comic writing.

The love scheme in this novel in fact is to accompany another scheme which is a more important axis in this humorous text. If what is conveyed by the story world is not meant to be taken seriously, some serious meaning is nonetheless to be found under this other axis. In other words, if the character is the direct victim of irony, the ironic humour will reveal the true object of mockery which is other than Candide's naïveté in his love quest. This other axis is to be found in the tale's alternative title "Optimism", which is the philosophical doctrine at stake in this

humorous text.

Axis II: Philosophical Quest

'Philosophical Quest' is the second but more important axis we shall discuss for the analysis of this humorous text. The main strand (cf. Part I, Chapter 3. 4.), with all the humorous micronarratives chosen for analysis, is linked to the central humour incongruity between the philosophical register (high, noble) and some other common or even vulgar register. Concerning the revelation of serious meaning, what is at stake under this axis is the philosophical doctrine of optimism. It is what Candide learnt from his professor Pangloss and is then put on to the test throughout Candide's adventures in the real world.

I need to recall here that the humour structure as well as the serious meaning of humour are always discussed within the frame of humorous parody; and the demonstration of the ironic play among the multiple narrative elements will proceed in the same way (see 'Implied Author's Design' 2, at the beginning of *Candide* analysis).

Axis II. 1. The Play Structure in the Story World

Under the axis of 'philosophical quest', the 'what' as revealed by the story world shows how Candide accepted the optimistic doctrine from Pangloss, but was led to test this philosophical view and search for other interpretations about the world when he had to face reality.

Axis II. 1. 1. Humour Registers In the Actantial Model

The *setting* of the story in the beginning under the axis of 'philosophical quest' is still the "castle", "the most beautiful and delightful of all possible mansions" ("le plus beau et le plus agréable des châteaux possibles." Voltaire, 1991: 48). Such description is of course in conformity with the philosophical teaching of optimism. Ironically, the castle is also the place where Candide cultivates his naïveté and ignorance about the real world.

After being chased out of the castle, Candide's worldly adventures seem to follow a route

unpredictable for ordinary human beings. With all the miseries that Candide experienced in person or heard about, anything but "optimism" would be the "real" knowledge that Candide would achieve by the end of his adventures.

Under the axis of 'philosophical quest', **Pangloss** is an important figure next to the comic hero Candide. Pangloss, as Candide's philosophy teacher, appears to be the "helper" in Candide's knowledge acquisition. But as the story goes on, he turns out to be the "opponent" and obstacle in Candide's achievement of real knowledge about the world.

According to Hamon's actantial model, we can find a major pair of humour registers outlining their relationship:

Register 1 (initial appearance):

helper (Pangloss) → subject (Candide)

Register 2 (eventual truth):

subject (Candide) ← opponent (Pangloss)

To go further with this outline, we can find other sub-humour registers in regard to the comic hero:

In the sphere of **knowing**, Candide, guided by his philosophical teacher Pangloss, is supposed to be the 'subject' of knowing the world through wisdom. But through the succession of the story events, Candide turns out to be the 'subject' of ignorance of the earthly world. When facing reality, he is in fact "a young philosopher utterly ignorant of the way of the world" ("un jeune métaphysicien fort ignorant des choses de ce monde" Voltaire, 1991: 51).

In the sphere of **longing**, Candide is the 'subject' of longing to learn. Meanwhile, he is also the victim of his philosophical knowledge.

In the sphere of **power**, Candide is the 'subject' of 'non-power' facing a cruel reality. In spite of his being "a young philosopher", Candide is unable to deal with problems in real life. On the other hand, Candide is also the 'subject' of 'being able to learn' through his worldly experiences. "Cultivate our garden" ("il faut cultiver notre jardin." Voltaire, 1991: 167) is the power he found to come to terms with the real world at the end of the story. With this conclusion, Candide is

supposed to find a better harmony with reality than before when he had been guided by the philosophy of optimism taught by Pangloss.

With these additional sub-humour registers found in the three actantial spheres, the humour structure is already a rich network of paradox relationships. The story world alone, with all the contradictions concerning the comic characters and their experiences, provides many humour registers. The most important pair of humour registers is Candide's 'philosophical knowledge' and his permanent impotence and frustration in reality. The principal logic mechanism that unites and neutralises these humour registers is similarly juxtaposition. Frustration can be a good material for the construction of a tragic story in a realistic story world. The paradoxical relation of humour registers however turns such frustrating experiences into potential comic materials.

Axis II. 1. 2. Characters' Speech Acts as Humorous Components

Next, we shall see how some *quoted speeches of the characters* contribute to the initial neutralisation of the humour registers within the story world. These examples are what Rimmon-Kenan called "direct discourse". According to Rimmon-Kenan, such discourse "creates the illusion of 'pure' mimesis" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 110). Chatman in his book *Story and Discourse* (1978) devotes a chapter to the "theory of speech acts" which "provides a useful tool for distinguishing the language of the narrator vis-à-vis his narrative audience from that of the characters vis-à-vis each other" (Chatman, 1978: 162-163). Our following examples also largely belong to his category of "pure speech records", which are at "the negative pole of narrator-presence - the pole of 'pure' mimesis" (Chatman, 1978: 166).

Candide's philosophical quest has gone through **three stages**. The **first stage** is the happy seclusion in the Castle of Thunder-ten-tronckh, which is a kind of earthly paradise for its inhabitants, while his expulsion at the end of Chapter 1 is also a parody of the exile from the Garden of Eden in the Bible. It is easier in the castle for Candide to believe Pangloss' philosophical view of optimism. The following passage from Chapter 1 is a quoted speech of Pangloss when he is giving his philosophy lesson to Candide:

"that things cannot be other than they are, for since everything is made for a purpose, it follows that everything is made for the best purpose. Observe: our noses were made to carry spectacles, so we have spectacles. Legs were clearly intended for breeches, and we wear them. Stones were meant for carving and for building houses, that is why my lord has a most beautiful house; for the greatest baron in Westphalia ought to have the noblest residence. And since pigs were made to be eaten, we eat pork all the year round." ("que les choses ne peuvent être autrement : car tout étant fait pour une fin, tout est nécessairement pour la meilleure fin. Remarquez bien que les nez ont été faits pour porter les lunettes; aussi avons nous des lunettes. Les jambes sont visiblement institués pour être chaussées, et nous avons des chaussures. Les pierres ont été formées pour être taillées et pour en faire des châteaux: aussi monseigneur a un très beau château: le plus grand baron baron de la province doit être le mieux logé; et les cochons étant faits pour être mangés, nous mangeons du porc toute l'année.")

(Voltaire, 1991: 47)

This is a *comb* playing with false reasoning. More precisely, the major logic mechanism is "false premise", i.e., if one accepts the initial assumption, the reasoning is perfectly logical (cf., Attardo, 2002: 10). Nash also once labelled this kind of mechanism "false premises and flawed inferences"(Nash, 1985: 46). The initial register is Pangloss' explanation of the law of the world, which is a variation of his "cause and effect" teaching. This philosophical discourse represents noble, high and serious value. But the first register is soon undermined by a digression of the speech: the switching to the second register is triggered by such words as "nose", "legs" and "pigs", which represent common and low value. These words, as Nash said, defy the expected predication (cf. Nash, 1985: 48). The flaw of the inference is plain to anyone with common sense: the natural function of the nose is certainly not for wearing glasses only, though it may happen to do that; and the reason why some people wear glasses is certainly not because they have got noses, etc. The switching of the two humour registers then goes from seriousness to non-seriousness. Such local comic effects add to the general non-serious atmosphere in the story world; in turn they are also confirmed by the general humour strategy of humorous parody.

It should be noted that, in a humorous text, there are multiple narrative elements contributing to the humour structure and leading to comic effects. Because of this *multi-determination*, the very juxtaposition of a different or opposite value is sometimes enough to trigger the switching from one humour register to another. Just imagine if the quoted speech above is isolated from the text, it could be taken as the nonsense talk of an idiot devoid of any humour. But comic effects are evident within the context of the humour text, and "it is precisely the multiple-determination (or hyper-determination) of the humorous effect that makes the text interesting" (Attardo, 1994: 267).

The **second stage** of Candide's philosophical learning is during his misadventures in the real world.

After the love adventure with Cunégonde in Chapter 1, Candide is chased out of the Castle. At the beginning of Chapter 2, Candide walked a long way with neither food nor enough clothes against the snowy winter. Candide "wandered off without thinking which way he was going. As he plodded along he wept" ("marcha longtemps sans savoir où, pleurant..." (Voltaire 1991: 49). At this moment someone offered him a little food. Candide at once saw it as the triumph of Pangloss' philosophy:

> "for that is what Mr. Pangloss used to tell me. I am convinced by your courteous behaviour that all is for the best." ("c'est ce que Monsieur Pangloss m'a toujours dit et je vois bien que tout est au mieux.")
>
> (Voltaire 1991: 49-51)

Such a quick mood-change does not appear realistic. As Sareil points out: "A comic hero is thoughtless ... far from being anxious about any future problems, he will rather belittle and minimise them. He does that by excessive credence rather than by vanity." ("Le héros comique est léger; ... Loin de s'inquiéter des difficultés futures, il les minimise, il les rapetisse, moins par vanité, semble-t-il, que par excès de confiance." Sareil, 1984: 73). Here, we do not take into consideration the narrator's discourse world yet. The comic hero's deeds and quoted words in mimetic illusion are already devoid of tragic effects. The humour registers here are composed of

story information about Candide's miseries which tend to be tragic and a sudden shift to the fantastic interpretation of the story events to the comic effect. The obvious "missing link" (Attardo, 2002: 11) between the two registers is then the local logic mechanism that unites and neutralises the incongruous elements for humour. Sareil points out that such double orientation ("double vision") or incongruity also exists in serious writing (cf. Sareil, 1984: 45). The distinction is that comic writing takes joy in playing with multiple perspectives and proceeds with constant unexpected leaps and bounds whereas tragedy advances steadily towards unity or purity ("Le comique est donc une façon risible d'envisager les choses sous un angle, ou même une pluralité de perspectives. Alors que la tragédie tend naturellement vers l'unité - ou, si l'on préfère, la pureté - , le comique, lui, demeure éternellement ambigu et procède par bonds et par sauts." Sareil, 1984: 46). This is the very paradox of humour: the incongruous elements *co-exist* and *mutually neutralise* each other so that detachment from serious emotion is made possible: "as soon as the incongruity is introduced to a pathetic scene, emotions disappear, the affective communication ... is largely reduced, ... we are no more involved in the characters' experiences. We feel detached." ("dès qu'on introduit une incongruité dans une scène pathétique, le suspense est détruit, les émotions disparaissent, la communication affective ... se trouve considérablement réduite, ... Nous ne participons plus à leurs épreuve, nous nous sentons détachés." Sareil, 1984: 46-47) We notice that comic effects are also heightened when the refrain "all is for the best" forms a *bridge* with the previous "everything is made for a purpose, it follows that everything is made for the best purpose." Voltaire, 1991: 47; see above).

To the implied reader, Candide's quick mood-change is against the logic of the real world. His interpretation of life here is what Chatman called "fallible filtration". Candide, as a character inhabiting the story world, of course can not realise this communication between the text and the implied reader. If Candide commits any "fallibility" (Chatman 1990: 151) in his point of view about the world, it is mainly due to Pangloss' philosophical teaching. As a result, a possible message from the text is the question about the truthfulness of that philosophical doctrine. As in fact, this text has other different targets for its fierce mockery, and the humorous portrayal of this intellectual character (with mild mockery) meanwhile serves to reveal this purpose.

During Candide's travels far and wide, in spite of his tendency to favour the optimistic view taught by Pangloss, he is subject to the inexorable pressure of experience. When he and

Cunégonde are on the voyage to Buenos Aires, reunited and with their Portuguese misfortunes behind them, he hopefully acclaims, to a less confident Cunégonde, "It is undoubtedly the new world that is the best of all the possible universes." (c'est certainement le nouveau monde qui est le meilleur des univers possibles" Voltaire, 1991: 74). However, his belief is shaken after he heard the story told by the "old woman":

"It is a great pity," said Candide, "that the normal custom at an auto-da-fé was broken and our sagacious Pangloss hanged: for otherwise he would have made some remarkable observations on the moral and physical evils which infest the earth and sea, and with all due respect to him I should have made bold to offer a few objections." (c'est bien dommage, disait Candide, que le sage Pangloss ait été pendu contre la coutume dans un auto-da-fé; il nous dirait des choses admirables sur le mal physique et sur le mal moral qui couvrent la terre et la mer, et je me sentirais assez de force pour oser lui faire respectueusement quelques objections."

(Voltaire, 1991: 86).

We first notice a series of 'juxtaposition' of very different and even opposite values: "auto-da-fé" (noble) / "broken" (common, devaluation); "sagacious" (admiration, praise) / "hanged" (reduction, death), "remarkable observation" (wisdom, praise) / "evils" (wrong, depreciation); "due respect" (for) / "objections" (against), etc. The general humour registers in this quoted speech are then composed of Candide's initial compliments and his eventual "objections" to Pangloss. Besides juxtaposition, the reasoning in Candide's comments is also a kind of "vicious circle", for "the reasoning is completely flawed in any case" (Attardo, 2002: 17): if Pangloss' were capable of making "remarkable observations" about the world's evils, his philosophy of optimism must turn out to be wrong; or if Pangloss' philosophy corresponds with reality, any "remarkable observations" about evils of the world may turn out to be wrong. The misery Pangloss suffered must prove that Pangloss is not a sagacious person; and if Pangloss' misfortune does not disapprove his "sagacious" wisdom, his philosophical teaching then must have proved wrong.

Both 'juxtaposition' and 'vicious circle' as logic mechanisms first help to build up and then unite and neutralise the incongruous humour registers. Such a mechanism also helps to construct

a potential ironic message at the story world level: Pangloss' philosophy could turn out to be a ridiculous point of view in real life.

Candide's voyages far and wide and all the misfortunes he experiences are a process towards disillusion. Besides corruption, slavery, murder, robbery, etc., there is of course the disillusion of his romantic quest for his beloved Cunégonde, which directly or indirectly motivates all his travels. Candide's naïve faith in the facile optimism of Pangloss is gradually overwhelmed by the mounting weight of his own experience of a very different reality. When Candide got to know the cruelty of slavery from a Negro in Surinam, he also realised the absurdity of this philosophical doctrine:

> "What is optimism? ... Well, it's the passion for maintaining that all is right when all goes wrong with us" (Qu'est-ce qu'optimisme? - Hélas! dit Candide, c'est la rage de soutenir que tout est bien quand tout est mal."
>
> (Voltaire, 1991:113).

In this quoted speech, "all is right" goes with "all goes wrong": again the juxtaposition of opposite values is the key logic mechanism here. In fact, some other humour theorists like Sareil and Jardon are also aware of this kind of mechanism as an effective means of comic writing, though they label it as "contradiction" (cf. Sareil 1984: 21-42; Jardon, 1988: 48). Todorov is not really a specialist in humour. However, he uses this word to replace Freud's term "faute de raisonnement" (a close term to Attardo's "faulty reasoning") in his book *les Genres du discours*, and he introduced three kinds of "contradictions" in humour. The above example may belong to his first kind which is "evident contradiction", i.e., the contradictory propositions are immediately and manifestly placed together (Todorov, 1978: 283-283). What is common to these theorists' account is that they all consider juxtaposition of contradictory items as an extreme case of incongruity in humour.

Sareil mentioned especially that in *Candide* the 'contradiction' between metaphysical terms and description other than philosophical discussion is a major element that renders the text comic (cf. Sareil, 1984: 29). As a matter of fact, many other logic mechanisms of humour in this

humorous text also contain contradictions, though the actual passage may be more expanded than this one. What counts for this thesis is the fact that many contradictions juxtaposed together make up various registers in the humour structure of the text. In this case, once again, no special linguistic element is needed to realise the switching to the second register: against a general background of humorous parody that undermines the 'serious' in favour of the non-serious', the very juxtaposition of the incongruous elements is enough to make salient one of the local registers, i.e., "all goes wrong" in reality tends to prevail over "all is right" in Pangloss' philosophical doctrine. Meanwhile, we also notice how the foundation is laid for the construction of the "serious meaning" of humorous irony in such instances of the story world. In other words, if the humour structure results in favouring "all goes wrong" in reality, what could be called into question is the contrary idea carried in Pangloss' philosophical teaching.

Candide's increasing doubt about optimism is also given away in some of his dialogues with Pangloss. After numerous misadventures, they both survived to find each other again:

"Now, my dear Pangloss," said Candide, "tell me this. When you had been hanged, dissected, and beaten unmercifully, while you were rowing at your bench, did you still think that everything in this world is for the best?" "I still hold my original views," replied Pangloss, "for I am still a philosopher. It would not be proper for me to recant, especially as Leibnitz cannot be wrong; and besides, the pre-established harmony, together with the plenum and the materia subtilis, is the most beautiful thing in the world." ("Eh bien! mon cher Pangloss, lui dit Candide, quand vous avez été pendu, disséqué, roué de coups, et que vous avez ramé aux galères, avez-vous toujours pensé que tout allait le mieux du monde? - Je suis toujours de mon premier sentiment, répondit Pangloss; car enfin je suis philosophe: il ne me convient pas de me dédire, Leibnitz ne pouvant pas avoir tort, et l'harmonie préétablie étant d'ailleurs la plus belle chose du monde, aussi bien que le plein et la matière subtile.")

(Voltaire, 1991: 160)

The dialogue between Candide and Pangloss carries on mainly within the story world, since

there is little attribution from the part of the narrator. Such 'dialogue' between characters in a written form is the original meaning of the concept of "mimesis" in Plato, "which means direct speeches as in a drama" (c'est-à-dire en paroles directes, à la manière du drame." Genette, 1972: 184). Chatman says such "pure dialogue between characters" is an important "source of narrative information." But the implied reader is often required to do "inferring" in this case (Chatman, 1978: 175).

In terms of humour structure, the humour incongruity comes from the divergence between the low-valued wording in Candide's speech and the high-valued wording in Pangloss' speech. Words like "hanged", "dissected, and beaten unmercifully"and "rowing at your bench" used by Candide are from the common language used in daily life, and they express worldly sufferings here. Candide's wording then forms the first register. In Pangloss' speech, on the contrary, terms like "a philosopher", "Leibnitz", "pre-established harmony", "plenum" and "the materia subtilis" are philosophy talk and represent high value, and they are employed, as always in Pangloss' speech, to express the optimistic point of view which is totally divorced from reality. Pangloss' wording then forms the second register. The logic mechanism is firstly *juxtaposition* of very different values. Then within Pangloss' speech, it is again a *false premise*: the ground of his argument is "I am still a philosopher" and "Leibnitz cannot be wrong" which however should not be held as irreversible truth. The paradox lies in the fact that Pangloss' speech, though relevant to their discussion about his experiences, is totally inappropriate to the facts Candide laid bare. The second logic mechanism is the "false premise" (Attardo, 2002: 10) in Pangloss' reasoning, i.e., if one assumes Pangloss' premise (that he is still a good philosopher, that Leibnitz cannot be wrong, etc.), his reasoning can be quite logical (cf. Attardo, 2002: 10). The switching from seriousness to non-seriousness is generated by the incongruity of the registers and then assisted by the general atmosphere in the story world that mars the realistic illusion.

When discussing "the comic naïveté" (la naïveté comique) of comic heroes, Sareil makes a distinction between he who is "intelligent" in spite of his innocence" ("intélligent en dépit de son ingénuité") and a genuine "fool" ("dupe"). According to Sareil, the former kind often "asks questions, is eager to understand, and as a result leads his interlocutor to unveil his own or his contemporaries' deceitfulness and dishonest manœuvres" ("pose des questions, désire comprendre, et amène ainsi son interlocuteur à révéler les fourberies et les manœuvres

malhonnêtes de son cercle ou de ses contemporains." Sareil, 1984: 74). Throughout the whole novel, Candide is always the pupil who is eager to learn and Pangloss the professor who is eager to teach. As "the most beautiful thing in the world" reaches the climax of Pangloss' speech, his deceitfulness forms a sharp contrast with what really goes on in reality. As Attardo indicates, the "least appropriate element will tend to be the most informative" in cases of humour and irony (cf. Attardo, 2000: 821). Through their dialogue, the implied reader can see that Pangloss' reasoning is becoming more and more groundless. As a result, Pangloss the philosopher, and not the innocent Candide this time, becomes the local victim of irony. Though the actual intelligence level of Candide is not the central interest of this novel, his intelligence does have the function of revealing the real target of irony of this humorous text.

In the last chapter, still faithful to the fantastic atmosphere of the comic world of the story, all the characters miraculously survive their misadventures. This is the **last stage** of Candide's acquisition of his philosophical knowledge. Still with ironic humour, the whole text ends up with a philosophical discussion between Pangloss and Candide:

From time to time Pangloss would say to Candide: "There is a chain of events in this best of all possible worlds; for if you had not been turned out of a beautiful mansion at the point of a jackboot for the love of Lady Cunégonde, and if you had not been involved in the Inquisition, and had not wandered over America on foot, and had not struck the Baron with your sword, and lost all those sheep you brought from Eldorado, you would not be here eating candied fruit and pistachio nuts." 'That's well said," said Candide, "but we must go and work in the garden." (... et Pangloss disait quelquefois à Candide: "Tous les événements sont enchaînés dans le meilleur des mondes possibles: car si vous n'aviez pas été chassé d'un beau château à grands coups de pied dans le derrière pour l'amour de mademoiselle Cunégonde, si vous n'aviez pas mis à l'Inquisition, si vous n'aviez pas couru l'Amérique à pied, si vous n'aviez pas donné un bon coup d'épée au baron, si vous n'étiez pas perdu tous vos moutons du bon pays d'Eldorado, vous ne mangeriez pas ici des cédrats confits et des pistaches. - Cela est bien dit, répondit Candide, mais il faut cultiver notre jardin." Voltaire, 1991:

167).

The above passage is still in the form of a dialogue with little overt intervention by the narrator. In Pangloss' speech, the humour registers are still composed of high-valued (philosophical reasoning) and low valued (common life objects) entities. The series of "if ... had not" presume some powerful logic propositions. Nonetheless they are only reduced to "candied fruit and pistachio nuts". This is what Sareil called "dedramatisation" or "degradation" for comic effect: in this case, comic writing "arranges to create constant incongruity so as to destroy the harmonious continuity of the text." ("s'arrange donc pour qu'à chaque pas surgisse une incongruité qui vienne détruire la continuité harmonieuse du récit." Sareil, 1984: 44-45). Pangloss' philosophical preaching is also a kind of 'faulty reasoning'. This comb is playing with "if you had not...you would not" formula which is another variation of Pangloss' "cause and effect" argument. This argument as usual leads to another absurd conclusion. Absurd because this reasoning is based on a series of "coincidences" (cf. Attardo, 2002: 11) and its conclusion is consequently "field restriction" (cf. Attardo, 2002: 15): the answer is technically correct, but restricts the reason for obtaining peaceful life to a much smaller domain (incidents of Candide's misadventures). Radical "degradation" to "candied fruit and pistachio nuts" is also a moment of comic climax within the story level where the 'switching' from seriousness to nonseriousness is generated.

Here the implied reader can once again see that Pangloss' reasoning is unjustifiable. Throughout the whole text, it is the comic hero Candide who often takes the role of the local victim of irony. By the end of the text, the implied reader however can start to infer some other meaning about the ironic humour of the text. If Pangloss's final reasoning is absurd, it could be meant to have always been so. If the intention of the implied author is other than ridicule of the naïve Candide, Pangloss and his philosophical teaching could have been presented just as idle folly. However, the story world alone has just provided a possible interpretation that the implied reader can infer. Further affirmation and clarification is needed from extra-narrative levels.

It is Candide who gives the last word in this text. Reaching the end of his symbolic voyage in the quest of for philosophical truth, Candide finally gains his spiritual maturity. According to the 'actantial model' formulated by Greimas (cf. Greimas, 1981: 36), Todorov (cf. Todohov:

1981:141) or Hamon (cf. Hamon, 1983: 162), this character's 'action' (his misadventures / spiritual quest) has led to his 'transformation'. Candide, having experienced so much, now is strong enough to cut across Pangloss' endless talk. At last he is able ("power" gained) to speak in a affirmative and authoritarian tone. Let us first see the literal meaning of Candide's speech: "That's well said, (= enough, shut up); but (you are wrong) we must go and work in the garden (come to help me to grow the vegetables). Of course, the meaning of Candide's speech goes beyond the literal meaning of the words. Within the story world, Candide refuses to take the role of comic fool again. He declares that he forsakes the idealism of his youth. He is happy with the cultivation of his modest philosophy and the ironic spirit, and he has found the only goodness that he can master: himself (cf. Barber, 1977: 26; Valette, 1982: 70-71). However, experiences of literary reading tell us that a character's attitude may not necessarily be the ultimate voice of the work. An overall view of Candide's remark and its contribution to the general serious meaning of the ironic humour must take into consideration the voice(s) of the extra-narrative levels.

Axis II. 2. The Narrator's Discourse World Playing Upon The Story World

Candide, as a classic comic character, is an example of what Bergson called "puppets with strings" ("pantin à ficelle") and a "toy in the hands of someone else" ("jouet entre les mains d'un autre." Bergson, 1997: 59)[18]. The one who plays with the strings of the puppet in question is the narrator.

In Part I of this thesis we explored various theories of the difference between the 'showing' and 'telling' of a story. It is true that no text of narrative fiction can really 'show' or 'imitate' the action it conveys, since all such texts are made of language, and "mimesis" is only an illusion (Genette, 1972: 185-6; Rimmon-Kenan, 1976: 108). However there exist the differences of narration ranging from "neutral statement" (Chatman, 1978: 168) to "highly charged" (Chatman, 1990: 143) narration. As we have already seen in the analysis of Axis 1, the discourse world of the narrator in *Candide* is highly charged throughout the whole text. In regard to the humour structure, the narrator's voice very often violates the (implied reader's) expectation and favours mostly *switching* to the second or the initially implicit humour register; with regard to the construction of the "*serious meaning*", the narrator's discourse is the narrative level that helps to

reject the local victim of irony in favour of the revelation of the real target of mockery of this humorous text.

As mentioned above, the **first stage** is in the Château de Thunder-ten-tronckh. This is how Candide attends Pangloss' course:

> Candide listened with great attention and with innocent belief (Candide écoutait attentivement, et croyait innocemment.)
>
> (Voltaire, 1991: 47).

Candide's admiration for his philosophical professor is as blind as the philosophical teaching is groundless:

> He (Candide) decided that the height of good fortune was to have been born Baron Thunder-ten-Tronckh and after that ... to listen to his master Pangloss, the greatest philosopher in Westphalia, and consequently the greatest in all the world. (Il concluait qu'après le bonheur d'être né baron de Thunder-ten-tronckh ... le quatrième, d'entendre maître Pangloss, le plus grand philosophe de la province, et par conséquent de toute la terre.)
>
> (Voltaire, 1991: 47)

Firstly, there is the grammatical indication of the presence of a narrator: "the character is referred to by the third person and his action and thoughts represented by the past tense" (Chatman, 1978: 184). The word "decided" and the very listing of Candide's "good fortune" indicates that it is *narrator's summary* of Candide's thoughts. We mentioned earlier that in Candide there is little interior revelation of the character. Here is one of the rare cases when the (external) narrator shifts his mental entry to that of the character. However, here the narrator uses Candide's point of view to interpret things and persons only to realise his purpose. It may not be a surprise that Candide, as a naïve pupil, bears a certain admiration for his professor. It is from how the story information is provided that we can detect and examine the narrator's intervention into

the story. It is one thing to ask: "is Pangloss really the greatest philosopher of the entire earth?" But it is another - and more narratologically relevant - thing to ask "how do we know that Candide's view is flawed?" We know not by listening to Candide telling his viewpoint, but by listening to a covert narrator *present* (cf. Chatman, 1990: 116) the character's thoughts with the effect of irony. In other words, the ironic humour comes from the narrator's *presentation*[19] of Candide's mental activity.

Ironic humour here firstly comes from the various comic means that the narrator adopts for the presentation. There is first what Cemil Cöker called "hasty generalisation" ("généralisation hâtive" Cöker, 1965: 23): without additional conditions, a proposition of "greatest philosopher of a province" can not legitimately lead to the conclusion of "the greatest (philosopher) in all the world." And the second half of the reasoning is of course also an 'exaggeration'. The humour registers are then composed of real/unreal, which then lead to the switching from seriousness to unseriousness. 'Hasty generalisation' through 'exaggeration' is then the logic mechanism that unites and neutralises the humorous incongruity. The paradox lies in the fact that Candide's reasoning is relevant to the context of presenting a pupil's admiration for his professor but inappropriate because Candide's conclusion is exaggerated.

Chatman explained that one version of the narrator's presence or his authority is " 'omniscience,' Knowing All, where 'all' includes the outcome of every event and the nature of every existent." (Chatman, 1978: 212). The narrator in *Candide* is an omniscient narrative agent, capable of showing or telling everything about the story world. Here the very fact that the narrator is able to penetrate into the interior world of the main character is evidence of the narrator's omniscient power.

Chatman also distinguished the focalisation of the narrator and that of the character by using the two terms "narrator's slant" and the "character's filtration" (Chatman, 1990: 139. Cf. Part I, Chapter 3, 2.2.). On this basis, Chatman then further discussed the problem of "unreliability" in the narration. He argued that it is important to make the difference between the unreliable in the narrator's narration and the unreliable in the "filtration" of the character. He referred to the latter as "fallible filtration": "what is 'unreliable' in fallible filtration is not the narrator's account of the story but only the thoughts or speeches of the filter character." (Chatman, 1990: 149). This distinction can well explain how the narrator's discourse is playing upon the

character in the story world in this case. Candide, imprisoned in the story world, is presented as a sincere worshiper of his philosophy teacher. The narrator in his narrative level, instead of expressing a sincere eulogy of Pangloss' prestige like Candide, is casting an ironic look at the characters in the story world. The initial "*great* attention" and "*innocent* (=naïve) belief" are the narrator's attributes and comments (cf. Axis I. 2. Chapter 1) on Candide's naïve mental state. Afterwards, Candide's thoughts are presented in indirect form. Such presentation can transmit more than direct speech since there is no guarantee that the character used the exact words in his thinking. In this case the narrator can easily intervene in the story world without leaving much trace of his presence. As a matter of fact, all the comic means adopted imply an interpretative quality on the part of the narrator (cf. Chatman, 1978: 197). With comic wording, with a deliberate withdrawal into the character's limited view, the narrator is purposely representing Candide's mindset as 'fallible filtration'. Thus a covert narrator is inviting the narratee to enjoy the irony at the expense of the character behind his back. It is only the very first chapter of the text. The implied reader can see that the naïve character is just being fooled by his conviction. Candide is clearly the local victim of irony; meanwhile, Pangloss' philosophy is also called into question by the ironic humour. Of course, the real target of the ironic humour of the text is not yet clear at this stage of the text.

During the **second stage** of Candide's philosophical quest, he experiences innumerable misadventures during his travels.

A very funny passage in the text is the last paragraph of chapter 2, when the narrator presents how Candide, hoodwinked to fight for the "the King of the Bulgars" in the army, runs away, but is then caught and punished.

One fine spring morning he took it into his head to decamp and walked straight off, thinking it a privilege common to man and beast to use his legs when he wanted. But he had not gone six miles before he was caught, bound, and thrown into a dungeon by four other six-foot heroes... (Il s'avisa un beau jour de printemps de s'aller promener, marchant tout droit devant lui, croyant que c'était un privilège de l'espèce

humaine, comme de l'espèce animale, de se servir de ses jambes à son plaisir. Il n'eut pas fait deux lieues que voilà quatre autres héros de six pieds qui l'atteignent, qui le lient, qui le mènent dans un cachot.)

(Voltaire, 1991: 50)

What follows is a detailed description of the cruel punishment to Candide. In short, Candide should receive "four thousand strokes, which exposed every nerve and muscle from the nape of his neck to his backside." ("quatre mille coups de baquettes, qui, depuis la nuque du cou jusqu'au cul, lui découvrirent les muscles et les nerfs." Voltaire, 1991: 51).

The above quoted passage is a *comb* of irony on the naivety of the comic hero. The general humour registers are composed of Candide's first joyful escape, emphasised by all the naïve good reasons presented by the narrator (unreal), and the eventual cruel punishment to the character's surprise (real). The logic mechanism that unites and neutralises the humour incongruity is Candide's *faulty reasoning* (cf. Attardo, 2002: 13-14) based on a direct *false analogy* between 'man' and 'beast' as presented by the narrator.

In this passage the narrator's presence is revealed through his *interpretation* about the state of mind of the character (cf. Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 98-99). As Rimmon Kenan says, "Interpretations often provide information not only about their direct object but also about the interpreter." (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 99). In regard to the story level, Candide's deeds and thoughts are presented as 'fallible filtration': as a soldier, Candide just walks straight away from the army like taking a spring walk, without realising either what he is actually doing or the seriousness of his action. Besides, Candide has 'sound' reasons to do so.

Candide's naivety is then presented with sharp irony and this irony is realised through the wording elaborated in the narrator's discourse. In the beginning, Candide "took it into his head" that all goes on well and that he has so many good reasons to believe so; only he is caught very shortly. The sentence pattern "but he had not ... before ... " obviously comes from a narrator who takes joy in watching the comic character running blindly into a disaster. The ironic humour reaches a climax when the narrator interprets Candide's thoughts with a local 'false analogy' and 'faulty (philosophical) reasoning' that can be inferred: "thinking it a privilege common to man and

beast to use his legs when he wanted". Common sense is enough to tell us that humans are not beasts and their behaviour is not supposed to be guided by their instincts, especially in the case of a soldier who is presumed to be restricted by military discipline. We notice that the humour incongruity is reinforced by the local divergence between "privilege" (high value) and "using legs" (low value). Thus a series of ironic terms wind up with a hilarious "degradation" (cf. page 28). With regard to the humour structure, this is the location in this passage where the *switching* from non-seriousness to seriousness is clearly generated. In the general ironic context under the axis of Candide's philosophical quest, the real target of mockery is then revealed to be the false cause/effect reasoning based on Pangloss' philosophy: we have legs, made for walking, therefore we can walk when and where we want. This is also an important *serious meaning* simultaneously constructed in the narrative structure of humour under the present axis.

With regard to the building up of the serious meaning, we see an omniscient narrator who is taking advantage of the character's limited knowledge. Candide's "fallibility" is quickly proved by the story information provided: Candide is indeed caught soon after and cruelly punished. With the narrator's overt attribution of the character's thoughts and deeds, the narratee, and in parallel the implied reader (in such cases of reliable narration), indulges in a feeling of superiority over the character. By this overt voice, the narrator is openly inviting the addressee of the text to enjoy the irony at the expense of the character. This is the ironic effect produced by the play of the narrator's discourse over the character in his story world. The climax of the humour structure is where the serious register becomes most inappropriate. Therefore it is also the location when the ironic message becomes more salient (cf. Part I, Chapter 5, 2.1.). Of course, Candide, with his naïve credulity and excessive trust (cf. Sareil, 1984: 73; cf. Axis II, 1.1. above), is temporarily the local victim of irony in this passage. The narrator's discourse then carries on and the real object of irony is to be exposed.

Unable to stand the physical torture any more, Candide asked for the death sentence and he obtained it. However, miracles continue to intervene in this fantastic world:

> The king of the Bulgars passed by at that moment and asked what crime the culprit had committed. Since the King was a man of great insight, he recognised from

what he was told about Candide that here was a young philosopher utterly ignorant of the way of the world, and granted him a pardon, an exercise of mercy which will be praised in every newspaper and in every age. (Le roi des Bulgares passe dans ce moment, s'informe du crime du patient et comme ce roi avait un grand génie, il comprit, par tout ce qu'il apprit de Candide, que c'était un jeune métaphysicien fort ignorant des choses de ce monde, et il lui accorda sa grâce avec une clémence qui sera louée dans tous les journaux et dans tous les siècles.)

(Voltaire, 1991: 51)

Besides story information, this passage involves the narrator's "commentary", i.e., "speech acts by a narrator that go beyond narrating, describing, or identifying will resonate with overtones of *propria persona*" (Chatman, 1978: 228). The third person reference already indicates the presence of the narrator. Irony then stems from the narrator's "overtones", which can be overheard from the "designedly choosing forms of words that misrepresent the content of the message." (Nash, 1985: 153). "Since the King was a man of great insight" is the narrator's authoritative *judgement*, which is one form of the narrator's presence through "commentary" (cf. Chatman, 1978: 228; Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 98). The next sentence at first sight is initially the King's identification of Candide. This is however a case when the narrator's voice comes to the fore as imitative mimesis and the narratorial voice overlap (cf. Cobley, 2001: 105): it may be pure story information that the King gets to know about Candide's interest in philosophical study. However, such an emphatic expression as "utterly ignorant" is likely to have involved some extra-narrative level intervention.. The third sentence is also mainly the narrator's commentary on the story event. The irony rests on the exaggerated flattery: how can any mortals prove that a certain entity has existed "in every newspaper and in every age", especially by the time of the publication of this text?

Irony calls attention to itself by "posing the irreconcilables" (cf. Chatman, 1978: 230). Here we notice that the incongruity is multiple: 1) "a young philosopher" is ironically juxtaposed with "ignorance"; 2) the praise of the King's "great insight" goes with the fact that the King is also the perpetrator of the disasters of war; 3) after so many tortures the King has inflicted upon Candide, he should however be considered to have shown "mercy" and should be eulogised "in every

newspaper and in every age". Humour irony in this passage is mainly constructed from the narrator's discourse. If we follow Chatman who terms the narrator's faculty as "conceptive" in his narrative level and the characters' faculty as "perceptive" in the story world level (cf. Chatman, 1990: 146), we can say that it is the conceptive view that prevails over the perceptive view in here.

With regard to the humour structure, all the ironic juxtapositions of the incongruous elements compose the humour registers in this passage. Comic writing by posing 'contradictory terms' that end up with 'exaggeration' all work to construct the logic mechanism of humour that neutralises the incongruity for comic effects. The comic emphasis of Candide's naivety as well as the exaggerated regard for the King despite his cruelty push the whole passage to a climax both in humour building and serious meaning building.

This is in fact a crucial place in the text where an important *serious meaning* of the ironic humour can be inferred. All these humour incongruities amount to the high inappropriateness of the literal statements. As Attardo indicates, high inappropriateness triggers the salience of the ironic message. Here Candide is no more the local victim of irony. Everything is aimed at Pangloss' philosophy: if Candide is naïve and "utterly ignorant of the way of the world", it is due to the philosophical conviction taught by Pangloss; if all the flattery towards the King is insincere, the cruelty and injustice he represents is meant to be criticised. As a result, Pangloss' theory of optimism can be proved false and is revealed to be the real target of mockery, assuming there is no contradiction of this point in the following chapters, of course. The ironic play of narrative levels in this passage mainly exults in the narrator's discourse at the expense of the character's 'fallible filtration'. Also ironically, the revelation of the ironic meaning is attributed to the King of Bulgars, which the narrator (and the implied author) expects the narratee (and the implied reader) to understand not only from the overt irony pronounced in the narrator's discourse, but also from the story information presented.

To take a general view of the whole chapter, we notice a humour construction process: Candide's naivety is often the local and initial victim of irony. As our analysis goes further, especially when we take a spatial view of the humour structure with various narrative elements of different levels working together, we may display more clearly how the eventual serious meaning is to be inferred from a humour text. Attardo's recent development of humorous text analysis has

provided many useful new tools in this field of study. However, his linear formula of humour structure made little distinction between occasional "target" or butt of a joke (cf. Attardo, 1985) and what is really intended by the whole text and can be eventually inferred by the implied reader. My spatial humour structure shows that the general target of irony as the eventual serious meaning of a humorous text can hardly be detected with any certainty by analysing just one or a few isolated segments of a text. Another relatively weak point of Attardo's linear structure, I think, is that it does not really allow consideration of the overall context composed of various narrative elements against which the humorous irony is constructed. Though Attardo is right to indicate that irony is to be inferred from an actual context, he has difficulty in showing how context should be taken into consideration in such inference.

As far as my humorous text analysis is concerned, Attardo's theory does not show the difference between humorous irony and irony in non-humour cases. As I have shown in the analysis of *Candide*, it is very important to be aware and understand how all the incongruous elements are neutralised against a general texture of parody, the building up of a fantastic atmosphere in the story world, etc., in favour of the production of comic effects.

Sometimes the story is presented with certain details and in such a way so that the narration can actually give discomfort, anxiety and even fear. In this case, humour of moderate irony is much reduced and the tone of mockery is much enhanced. Here is a passage from Chapter 3 that describes the battle between the Bulgars and the Abares:

> When all was over ... Candide decided to find somewhere else to pursue his reasoning into cause and effect. He picked his way over piles of dead and dying, and reached a neighbouring village on the Abar side of the border. It was now no more than a smoking ruin, for the Bulgars had burned it to the ground in accordance with the terms of public law. Old men, crippled with wounds, watched helplessly the death throes of their butchered women-folk, who still clasped their children to their bloodstained breasts. Girls who had satisfied the appetite of several heroes lay disembowelled in their last agonies. ... ("Enfin, ... il prit le parti d'aller raisonner ailleurs des effets et des causes. Il passa par dessus des tas de morts et de mourants, et gagna d'abord un village voisin; il était en cendre: c'était un village abare que les

Bulgares avaient brûlé, selon les lois du droit public. Ici des vieillards criblés de coups regardaient mourir leurs femmes égorgées, qui tenaient leurs enfants à leur mamelles sanglantes, là des filles, éventrées après avoir assouvi les besoins naturels de quelques héros, ...")

(Voltaire, 1991: 52)

This passage provides information about the story world more than it shows the narrator's presence. It is principally what Rimmon-Kenan called "description of setting": a "relatively minimal sign of a narrator's presence" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1976: 96). But the narrator's presence is still there: first, the third person reference indicates that the character is fixed in the scene by an outside voice. Besides, the narrator is still speaking with irony, to say the least.

The only action in this passage is Candide's escape from the bloody battlefield. And Candide's escape is ironically presented to be guided by his philosophical reasoning: "Candide decided to find somewhere else to pursue his reasoning into cause and effect". Common sense tells us that a soldier surrounded by bloodshed during a fierce battle will hardly be in a mood to perform any philosophical reasoning. We then realise that this philosophical reasoning is not likely to be the character's mental activity; rather, it is an attribution to Candide's thoughts and deeds by an external voice. Thus the narrator, who resides in a extra-narrative level, is likely to have elaborated such inappropriateness for the production of ironic humour. Humour incongruity here first lies in the *different story contents* posed together: as we said above, fierce battle is incongruous with the pursuit of philosophical reasoning; secondly, incongruity also lies in the *mixed writing styles*: the expression "to pursue his reasoning into cause and effect" (noble, high; calmness) certainly counterpoises such vocabulary as "crippled with wounds" and "bloodstained breasts" (familiar, common; brutality). Several theorists on humour have explained how such mixed styles are used to produce comic effects. Culler once mentioned that when parody functions to produce humour, typically it hovers on the hedge of serious exploration "before teetering back into comic bathos" (Culler, 1975: 153). Sareil also explained that in comic writing, "mixed writing styles" ("mélange des styles") refers to the case of the "simultaneous presence of a noble style and a familiar style, or rather the existence of noble terms juxtaposed with familiar terms on certain occasions" (présence simultanée d'un style noble et d'un style familier, ou plutôt

l'existence de termes nobles et familiers dans des contextes." (Sareil, 1984: 179). The process of humour production "consists in raising the tone of the speech, ... and then suddenly letting it drop by introducing something common and vulgar" ("consiste à élever le ton du discours, ... et à le laisser tomber brusquement, généralement par l'introduction d'une grossièreté" (Sareil, 1984: 179). We notice that it is not the first occurrence of such a clash of styles. We can meet many other examples throughout the whole text: when "cause and effect" goes with "kicks to his behind" in the first Chapter; or when the chain of events in this "best of all possible worlds" goes with "candied fruit and pistachio nuts" in the last chapter. In this humorous text, pedantic wordiness and complex syntax in fact constantly accompany homely and even vulgar vocabulary. It is an important technique for the building-up of the humour register of philosophy and its counterpart in the humour structure. The clash of writing styles is one frequent sub-logic mechanism (cf. Part I, Chapter 4. 2.2.) that serves to unite and neutralise some of the sub-humour registers within the general frame of 'parody'. Governed by the narrative strategy of parody, here is another 'degradation' from a high and serious philosophical register down to a low and non-serious register. Such an occasion is then a sure occurrence of switching to non-seriousness. We should also notice that it is again a *bridge* built with the refrain of "cause and effect".

According to Booth, clash of style is also an important "clue to irony": if a speaker's style departs notably from whatever is supposed to be the normal way of saying a thing, it gives reason to suspect irony (cf. Booth, 1974: 68), or in my arguments, such a style clash could help to reveal the serious meaning of (humorous) irony. We notice that this account by Booth also corresponds with Attardo's statement about how high inappropriateness betrays ironic salience. So the clash of styles in *Candide* is also an important logic mechanism that functions to reveal the real target of mockery under the axis of 'philosophical quest'.

Humour in *Candide* sometimes amounts to *satiric humour*. But when it happens, the comic hero is placed rather distantly from the (narrator's) highly-charged discourse which expresses such antagonism. In other words, the narrator's aggressive discourse is not aimed at the comic hero when this narrative agent becomes really aggressive.

'Juxtaposition of contradictions' is again used for humour production here: a law that commands us to kill people and to burn villages can certainly not considered as "public law"; also soldiers that rape women cannot be called "heroes". As the story world information dwells on the

cruelty of war, it is no longer a counter-balance to the non-serious register so as to neutralise the incongruous to comic effects. As a result, there are comparatively few comic effects engendered and thus little mirth or humour for the implied reader to enjoy here - a local 'switching' that lays bare the target of irony aimed at by the text. We can intuitively feel that the text is funnier when the comic hero's naivety is involved as victim of irony; when the comic hero, despite his weakness, is not really the focus , the mockery launched by the narrator then becomes more violent and the narration becomes more serious. It is in fact a general case throughout the whole text. Here is one such occasion of a humour climax when "switching" contributes more to the revelation of the real target of irony rather than to the funniness of the humour structure.

Re-enforced by the *bridge* built upon the refrain 'cause and effect', the display of the philosophical terms in the beginning and their (repeated) comic degradation afterwards is a strong indication of the real target. The exposure of earthly evils, though with a certain humour, amounts to fierce *satire*. The startling scene of war, like all the other horrors experienced by the characters, is the story event presented to undermine and to criticise eventually the optimistic philosophy in question. In regard to the general humour effect, we say that *it is 'ironic humour' that aims at the comic hero and his naivety; but it is also 'satirical humour' that aims at the optimistic doctrine professed by Dr. Pangloss and the worldly evils that contradict this philosophy.*

The narrator's discourse in *Candide* is often highly charged, i.e., manifested through an overt voice. More often in fact, the narrator just stands out at the front and discharges the ironic humour openly. The following passage is taken from the beginning of Chapter 3, in which we can see how the narrator's voice dominates:

> ...the bayonet provided sufficient reason for the death of several thousand more. The total casualties amounted to about thirty thousand. Candide trembled like a philosopher, and hid himself as best as he could during this heroic butchery. (...La baïonnette fut aussi la raison suffisante de la mort de quelques milliers d'hommes. Le tout pouvait bien se monter à une trentaine de mille âmes. Candide, qui tremblait comme un philosophe, se cacha mieux qu'il put pendant cette boucherie héroïque.)
>
> (Voltaire, 1991: 52)

As I analysed earlier, here once again, pedantic terms like "sufficient reason" are incongruously juxtaposed with other common words as well as the story content presented. The comic climax or switching is mainly engendered by the *simile*: "Candide trembled like a philosopher". According to Genette, using figurative speech to create special language effects is an evident mark of the narrator's "showing up": it is typical of the narrator's speech act when he acts "as analyst, commentator, stylist, ... and in particular when he uses 'metaphor' or any other known figures." ("Présence du narrateur comme ... analyste et commentateur, comme styliste ... et particulièrement - on le sait de reste - comme producteur des 'métaphores'." Genette, 1972: 188). 'Simile' is differentiated from 'metaphor' only in that the two compared items are overtly linked by the word 'like' or other similar terms. Here I should add that, this statement by Genette is only suitable to the case when some figures of speech appear in the narrator's discourse. As we shall see in the third humorous text to be analysed in this thesis, 'simile' or 'metaphor' appear frequently both in the story world and in the narrator's discourse world, and we can not attribute all metaphors to the narrator's discourse.

A 'philosopher' tends to perform abstract meditation, while a 'soldier' is supposed to fight in battle. We can hardly link these two images together without some special reason. But when these two images are unexpectedly placed together because of their capacity for trembling, it first creates comic surprise. Such a logic mechanism in humour production is once again what Attardo called "false analogy": of course both a philosopher and a soldier happen to tremble under certain circumstances, but it is a very marginal aspect of the two entities compared (cf. Attardo, 2002: 13). However, a further significance of this simile concerns more the revelation of the serious meaning of the ironic humour. A soldier who trembles in a battle should be considered as a coward, which is, of course, a negative image. By attaching 'philosopher' to a negative image, the narrator is launching ironic humour against the philosophical doctrine implied. What follows is a 'contradiction' composed of the derogative term "butchery" and the affirmative term "heroic" for ironic purposes. Obviously, "butchery" of human lives can not be considered "heroic".

In terms of *humour structure*, the incongruous elements contained in these comic writings construct various humour registers. The simile in the passage creates a hoist in the humour structure where all serious registers are switched to definite non-seriousness. In terms of the

serious meaning revealed, the usage of philosophical terms in an inappropriate context is once again the narrator's indication of the real object of irony. Derision at the philosophical register only leads to the depreciation of Pangloss' philosophy.

Compared with the rest of the chapter, the delivery of comic effects in this passage is more frequent, and the narrator's ironic voice is more overt. In fact, it sets the narrative orientation for the whole chapter, which in turn coheres with the whole text. This passage is mainly the narrator's 'interpretation of story', which is a kind of narrator's commentary on the story (Chatman, 1978: 237-238; Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 98-99). Once again, if we follow Rimmon-Kenan's suggestion[20] to study the interpreter of the story, we can find two important pieces of information about the narrator's discourse. Firstly, it is about its basic comic tone; secondly, it is about its intended ironic play over the story world. This is why, even when the narrator sometimes becomes covert in the following passages, the comic tone still remains throughout the whole chapter. As irony borders on satire, the real target of ironic humour is not blurred but further exposed.

Such an overt voice in fact dominates the narrator's discourse throughout the whole text. Another example is in chapter 6, when Candide and his professor Pangloss passed by Lisbonne which was then damaged by an earthquake. In order to calm down the earthquake, the authorities of that country decide that some people ought to be burnt as a sacrifice. Candide and Pangloss are chosen for this purpose:

> After diner Dr. Pangloss and his pupil, Candide, were arrested as well, one for speaking and the other for listening with an air of approval. (On vint lier après le dîner le docteur Pangloss et son disciple Candide, l'un pour avoir parlé, et l'autre pour avoir écouté avec un air d'approbation.)
>
> (Voltaire, 1991: 63)

What happened next is that both of them are imprisoned, humiliated and tortured cruelly. We can hardly imagine "speaking" and "listening with an air of approval" as a crime nor that someone doing this should deserve being burnt alive. We can use Attardo's term "missing link" (cf. Attardo, 2002: 11) to label the logic mechanism here. In such case, there is not really any element that unites the incongruity; it only signals some playfulness. The narrator, located in an

extra-narrative level, is casting an ironic look at the story event. Such playfulness also indicates the serious meaning for the implied reader to infer: are not all Candide's sufferings largely due to Pangloss' philosophical teaching and his gullibility about it? As often in the case of mild irony and the strong comic moments of the text, the playfulness in the narrator's narrative meanwhile takes the comic hero as the first victim of irony, but also implies that the folly and falsehood of Pangloss' philosophical teaching is of central importance.

* * * * *

SUMMARY of *CANDIDE*

1. THE PARADOX STRUCTURE OF HUMOUR

In *Candide*, the **implied author's** design is, among other things, to fix the story into a conventional picaresque novel structure. But the story content as conveyed by the story world is quite different from what the story frame presumes. The general logic mechanism that unites and neutralises these two humour registers is among other things *parody* which is a major source of the global irony. This is the 'play' of the implied author's design over the story world, or a primary pair of humour registers of this humorous text. Theorists like Genette have taken little interest in the role of the implied author. The analysis of *Candide* shows that this narrative level can be very important for the understanding of a text. We can hardly understand the major ironic humour if we are not aware of this parody designed by the implied author. Of course, the sources of the ironic humour in the text are multiple. As it is illustrated in the previous text analysis, the narrative structure of humour of the text is a 'spatial' complex network with numerous narrative elements working together.

In this humorous text, many of the comic writing skills in the actual 'telling' of the story that steer the narration away from pure narrative statement come from the **narrator's speech act.** Many of the local logic mechanisms such as 'exaggeration', 'juxtaposition of contradictions', etc. in the narrator's discourse have neutralised various humour incongruities and engendered abundant comic effects. The narrator's discourse often takes joy in poking fun at the characters

confined in the story world. Such play not only largely activates the 'switching' from seriousness to non-seriousness; it also largely contributes to the reversal of the implicit-explicit messages and leads to the revelation of the serious meaning of the ironic humour.

The story world alone also provides abundant humour registers: the paradoxical structure in terms of the actantial model, the fantastic atmosphere building so as to deprive the story events of realistic illusion, etc. The comic hero Candide portrayed with little psychological interest is often the local victim of humorous irony and furnishes much funniness.

Paradox lies in the fact that the incongruous humour registers are all to certain degree both relevant and inappropriate to the context (cf. again Attardo's formulation of irony, Part I, Chapter 4, 2.1.; and Palmer's formulation of humour: "the logic of the absurd", Part I, Chapter 1, 2.3.); it also lies in the constant implicit-explicit reversal both with regard to the humour structure and to the revelation of the serious meaning.

2. THE PORTRAIT OF THE COMIC HERO

Candide is a traditional comic character in so far as he has 'candide' or naivety as his single trait. The portrait of this character is constructed around two major axes: his 'love quest' and his 'philosophical quest'. The pathetic story material about his misadventures is however deprived of tragic colour due to the various logic mechanisms that unite and neutralise the humour incongruity for comic effects. It is true that Candide is often the local victim of the ironic humour. But the main function of this portrait is to assist in the revelation of the real object of irony. When the victim who "really is 'innocent' and confidently assumes nothing is wrong," the ironist, i.e., the implied author together with his accomplice the narrator, frees the character from being the real object of irony (cf. Muecke, 1969: 33). As a result, the philosophical doctrine of 'optimism' as falsely claimed by the title, advocated by Pangloss and naively believed by Candide is exposed to be the real target of irony. "We must go and cultivate in our garden" pronounced by Candide is the last voice of the text. It promotes a realistic attitude against Pangloss' false optimism. This claim also signifies the positive transformation of the comic hero. In brief, the *serious meaning* revealed by the narrative structure of humour in this text then conveys that Candide, the comic hero, is mainly an innocent victim who is capable of positive transformation.

[1] Voltaire (1947) Candide or Optimism, trans. John Butt, London: Penguin Books.

[2] According to Genette, "imitation" for amusement without any real mocking purposes is "pastiche". See my introduction to various inter-textual dialogic forms in the beginning of *The British Museum is Falling Down* analysis.

[3] While studying the comic characters in classic comedies as typified in some of Molière's works and in Voltaire's *Candide*, Sareil notes that many of these characters have limited traits, whether as physical traits or moral traits. Such simplicity favours the production of comic effects through "repetition" and "variation". As he says, "En général, la description des protagonistes de romans comiques est brève et se limite à quelques traits, physiques ou moraux. ... en rappelant un trait, toujours le même, fixent le personnage dans l'esprit du lecteur et permettent de jolis effets de répétitions et de variations" (Sareil, 1984: 67).

[4] The comic nature of the main character is not certain yet in the beginning of the text.

[5] A typical case of such comic (anti-)heroes exists in Jewish literature and are called "schlemiels" which I studied in my DEA thesis. Cf. Stora-Sandor (1984), Theodor Reik (1962) and Ezra Greenspan (1983).

[6] The "evaluative item" concerning the character in a text is to be examined around the positive or the negative pole (Hamon: 1983: 184; cf. Part I, Chapter 5. 1.)

[7] Cf. Part I, Chapter 4. 1. 2. and see J. Cohen's theory about the difference between humour and non-humour narrative, and his idea of "neutralisation" and its function in humour.

[8] "Pangloss" means '(learned) commentary on everything'.

[9] Todorov lays stress on the state of mind of the (implied) reader. He defines the fantastic as a hesitation between two possible interpretations of events, esp. between what natural law can define and events which appear to be supernatural ("le fantastique, c'est l'hésitation éprouvée par un être qui ne connaît que des lois naturelles, face à un événement en apparence surnaturel" (cf. Todorov, 1970: 5).

[10] Cf. Chapter 3. 5. of Part I.

[11] Exaggeration can also play with reverse through *indifference*, or it uses the same tone to refer to things or views that have little relation with each other. (Cf. "L'exagération joue aussi à l'envers sous la forme d'*indifférence*, ou encore par l'emploi d'un ton uni qui met sur le même plan des objets ou des points de vues sans rapport." Sareil 1984:182).

[12] According to Attardo, the 'logic mechanism' functioning to produce humour "can range from straightforward *juxtaposition* (Attardo and Raskin 1991: 307) or *analogy*, which can be far fetched ... to more complex errors in reasoning..." (Attardo, 2002: 5).

[13] Palmer explains how an "entertainment sign" or a "cue" (the social category of entertainment) is primarily extra-diegetic; but he does also allow for the possibility that such sign or cue may be a semantic feature of the text, as shown in some of his comedy analysis (cf. Palmer, 1994: 100-104; see Part I Chapter 1. 2.4. of this thesis).

[14] Not all characters are by definition imprisoned in the story world, though it is mostly the case in the three humorous texts analysed in this thesis when the intellectual characters become the victim of irony launched from the narrator's discourse or mocked at by the general story structure as designed by the implied author. As for other different cases, cf. Part I, Chapter 2.2.2., footnote 9.

[15] See the end of chapter 3, Part I.

[16] Cf. footnote 3.

[17] Palmer may not agree with the analysis by Sareil here, since there are many comic sequences where it is absolutely inevitable that 'something' will come to pass, and it does: the suspense involved is waiting to see when and exactly how it will happen, and the surprise is not that it is not expected, but that it ought not to happen (cf. Palmer,

1987: 46).

[18] Cf. Part I, chapter 6.

[19] Chatman says: "'presentation' is the most neutral word I can find for the narrator's activity. As part of the invention of the text, the implied author assigns to a narrative agent the task of articulating it, of actually offering it to some projected or inscribed audience (the narratee)" (Chatman, 1990: 116).

[20] Cf. analysis of Axis I. 2., Chapter 1. 2. above.

CHAPTER 2

THE BRITISH MUSEUM IS FALLING DOWN[1]

B.M.F. is an example of 'campus fiction'[2]. 'Campus fiction' as a special phenomena in English literature traditionally/typically "presents the university as an isolated community peopled mainly by pathetic clowns" (Björk, 1993: 9). By this definition the portrait of the main characters in such fiction already presumes a *paradox*: "pathetic" suggests tragic while "clowns" tend to be comic.

The *comic hero* of this humorous text is called Adam Appleby. He is a PhD student working on contemporary literature. The *story* tells how he is lost in a whole day's endless nightmare of wondering. The *plot* is episodic. It follows Adam Appleby through the tumultuous events accompanied by his agonising worry that his wife may be pregnant again (they already have four children) and another major worry about the completion of his thesis which could decide his academic future. His nightmare is made more pointed by his failure to do any academic work and the special practical and financial crisis which another child would precipitate. Unlike Candide, this character is to a certain degree conscious of his dilemma. The ironic situation he is put in bewilders him, makes him suffer, and moulds his (split) personality.

The general effects of irony in this text also take on a new dimension compared with *Candide*. In *Candide*, as we concluded, the humorous writing in the portrayal of the comic hero on one hand produces moderate irony towards this character; but on the other hand it also serves to produce fierce satirical humour towards the philosophy of optimism and the worldly evils that contradict this philosophical doctrine. The ironic humour in *B.M.F.* on the contrary does not lead to any definite criticism. Though Yaari does not cite *B.M.F.* when he comments on the irony in many 'modern' literary works, he does use the term 'paradoxical irony' to summarise similar phenomena. In addition, Yaari draws our attention to the comic aspect of such irony. Yaari notes that irony in numerous modern literary works is dominated by paradoxical indecision and an irrational spirit is expressed through frivolous games. Its morality and aesthetics are essentially playful and can fit into no fixed system but 'paradox' (cf. Yaari, 1990: 126)[3]. We shall see in *B.M.F.* that the ironic humour structure exposes multiple referential dimensions rather than presenting a definite and aggressive standard; the

serious meaning revealed from this humour structure is directed at nothing for definite negation or criticism. Such uncertainty is the central point in the portrayal of the comic hero in *B.M.F.*.

* * * * *

In the following textual analysis of *B.M.F.*, Bakhtin's term 'dialogue' will be used to refer to the relationship among many of the important humour registers which are considered as the functional components of the humour structure in the text. 'Dialogue' is then an important narrative strategy that governs the narrative structure of the text; it is also a major logic mechanism by which the principal humour registers are brought together in this humorous text.

- **'DIALOGUE' AS INTER-TEXTUAL RELATIONSHIP**

'Dialogue' is a concept originally developed by Bakhtin. According to Bakhtin, "dialogue is the defining feature of the signs passed between humans" (Cobley, 2001: 230). 'Dialogism' stems from the Formalist ideas that all works can be defined only in relation with other works. Bakhtin developed such ideas to claim that any statement can be conceived only in relation to other statements or to a 'déjà dit' (what is already said). Todorov summarises it thus: "the most basic principle is that *any* relationship between two statements is inter-textual" ("au niveau le plus élémentaire, est intertextuel *tout* rapport entre deux énoncés." Todorov, 1981: 95). In this sense, dialogue can be omnipresent, but for Bakhtin there exist certain types of discourses, genres and literary works where the function of dialogue predominates.

Following Julia Kristeva who used the term 'intertextuality' as a label for Bakhtin's dialogism, Gérard Genette further exploits the inter-textual relationship in his book *Palimpsestes* (Genette, 1982) by introducing the term 'transtexuality'. 'Transtextuality' for Genette refers to "anything that can, manifestly or secretly, relate one text to other texts." ["tout ce qui le (un texte) met en relation, manifeste ou secrète, avec d'autres textes." Genette, *Palimpsestes* 1982: 7]. Genette's "transtextuality" contains five major categories. The first category is "intertextuality" which refers to the co-presence of two or several texts, as in the case of quotation, plagiarism, or allusion. The second category is "paratextuality" in which the inter-textual relationship is found in the other parts outside the main body of the text, such as

titles, preface, etc.. The third category is "metatextuality" in which the inter-textual relationship is manifested by certain kind of 'commentary' without direct reference to the other text. The fifth category is "architextuality" in which the inter-text relationship mainly has to do with the ambiguity of literary genre. Genette gave a more detailed discussion to the fourth category which is "hypertextuality". This category includes all other modes except 'commentary' that unite a text B and a precedent text A onto which text B is grafted" ("tout relation unissant un text B à un texte antérieur A sur lequel il se greffe d'une manière qui n'est pas celle du commentaire" Genette, 1982: 11-12) For Genette, the distinction between "imitation" and "transformation" is essential here. By "transformation" Genette means the "simple" or "direct transformation" of a text which "mainly has to do with another text and secondly with another style, while imitation on the contrary mainly has to do with another style and secondly with another text." ("a essentiellement à faire à un texte, et accessoirement à un style; inversement l'imitateur a essentiellement affaire à un style, et accesoirement à un texte." Genette, 1982: 89) This distinction introduces some further clarification into the term 'parody'. Genette then further states that "pastiche" belongs to "imitation" and "parody" belongs to "transformation". The main humour structure of *Candide*, for instance, is principally an ironic imitation of a well-known literary style (see the previous chapter), and it is only one particular dialogic form. If we use Genette's term, it is "pastiche" rather than "parody". Compared with *Candide*, both "imitation" and "transformation" are to be found as the inter-textual dialogic form in *B.M.F.*. In other words, some of the inter-textual dialogue is a verbal 'play' against (part of) an actual text, while some other inter-textual dialogue is a 'play' against a literary style at large.

Genette also used the term "regime" to differentiate the "intention" of texts. For Genette, there are texts either *with or without the intention of amusement*. Such a difference had been very often ignored when terms like 'parody' were considered only as 'figures' (see Part I, Chapter 5). He then defines some categories of "regime" that range from pure amusement without aggressive or mocking intent to the very serious (cf. Genette, 1982: 36). Nonetheless, Genette is not clear enough in the definition of such categories. As far as this thesis is concerned, Genette's book *Palimpsestes* still does not provide a distinction between humorous texts and non-humorous texts. For example, the three categories "playful, satirical, and serious" ("ludique, satirique, sérieux") in the table on page 37 of *Palimpsestes* are meant to show the range from pure amusement to pure seriousness. Then on page 39 of the book Genette gives another table with six categories which are "humorous, playful, ironical,

satirical, polemical and serious" ("humoristique, ludique, ironique, satirique, polémique, sérieux"). The division in the second table is meant to be "more flexible and less crude" ("plus souple et moins brutal" Genette, 1982: 38). But in neither case did he illustrate the relationship between irony and humour, nor did he explore the production process of comic effect in the case of humorous irony. Of course, humour study is not Genette's main object in this book. The inspiration that Genette's theory can give us is a combined study of irony and humour as hyper-determined or pre-designed in the text. As for the relationship between the two notions, a theoretical approach is given in Chapter 4 of Part I where a preliminary definition of 'irony' is provided for the humorous text analysis in this thesis. Just to repeat here, 'irony' can either produce comic effect or not produce such effects; and it is the former case under discussion in this thesis. 'Irony' for this thesis also implies a mild mockery that does not lead to fierce criticism of the comic heroes. In this sense, 'ironic humour' is the general term that involves all the comic effects regarding the intellectual characters in the humorous texts discussed in this thesis.

- **'DIALOGUE' AS 'DOUBLE' IN ITS THEME DEVELOPMENT**

When Morace used the term "double novel" (Morace, 1989: 132) to summarise the texture of this novel, he was emphasising the conflation of many very different contexts against which the story is developed in this text. These contexts often form pairs of opposing themes within the text: sex and religion, realism and parody, life and literature, etc. confront each other in permanence and very often meet in duel with equal force. They are deliberately pitted against each other to form a universe of disturbance within which any ironic truth should be sought. Based on the assumption of such double perspectives, the construction of the humour structure and the revelation of the serious meaning in this humorous text are to be explored under two major axes in dialogue in the following text analysis (see 2.2. below).

- **'DIALOGUE' AS THE INTERIOR WORLD OF THE COMIC HERO**

Bakhtin considers that novels constitute the best dialogic form, because there is the 'who' that speaks and the 'what' that is spoken (cf. Bakhtin, 1978: 101-102; Sangsue, 1994: 37-38; Todorov, 1981: 95-96; Cobley, 2001: 230). In Bakhtin's view, Dostoïevski's works reached the peak of dialogism in this literary form because he created the "polyphonic" novel.

Such novels are regarded as a genre that values the multiplicity of voices and consciousness that are independent of each other without being confused" ("multiplicité de voix et de conscience indépendantes et non confondues" Bakhtin, 1970: 10) regarding the interior world presentation of certain characters. Bakhtin's analysis of Dostoïevski's novels provided a special insight into the kind of characters whose split-ego is a preoccupation in the novel. For Bakhtin, the main characters' self-consciousness in Dostoïevski's novels is in permanent dialogue: their existential form is an intensive communication and interaction between different and even contradictory voices within the character's interior world (cf. Bakhtin, 1970: 295). To study such dialogism, he listed three general categories[4], and each of these categories has in turn other detailed classifications. The split-ego of the comic hero Adam Appleby in *B.M.F.* will be a central topic in my discussion. Though Dostoïevski's novels are for the most part far from comic, the characters in his novels are close to Adam in one respect: they are all literary figures full of contradiction. In Bakhtin's study of Dostoïevski's characters, "the chief subject of our investigation, one could even say its chief hero, will be double-voiced discourse, which inevitably arises under conditions of dialogic interaction" (Bakhtin, 1984: 185). Similarly, the coming analysis of the comic hero Adam will also lay emphasis on the double-voiced discourse in the narrative structure for the portrayal of this character. In this sense, Bakhtin's theory of dialogism regarding the analysis of such characters is particularly significant for the present analysis of *B.M.F.* and the study of its main character.

* * * * *

To use Bakhtin's term, the paradox structure of humour in *B.M.F.* is realised mainly through 'dialogue'. Morace, while studying some contemporary dialogic novels including this one, states that such texts are "conflations or more accurately dialogues - involving various and often conflicting views, styles, and forms" (Morace, 1989: xiii). This multiple dialogue contains the incongruity developed in the themes or 'axes', the incongruity in the play of the inter-textual relationships as well as in the portrayal of the complex comic hero. In this context, the term 'discourse' may also take on a larger dimension. As Bakhtin explains, "'discourse' here means language in its concrete living totality, and not language as the specific object of linguistics, something arrived at through a completely legitimate and necessary abstraction from various aspects of the concrete life of the word" (Bakhtin, 1984: 181).

According to Genette's concept of "regime" in his theory of "transtextuality", *B.M.F.*

will be considered as a text intended for the production of comic effect as part of the implied author's design. To be more precise, the various 'dialogue' effects in this text are largely intended for amusement; and if there is any aggressiveness, it is moderate and is headed for 'compromise'. As Björk commented: "the most celebrate theme in this type of literature is *compromise* - the major driving force of the novel" (Lambertson Björk 1993: 73). Such 'compromise' will be the central point of the serious meaning revealed by the humour structure; it also reflects the very paradoxical nature of the ironic humour regarding the comic hero in this text. We should be aware that 'dialogue' does not necessarily provoke humour, and Bakhtin's postulation of this concept is based on Dostoievski's works which are largely serious texts. Therefore, many other humour skills are to be searched for and studied during our analysis of this humorous text.

The Implied Author's Design

1. The Title of the Book

The title literally tells of a catastrophic event, and in parallel the text tells a story about the main character's one day's adventure which is also filled with catastrophic incidents. On the other hand, this title has a strong reference to the first line of a very popular nursery song in England which goes "London Bridge is falling down, falling down, falling down ..."[5]. To use Genette's terms, the inter-textual relationship here is meanwhile "intertextuality" and "paratextuality"; i.e., it plagiarises (or parodies) that well-known nursery song and its location is exterior to the main body of the text. Since the *B.M.F.* is neither a children's book nor a book about children's songs, such a reference sets a comic tone for the whole text. A story of catastrophic incidents told in a comic tone is a basic humour incongruity of the text.

By alluding to a famous nursery song, the title is also providing the first clue to irony. Wayne C. Booth, while discussing the clues to irony, called our attention to certain formulations of titles. When a title contains obvious inappropriateness, it can be a "straightforward warning" from the implied author. Here the implied author is giving a direct invitation to its implied reader: my text is going to be tricky, or the character is going to be trapped... I invite you to stand out here with me and work out the irony as we go along (Booth, 1974: 53-54). Such a direct and unmistakable invitation should not be ignored, and "only the most careless of readers will fail to make use of such aids when they are offered"

(Booth, 1974: 53). Of course, the true nature of the irony is in suspense at this stage of the text, and the portrait of the comic hero can only be unfolded through the construction of the text.

2. The Story Structure in Dialogue with Joyce's *Ulysses*

The story structure of *B.M.F.* is principally in dialogue with James Joyce's long novel *Ulysses*. The implied author of *B.M.F.* is taking James Joyce's *Ulysses* as model for the construction of a new story. So the dominant narrative strategy is 'pastiche', though it may involve some local 'parody'. The story structures of these two texts are quite similar. Like *Ulysses*, the story in *B.M.F.* is also about the main character's wandering in a capital city (Dublin in *Ulysses*; London in *B.M.F.*) and within one day's time. Like Bloom in *Ulysses*, Adam Appleby is also an anti-hero with a religious affiliation (Bloom is Jewish; Adam Catholic) and an anxious obsession about his wife (Bloom about his wife's possible infidelity; Adam Appleby about his wife's possible pregnancy).

To use Genette's term, this dialogic form is primarily a 'pastiche' which is a form of *imitation* for amusement. 'Pastiche' is then the key logic mechanism that unites and neutralises the main humour incongruity in the story structure.

Genette offered two terms to differentiate two playful forms that had been fused in 'parody' alone. According to Genette, 'pastiche' is a form of *imitation* while 'parody' is a form of *transformation*. The function of 'parody' is to play upon an original text on the literal level (thus 'transformation'), whereas 'pastiche' pays homage to an original text model by hijacking its whole form but keeping a substantial distance from its literal surface (thus 'imitation') (cf. Genette, 1982: 85). In this case, "it is impossible to imitate directly. One can only imitate indirectly by practising its style in another text … by taking the original model as a model, i.e., as a genre." (il est impossible d'imiter un texte, on ne peut l'imiter qu'indirectement, en pratiquant son style dans un autre texte … en traitant le texte comme un modèle, c'est-à-dire, comme un genre." (Genette, 1982: 90-91). Therefore, the conductor of 'pastiche' must "chew and digest" (Genette, 1982: 90) the original model first, master it well as a genre so as to create another new text.

Genette further clarifies that "pastiche is imitation in a regime of playfulness, and its dominant function is *pure entertainment*." ("le pastiche est l'imitation en régime ludique, dont la fonction dominante est le pur divertissement." (Genette, 1982: 92). Though theoretically

speaking it could be 'satirical' against a model, there also exists the case when no real target is necessary in such playfulness. When the playing is for playing's sake only, 'pastiche' becomes an imitation of a style for comic effect *par excellence* (cf. Genette, 1982: 92-93). In *Candide*, the imitation of the picaresque genre is not meant to mock at what it is modelled on, though there exists the *possibility* of mockery aimed at the modelled literary genre in the case of parody; in *B.M.F.* similarly, its 'dialogue' with *Ulysses* in the story structure does not lead to a degradation of the background text. It is in fact one of the literary jokes in this text, and it even tends to be a homage instead of devaluation. As Genette says, pastiche is "a kind of protective if not salutary censorship" ("une sorte de censure protectrice - je ne dis pas salutaire..." (Genette, 1982: 87). However, unlike the 'parody' (in the classic sense) in *Candide*, it does not really lead to any true mockery, either. In the end it is the 'dialogue' itself that prevails; there is neither affirmation nor negation to whatever is involved in the 'dialogue'. This is the very paradox of the ironic humour in this text.

'Pastiche' functions as the 'general narrative strategy' for humour in *B.M.F.*. Pastiche in this text may go so far as to involve some 'local parody', i.e., a play upon the literal presentation of the original text. An example is the ending of the text (see Axis I. 1 below for the detailed analysis).

In *B.M.F* this function of 'entertainment' or playfulness is intended for *ironic humour*, in which aggressiveness is less important than the providing of comic effect. As Björk explains, parody in this text "is not mocking the authority of the background text" and it "does not aim at ridiculing or belittling" (Björk, 1993: 85). Then it leads us to consider the *serious meaning* implied by this 'dialogue' with *Ulysses* in the story structure. Such dialogue in fact contributes to what I introduced as 'general irony' or 'infinite irony' (see Part I, Chapter 5, 2.3.) Bakhtin's words are again appropriate: "The word in language is half somebody else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention" (Bakhtin, 1985: 293).

The paradox of ironic humour through 'dialogue' in the story structure is to be amplified by the multiple narrative worlds in interaction: in the story world it is expressed by the 'uncertainty' of the comic hero's personality; in the narrator's discourse world it is expressed by the narrator's ironic attitude towards the character imprisoned in his story world. Hyper-determined by the implied author's intelligence, what is conveyed by the ironic humour has more to do with a general human condition than with the comic hero's weakness alone.

3. Two Axes in Dialogue: Adam Appleby as a Modern Comic Hero

Unlike classic comic characters such as Candide, the comic hero in *B.M.F.* does not consist of a single trait alone, nor is he totally unrealistic.

Within the *story level*, the comic hero is presented as caught in a permanent dilemma or 'impossible situations'. What is unrealistic in the story world is however largely due to the character's 'literary fantasy' (see Axis II below). To a certain degree, the comic hero himself is conscious of it, and he can also adopt an attitude of self-irony towards his situation. The paradox structure of humour within this narrative level shows the comic hero's split ego and his consequent contradictory behaviour as his *personality*. The comic mode within the story level is in a way the character's reconciliation of his interior contradictions; it is also his ironic attitude towards the incongruity of the universe in general.

With regard to the general humour structure, the comic hero is not only caught in the story world, he is also caught by the narrator's discourse world. The ironic humour may locally take the comic hero as the victim of irony, but the text does not expose this character as the eventual object of definite criticism.

'Dialogue' is omnipresent in this humorous text. In the following, the discussion will address *two major axes*. In this text, each axis is considered to contain two items which function as counterparts in the 'dialogue'. Together they make up the two important pairs of humour registers related to an important subject of the text. The two main axes we shall explore are 'sex quest ←→ religion' and 'literary quest ←→ real life'. As in the analysis of *Candide*, the quoted passages chosen for analysis are considered as important micro-narratives related to the construction of both the humour structure and the serious meaning of the text. Under each axis, passages analysed are considered to form a main *strand* as they are related to the general subject matter which is the axis title.

Axis I: Sex Quest ←→ Religion

In this humorous text, the comic character's sex quest goes with his religious dilemma. Among other things, this double theme in turn contributes to the general dialogic narrative strategy for humour production. As Wenche once remarked on this text: "sex on the one hand,

religion on the other, emerge as extended metaphors through which is presented a running commentary on the art of fiction" (Wenche 1990: 123-124). Hence 'sex' and 'religion' as the two poles of the dialogue are *the two major humour registers* to be discussed under this axis. The *main strand*, with all the humorous micronarratives chosen for analysis, is tied to the central humour incongruity between the religious register (high, sober; life-restricting) and sexual register (low, or even vulgar, non-serious, but life-affirming), though this strand may involve other sub- and minor humour registers.

Axis I. 1. The Paradox Structure of Humour in the Story World

Under this axis, the 'what' as revealed by the story world alone consists mostly of serious story materials that tend to be tragic. Adam Appleby, the comic hero, is a person overwhelmed by various worries. His first worry is his sexual life. Adam can not enjoy his sexual life normally because Catholic doctrine prohibits artificial contraception. Yet his limited financial condition and his PhD study project necessitate efficient birth control in this family. Adam is then caught in a very embarrassing situation.

Axis I. 1. 1. In Terms Of the 'Actantial Model'

While analysing the portrayal of certain complex characters in Dostoievski's novels, Bakhtin discussed the dialogic relationship between self and other *inside* these characters' consciousness. Bakhtin's dialogism calls our attention to the fact that neither of the various aspects in dialogue can constitute a self-sufficient entity. We shall discover in *B.M.F.* a closely related phenomenon: the confusion of contradictory voices lost in the consciousness of the main character. The result is that the dialogue itself dominates, which will not mellow the comic hero.

The story under this axis is mainly about Adam's sufferings in his sexual life. This trouble more precisely is due to his interior contradictions: his sexual desire collides with his religious conviction. This dilemma again fits into the permanent predicament of intellectual characters in general: theory hinders practice in life. Compared with the 'actantial model' presented in *Candide* analysis where Candide's philosophical or love quest is mainly hindered by exterior forces, here it is the comic hero himself that is the main obstacle in his pursuit in

life. When the roles of opposing forces are taken by one persona, the interpretation through the 'actantial model' then must be considered differently:

(sexual) object (wife, etc.)

↑

subject of desire (Adam) ← opponent (Adam)

↑ ↑

'register' of sex (in dialogue with) 'register' of religion

'Dialogue' as incarnated by the very personality of this character is displayed clearly by this model. It is one of the dialogic forms that Bakhtin examines: "dialogical relationships are also possible toward one's own utterance as a whole, toward its separate parts and toward an individual word within it" (Bakhtin, 1984: 184). In this case, as Bakhtin explains, the inner self of the character is thoroughly dialogical: "the basic schema for dialogue is the opposition of 'I' to 'the other'" (Bakhtin, 1984: 251). This is the basic feature of this comic hero, for "comedy is based on contrast, or incongruity" (Lodge, 1984: 134). We also notice from the above 'actantial model' that there is no transformation of the main character. As Björk says, "Adam as a character is not allowed to mature in the novel. There is no textual evidence of this potential" (Björk, 1993: 87). So dialogue here is used "not as a means but as an end in itself. Dialogue here is not the threshold to action, it is the action itself. It is not a means for revealing, for bringing to the surface the already-made character, of a person; no, in a dialogue, a person not only shows himself outwardly, but he becomes for the first time what he is - not only for others, but for himself as well" (Bakhtin, 1984: 251).

We may enrich the meaning of the actantial model by investigating the three 'actantial spheres'. Then the dialogic form in the portrayal of this rather inactive actant can be further interpreted as below:

In the sphere of **knowing**, Adam is the 'subject' of 'knowing' the religious law; meanwhile, he is also the 'subject' of 'not-knowing' what to choose and what to do in his sexual life.

In the sphere of **longing**, Adam is the 'subject' of sexual desire as well as the 'subject' of asceticism.

In the sphere of **power**, Adam is very good at idle talk and day dreaming, but is incapable of any effective action.

It is clear that Adam's trouble is due to his contradictory personality, and this weakness lasts throughout the whole text. Paradoxically, such contradiction is also his way of maintaining his psychological survival despite his dilemma. The paradoxical humour about this comic hero first lies in this weakness; what heightens this tension is the coexistence of multiple 'double' discourses in the text.

Axis I. 1. 2. The Initial Neutralisation of the Humour Registers in 'Interior Dialogue':

"**Interior dialogue**" is a term created by Bakhtin in his theory of dialogism. Its prime interest lies in the examination of the interior world of certain complex characters. This is Bakhtin's attempted explanation: "Let us imagine two extremely intensive arguments of a dialogue, word against anti-word, instead of following each other and being pronounced from two different mouths, are applied one upon another and are fused in a SINGLE statement in a SINGLE mouth"[6] (Bakhtin, 1970: 244), or in a SINGLE mind when it is not pronounced aloud.

Bakhtin's statement on this "interior dialogue" is based on the analysis of some characters in Dostoievski's works, and most of them are far from comic. With regard to the comic hero in *B.M.F.* which is a text dominated by ironic humour, the 'dialogue' is not so intensive, and the confrontation of the 'word' and 'anti-word' is not so fierce. As Bakhtin stated, we can see in the text that Adam's self-consciousness often goes in a double (even multiple) orientation. The 'interlocutors' in his speech acts actualise different facets of this personality. It is his dialogue with 'an alter ego' within himself. At the same time, all the dialogic items necessitate additional measures to become comic materials. As we shall discover gradually, various general and logic mechanisms are adopted to assist in the neutralisation of the incongruous elements in dialogue. Only then can this dialogue lead to the paradox of ironic humour.

Under the axis of 'sex quest ←→ religion', it is not the fear of hell nor any problems with accepting the Holy Trinity that cause Adam Appleby 's sufferings in his relation to the Catholic church. As we said earlier, the problem comes from the Catholic teaching on

contraception and Adam's incapability in daily practice. This problem seems trivial compared to the serious religious context. Yet it has put so much strain on Adam Appleby's nerves and he makes so much fuss about it.

In the presentation of this story, the dialogue is carried out mainly between the theme of 'religion' and the theme of 'sex'. 'Religion' and 'sex' could co-exist in anybody's life in harmony, only they become extraordinarily *incongruous* aspects in Adam's life. As a result, in the humour structure to be explored under the present axis, each of these two items becomes an important humour register in constant dialogue with the other. While these two entities make up the two primary humour registers, some other mechanisms are involved in the humour production process. Here we may use Sareil's term "**profanation**" ("désacralisation") to name the major relationship and the union between 'sex' and 'religion' in the comic writing. Sareil once explained that "profanation presumes a situation where two delicate subjects come into contact and it is usually difficult or even dangerous to deal with them together. The comic is then favoured by a certain lack of liberty. Once we pass the limits, we arrive at irreverence. This explains to a certain degree why the comic is in its element when there are authoritarian restrictions ... especially when we touch on subjects like religion." ("La désacralisation suppose des sujets auxquels il est difficile ou dangereux de toucher. Le comique est donc favorisé par un certain manque de liberté qui, en lui ôtant les coudées franches, donne un aspect irrévérencieux à ses pointes. Cela explique dans certaine mesure que le comique s'est spécialement imposé sous des régimes autoritaires ...surtout lorsqu'elle s'en prenait à certains sujets, comme la religion" Sareil, 1984: 25). In this case, the mockery challenges the authoritarian restrictions. Contradictions then soon emerge. This mockery in its essence expresses contempt, for it defies the authority that pretends to be the representative of the universal truth (cf. "la moquerie est légère, elle combat la lourdeur. Mais aussitôt une première contradiction surgit. Par le seul fait de ne pas adopter l'optique universelle, elle est, par nature, irrespectueuse." Sareil, 1984: 22). In *B.M.F.*, this contradiction stems from the interior struggle of the comic hero and amounts to a paradox of ironic humour. The text is interwoven with the solemn and serious discourse of Catholic doctrine and the discourse of Adam's sexual problem which tends to reduce the former discourse's value. Nevertheless, this "profanation" is so mild in *B.M.F.* that the 'challenge' to the authority is only a humorous play. We remember that in *Candide*, when the philosophy of optimism hinders Candide's various quest in life and becomes meanwhile an important component of the humour structure, this philosophy is eventually revealed to be the real target for mockery and negation.

The cases are different in *B.M.F.*: none of the incongruous elements in dialogue, whether as the subject matter or other narrative aspects of the text, is aimed at for definite mockery or criticism. We shall see that this principle of dialogism is relevant in the analysis of the other axes as well.

Bakhtin's in his work *Rabelais and His World* (1984) introduced how clowns and fools, which often figure in Rabelais' novel, are characteristic of the medieval culture of humour. "They were the constant, accredited representatives of the carnival spirit in everyday life out of the carnival season" (Bakhtin, 1984). Bakhtin continues to explain the basic features and the nature of the mocking forms of humour in this carnival type. On one hand, humour expressed in such festivals provides a complete freedom "from all religious and ecclesiastic dogmatism, from all mysticism and piety" (Bakhtin, 1984). We can find "numerous parodies and travesties, humiliations, profanations, comic crownings and uncrownings which express a sense of gay relativity of prevailing truths and authorities. One might say that carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions" (Bakhtin, 1984). However, such humour on the other hand is basically positive rather than hostile, for the festivity also accompanies a profound belief in what is being mocked, even when certain carnival forms parody the Church's cult [also cf. Palmer (1994): Chapter1 & 2.]. Then we can go further with the comparison between the gentle mockery as in *B.M.F.* and the kind of outright aggressive mockery as in *Candide*. In *Candide*, the (moderate) ironic humour directed at the comic hero does lead to the revelation of the real object(s) aimed at for (fierce) satiric mockery. The aggressive humour in this text not only condemns the philosophy of optimism which does not correspond with reality, it also censures other authorities in the society including political or religious power. In *B.M.F.* however, when the "comic clown" is lost in his whimsical imagination or when he is indulgent in his lofty and scholarly talk, it is often a moment of 'carnival feast' for him. His imagination or speeches often play upon the taboo imposed by Catholic restrictions. In a sense, his meeting with his friends, who are also the same type of intellectual characters as him (see analysis below), or his attempted (but unsuccessful) adultery with Virginia (see analysis in Axis II. 2. 2.) are a modern version of 'carnival festival', i.e., a momentary escape from the Catholic routine. These episodes of the story are presented with striking humour which is constructed at the expense of Catholic authority. In Adam's story, violation of Catholic rules or adultery is still too threatening to be granted the status of actuality. "Profanation" of the 'sacred' does not lead to the renaissance of

any new ideas nor a transformation or maturity of the comic character in question. Björk also used some of Bakhtin's key ideas from his book on Rabelais in his discussion of some campus novels by the same author. As Björk points out in his analysis of these intellectual characters, their fear "functions as confirmation of rules and values that are forever unchangeable" (Björk, 1993: 106). Generally speaking, this type of mockery "does not suggest that these characters are seen by their authors as exceptional, pernicious and requiring to be eliminated. On the contrary, they are presented as absolutely normal, typical and acceptable. ... or like the carnivalesque, they 'reify the status quo'" (Björk, 1993: 92).

Now we will look at the story world to search for some initial neutralisation of the humour registers through "interior dialogue". Adam and his wife practice the only form of "family planning" allowed by the Catholic church which is the "temperature method". But Barbara's period is three days overdue, and this method seems to be failing them again for the fourth time. As we know, Adam's moderate income can not afford a continuously enlarged family, which in turn threatens his PhD study project. This is what Adam is basically racked by from the very beginning of the day. This is the beginning of the story in Chapter 1 of the text. While waiting for his morning tea in the kitchen, Adam "mentally composed" an article that he imagined "for a Martian Encyclopaedia compiled after life on earth had been destroyed by atomic warfare":

> As far as the Western Hamisphere is concerned, it appears to have been characterised by a complex system of sexual taboos and rituals. Intercourse between married partners was restricted to certain periods determined by the calendar and the body temperature of the female. Martian archaeologists have learnt to identify the domiciles of Roman Catholics by the presence of large numbers of complicated graphs, calendars, small booklets full of figures, and quantities of broken thermometers, evidence of the great importance attached to this code. Some scholars have argued that it was merely a method of limiting the number of offspring; but as it has been conclusively proved that the Roman Catholics produced more children on average than any other section of the community, this seems untenable. Other doctrines of the Roman Catholics included a belief in a Divine Redeemer and in a life after death.
>
> (Lodge, 1981:12)

This passage is the character's mind's product without the narrator's intervention. In his intense interior dialogue, the comic hero is aware how Roman Catholicism has reduced sex into mechanical processing. Not only does the contraceptive method for Catholics hinder normal life, it also fails to reach the goal of family planning. Meanwhile, Catholic authority remains strong and unshaken in Adam's consciousness.

Humour first comes from Adam's interpretation of Catholics' sexual life. 'Sex' is (implicitly) compared to "complicated graphs, calendars, small booklets full of figures, and quantities of broken thermometers". These are usually very different matters and can hardly be associated with each other. A little common sense can make us understand that sex can be anything but mechanical. This association may appear to be more senseless for a man like Adam who has known much romance at least in his modern literature study (see 'Axis II' below). Regarding the local humour structure, 'sex' discourse makes up the first humour register and the "mechanic processing" makes up the second one; the logic mechanism that neutralises this incongruity is "false analogy" (Attardo, 2002: 10; see *Candide* analysis Axis I. 2., Chapter 1. 2.). In the above passage, 'sex' is evoked directly, and implicitly it is spontaneous erotic pleasure that dominates the evocation; meanwhile, 'sex' is also reduced to a mechanism that destroys its pleasurable spontaneity. As V. Raskin says "the basic sexual /non sexual opposition ... plays an important role in sexual humour" (Raskin, 1985: 177). Such comic treatment "takes love (here 'sex') as both taboo and a subject to be demystified." ("accept l'amour comme étant à la fois tabou et sujet à la démystification." Sareil, 1984: 31)[7]. Sareil further explains that when "sex" is treated comically in a humorous text, "the situation is characterised by the absence of all visual description: the scene takes place in a totally imprecise manner." ("La situation est caractérisée par l'absence de toute description visuelle: la scène se déroule dans une imprécision totale"); in this case, the text "interposes between a precarious situation and a totally innocent language." ("interpose entre le caractère scabreux de la situation et l'innocence totale du langage." Sareil, 1984: 28-29).

To consider the whole passage, it is principally composed of religious discourse (serious) in opposition with sexual discourse (frivolous), and the logic mechanism that governs the entire comb is the 'profanation' that I introduced earlier. Humour in this case takes advantage of the situation dominated by hypocrisy, prejudice and interdiction around the subject of 'sex' (cf. Sareil, 1984: 27). 'Profanation' then discharges offence against both these interdictions and the way they are expressed, and this becomes the source of funniness. (cf.

"L'offensive est alors menée à la fois contre ces interdits et contre la façon dont ils sont exprimés qui devient source de plaisanterie." Sareil, 1984: 24).

Olbrechts-Tyteca once gave an account of humour incongruity by using Leibniz' definition of the 'absurd' and the 'ridiculous'. For Leibniz the 'absurd' refers to "what contradicts a logical or geometrical exigency" ("ce qui est en contradiction avec une nécessité logique, ou géométrique"), and the 'ridiculous' refers to what is incompatible with a moral exigency" ("ce qui est incompatible avec une nécessité morale" Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1974: 161). Then we can imagine that people or things that go against such exigencies to a certain degree may be regarded as the 'absurd' or the 'ridiculous'. In fact, humour includes such a *paradox*: there is the assertion of the *violation* of certain norms; meanwhile it also signifies that it is only a *moderate walking-away* from what is generally accepted. These two conditions can be enough to provoke humour (cf. Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1974: 162). Here 'sex' is turned into 'absurdity' by being juxtaposed with the mechanical objects. Meanwhile, Catholicism is locally turned into the 'ridiculous', and those who perform this 'absurdity' are only victims of their conviction. Humorous irony thus triumphs with this moderate aggressiveness.

The *switching* from seriousness to non-seriousness is actualised with all the humour skills adopted. But the mockery revealed here does not lead to any definite criticism. Even when comic effects reach a climax, no new ideas are brought into play. In Adam's 'interior dialogue', however fierce the confrontation of different ideas may be, this dialogue does not bring about a new consciousness. His mental work still ends up with the authoritarian voice expressed by a series of dictatorial terms ("doctrines", "belief in a Divine Redeemer", etc.). As a result, the very paradox of humour prevails, for such humour is both a form of questioning authority and a form of its acceptance. As Sareil points out, "it is not about denouncing an attitude, for a denunciation is a serious act; it is rather to play with the unacceptable and to accept it at a discount." ("Il ne s'agit pas de dénoncer une attitude, car la dénonciation est un acte sérieux, mais de jouer avec l'inacceptable et l'accepter sous une forme atténuée." Sareil, 1984: 24)

Despite his semi-awareness, Adam still goes on with this mechanical process in his sexual life. So in a sense, this comic character is also capable of self-irony. In the above quoted passage, if Adam turns Catholic sexual life to absurdity in his mental work, he is certainly not sparing himself and his own deeds. In this case, the comic hero is both the ironist

and the victim of the irony created by himself. In fact, Adam quite often mocks himself during the story. The following is another example of his self-irony. It is a scene when Adam is chatting with some of his friends, and the topic is mainly about his difficult reconciliation of sex and religion. They are now talking about the notion of Trinity at a dining table:

"I should have brought my clover leaf with me," said Adam. He spooned some mustard on to his plate, and sprinkled it with pepper and salt. "Three in one."

"There!" cried Camel. 'It really tastes horrible, but it's true."

(Lodge, 1981: 59)

Then they start to relate the religion to Adam's other anxiety in his life:

"Do you realise that the birth-rate figures show that England will be a predominantly Catholic country in three or four generations? Do you want that?"

"No," said Adam fervently, "but it won't happen because of the lapsation rate."

"Lapsation?" Camel required.

"Falling off from the church," Adam explained.

"Why do so many fall off?"

"Not because of the doctrine of Trinity," said Adam. "Because of birth control is my guess ..."

(Lodge, 1981: 59)

Here the mere identification of the speakers suggests the existence of the narrator who is quoting their speeches. But the narrator does not intervene in the story with his attitude. What is interesting for the humour exploration here are the comic hero's deeds and words as the story information conveys them.

In the first quoted part, the religious register (high, grave) is compared with, or rather reduced to, "clover leaf" and "mustard, pepper and salt" mixed up together (low, trivial) as the comic hero plays with the three spices for food at the dining table. Adam's conclusion at the result of his performance "three in one", together with his friend's exclamation "horrible, but it's true" makes the humour incongruity more striking and enhances the comic effect. The

logic mechanism is first 'false analogy' (Attardo, 2002:10) and then 'dedramatisation' or 'degradation' (see the analysis of *Candide*, Axis II.1.1.). The eventual consequence is the 'profanation' of the initial religious register.

In the second quoted part, the humour registers are mainly a dialogue between religious discourse and sexual discourse. There is some suspense about what Adam really wants to say, and this creates a set-up phase for humour. This conversation starts with his friend's remark about the increasing population of Catholics in England because of their birth rate. Adam then retorts that "it won't happen because of the lapsation rate." The origin of the word "lapsation" is 'lapse'. A 'lapsed Catholic' refers to someone who quits the Church. When his friend Camel questioned the word "lapsation", Adam explained that it means "falling off from the church." To be more precise, "lapsation" for Adam means using birth control against the Church's commands. Adam's last explanation lays bare his real meaning: to fall off from the church "not because of the doctrine of Trinity" but "because of birth control is my guess..." Here humour lies between the incongruity between the religious notion 'Trinity' (high, holy) and 'birth control' (low, common). The logic mechanism is again 'degradation' that leads to 'profanation' of the religious discourse. "Lapsation" is however an unusual word. If we search further, it is possible that 'fall off' also indicates the danger of falling into hell (the contrary of Ascension to heaven). The implied 'homophone' in the latter half of the two words could be another logic mechanism that unites and neutralises the divergence between the religious register and the sexual register here.

Here Adam is in fact expressing his *interior dialogue*. Stuck between the Catholic doctrine and his hindered sexual practice, one ego inside him is persuading him to disobey the church's commands by using artificial birth control, while an alter ego is holding him back with Catholic principle. The divergence between his words and deeds makes us doubt any authentic lucidity and revolt of the comic hero. In fact, Adam is imagining (not really looking for) a compromise way out: leaving the Catholic church because of 'birth control' rather than betraying the principal of 'Trinity' may be a less serious sin? But he will never do it. Besides, he is rushing to a religious discussion for Catholics after this chat with his friends. What is more he "... must hurry". As usual, his interior dialogue ends up with the authoritarian voice of Catholicism.

In the preceding quoted passages, both when 'sex' is reduced to mechanical processing and when the 'Trinity' is reduced to a mixture of spices, Adam is certainly mocking himself too, for he himself is fully involved in what is mocked. This represents the comic hero's split

ego, and the dialogue of contradictory voices in him still shows no solution for him. Embarrassed by his difficult situation, the comic hero is however capable of saving himself through self-irony. As Muecke once explained in his analysis of *self-irony*: "the only sense remaining to him (we shall imagine) is a sense of irony. This will enable him to see himself in an ironic situation. ... And stronger his sense of irony the more he will be enabled to detach himself from his situation and become, by a kind of double-think, the ironical observer of himself as victim" (Muecke, 1969, 39).

Yes, Adam is capable of mocking at his weakness. In the meantime, it is however out of the question that he should take any action to change his fate. No. He is only good at talking or imagining things, and this is the "eccentricity" of intellectual characters. Adam's ideas are constantly incongruous with his deeds, and Adam himself can give a good summary of the paradox in his life. When Adam is asked if he "really believes in all that nonsense about birth control", Adam answers truthfully:

> "I'm not sure I believe it, but I practise it."
> (Lodge, 1981: 112)

In terms of *humour structure*, the humour incongruity here lies in the discrepancy between Adam's (dis)belief and his practice as expressed by himself; due to Adam's sense of (self-) irony, humour incongruity also lies in the fact that Adam is meanwhile the performer of paradoxical behaviour and the ironical observer of his contradictory personality. With regard to *the serious meaning*, this is the revelation of the split-ego as the basic trait in the comic hero's portrait.

Adam is a comic character full of whimsical ideas. The permanent dialogue of all these ideas within him has become his self-protection measure and his secret for survival. The following quoted part shows such a moment when the comic hero, tormented by his sexual problem, is at pains to suggest a *paradoxical solution*.

> "The only thing I can see is to get contraception classified as a venial sin," said, with sudden inspiration. "Then we could all feel slightly guilty about it, like cheating on the buses, without forfeiting the sacraments." (Lodge, 1981: 63).

This is a speech that Adam makes during his religious discussion with other Catholic members. Once again, Adam is seeking for *compromise*. Only whether or not a true compromise really exists is a big problem for him. The humour incongruity comes from Adam's contradictory reasoning: on one hand, Adam wants to practice contraception knowing that it is a sin; on the other hand he wants to be forgiven by arguing that it could be a "venial sin". The logic mechanism is "false premise" (Attardo, 2002: 10) based on a "false analogy" (Attardo, 2002: 13). "Contraception" and "cheating on the buses", usually very separated matters, are associated here by the shared feature of "cheating" in this context. Only this feature "is a marginal aspect" of the two items (cf. Attardo, 2002: 13). What is more important for Adam in this analogy is that Adam wants further to combine the two entities by the feature of "venial sin", and this similarity "does not exist" (Attardo, 2002: 13) in reality. Adam himself also knows the seriousness of the sin related to 'contraception': "But the other thing (contraception by using a condom) is something you commit, in the first place, in cold blood in a chemist's shop..." Yes, it is a pity that Adam is neither God nor the priest that represents religious authority. He has no way to change the law of Catholicism. This undeniable fact has made him the victim of the ironic situation presented by the story events. Such an ironic situation in return ironically goes against his thoughts and words. Even if Adam is capable of casting an ironic look at himself, there is still no real sparing of himself as a victim of irony. The poor comic hero is caught in the whirlpool of irony, and no safe exit is indicated in the text.

There are moments when Adam can no more ignore the fact that he is a failure both as a Catholic and as a man. The comic hero is cracking up. That night, Adam in despair attempted a sexual adventure with a young girl in exchange for some research material needed for his PhD thesis. Urged by the seducing girl but hindered by his religious morality (if there is any), the comic hero tries to ease his embarrassment again by using his self-irony:

> "Religion has played havoc in my married life," he explained. 'If sex can't find its normal outlets..."
>
> (Lodge, 1981, 144)

In Adam's first remark, the religious register (high, holy) is degraded to common or even

derogatory value by the word "havoc". Adam's second utterance is obviously "sexual humour", for "sex" with its "normal outlet" in this context has a strong indication of man's ejaculation in sexual intercourse (common, frivolous, vulgar). The degradation of the religious register then goes even further. As a result, humour incongruity here additionally lies between religious discourse as a sober register and sex discourse as playful register for comic effect. The general logic mechanism is always 'profanation', and the production of comic effects is efficient. Since we are aware that Adam is himself a Catholic, such profanation certainly expresses his ironic attitude towards his own conviction. As the comic hero, Adam proves himself audacious in his mocking at his own impotence in his sexual life and his general embarrassment.

Unlike the comic hero in *Candide*, Adam is to a certain extent conscious of his ironic situation and of his own weakness as partly responsible for his sufferings. That is why he is capable of self-irony. With regard to the humour structure, Adam, like Candide, is often the local victim of irony. It is true that religion as the counterpart of Adam's sexual problem is often disgraced. But whether or not this religion, like the philosophy of optimism in *Candide*, is meant to be the eventual target for definite negation in the text is still a question. This point remains uncertain until the general humour structure of the text is examined. As we have seen till now, the 'profanation' of the religious humour register mainly functions to provoke humour.

As mentioned earlier, the end of this humorous text is a *parody*, where the monologue of Barbara, Adam's wife, is in inter-textual dialogue with Molly Bloom's monologue in *Ulysses*. It is a place in the text when the speech act of a secondary character serves to enrich the portrait of the character and helps to highlight the central irony of the text. Now, let us compare the last few lines of these two texts:

The British Museum Is Falling Down

...I said I will always love you he said I'll prove it every night he kissed my throat *perhaps* you think that now I said of course we will he said we'll have a nanny to look after the children *perhaps* we will I said by the way how many children are we going to have as many as you like he said it will be wonderful you'll see *perhaps* it will I said *perhaps* it will be wonderful *perhaps* even though it won't be like you think *perhaps* that won't matter *perhaps*. (Lodge, 1981: 161)

Ulysses

... I asked him with my eyes to ask again *yes* and then he asked me would I *yes* to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him *yes* and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume *yes* and his heart was going like mad and *yes* I said yes I will *Yes*. (Joyce, 1984: 643-644)

This passage is what Rimmon-Kenan called "free direct discourse" and is placed as the highest form of "showing" among her seven types of speech presentation "ranging from the purely 'diegetic' to the 'purely' mimetic" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1976: 109-120). Chatman then called this kind of speech "interior monologue"[8], in which the perception of the character belongs to the story world. Here Barbara, like Molly Bloom, as Chatman explained, "is not functioning as narrator, not telling anyone a story after the fact, but simply carrying on normal thinking processes in the present story moment. The thought stream is simply quoted by a totally effaced narrator" (Chatman 1990: 147).

At first sight , this quoted part is at least a *comb* playing with the word "perhaps". Meanwhile, the ironic humour is also largely due to the very wording of the text B that recalls the parodied text A[9] as a whole. The two texts involved in this parody then compose the local

humour registers. Just like the ending of *Ulysses*, *B.M.F.* also ends with a monologue of the main character's wife, which is mainly the wife's reflection on their conjugal relationship. Though this inter-textual dialogue is part of the imitation of the general style of *Ulysses*, this part by itself is also playing with the literal presentation of the original text. For example, this monologue is also composed of long passages without any punctuation. Another evidence of the parody is that the numerous "yes" in *Ulysses* are replaced by numerous "perhaps" in *B.M.F.*. in the very end of the novel. If "perhaps" is the last voice of the text, "uncertainty" is the dominant feature of the humour structure. It is just a playful form in which the parodied text is not targeted for genuine mockery. There is no definite affirmation or negation of whatever is involved in this parody.

In view of the general behaviour of the comic hero throughout the whole story, Barbara's cautionary "perhaps" (appearing about twenty times in the final two pages) also echoes her husband's lasting uncertainty in his personality. So this monologue is also adding the critical finishing touch to the portrait of the comic hero.

Barbara's monologue is far from Molly Bloom's life-celebrating soliloquy; rather it is in line with the ironic tone of the whole text. The "general irony" implied by the story structure (see "implied author's design" above) is well echoed by Barbara's multiple "perhaps" here in the story world: nothing is certain, no solution is to be found. Adam's dilemma only reflects what is fundamental and irremediable about such a world. "Perhaps" functions like a summary of the whole story and its *serious meaning* at the end of the text. In a world where uncertainty dominates, there may be more than one way of responding to such a predicament. Though "general irony is not primarily corrective or normative, ... in so far as irony is a better way there may be a corrective, or at least a heuristic element in the ironical presentation of a *General Irony situation*" (Muecke, 1969: 120-121).

Within the story world, various humour registers are built up upon the incongruity in the comic hero's thoughts, words and deeds as well as the comic hero's own self-irony. An important *general logic mechanism* is 'profanation' under the axis of 'sex quest ←→ religion', which in turn involves other local sub-logic mechanisms. As sexual humour plays with the heavy interdiction and generates the switching to non-seriousness, such humour is often the location of certain comic climaxes in the text. More examples of comic moments of the text from the narrator's discourse world will be displayed below. While humorous irony is headed for uncertainty and compromise, the serious meaning is initially constructed in the story world and should be amplified by the ironic play of the multiple narrative worlds.

Axis I. 2. The Narrator's Discourse World Playing Upon The Story World

Unlike *Candide*, the *comic hero's name* in *B.M.F.* is not indicated by the title of the book. Rather, there is a special part in Chapter I that introduces all the names of Adam's family. In this part, it is mainly the narrator who is presenting Adam's family situation in an ironic tone. At this moment of the story, Adam is saying goodbye to his whole family before he starts out for a whole day's adventure:

> Adam's family lined up in alphabetical order to be kissed goodbye: Barbara, Claire, Dominic and Edward (seated). When the principle behind this nomenclature dawned on their friends they were likely to ask humorously whether Adam and Barbara intended working through the whole alphabet, a joke that seemed less and less funny to Adam and Barbara as time went on.
>
> (Lodge, 1981: 20)

A neutral narrative statement capable of conveying the same story information could be "Adam kissed his whole family one by one before he went out to work". But it is not the case here. Instead, it is mainly the narrator's *interpretation* (see analysis of *Candide*, Axis1.2. Chapter 2) of the story events which provokes humour and indicates the ironic meaning. The humour registers involved are alphabets (mechanic, formality) and family members (human, informality of family life). The note 'seated' probably refers to a newspaper reporting convention, where people in a photograph are identified for the reader. The logic mechanism that unites and neutralises this incongruity for humour production is 'valid analogy'. Attardo made an effort to distinguish 'valid analogy' from 'false analogy': "a valid analogy is focused on one of the central, essential traits of the two entities being compared" (Attardo, 2002: 10-11). Here the analogy resolves around the alphabetical order by which the initial letters of the names are given one after another in Adam's family which are actually in alphabetical order.

We know from the story world that Adam is suffering because he finds himself caught between his religious duty and his sexual desire. Together with all other problems in his life which have given him a whole night's nightmare, he is certainly not in a mood to make any light-hearted jokes. It is then not difficult for the implied reader to understand that the comic treatment of the story information is provided by the narrator. Here the narrator is not narrating the story from the character's 'interest point of view'[10], i.e., showing sympathy for the

character's difficult situation. Instead, the narrator is giving a detached, or in Jouve's term, a "distant"[11] description of Adam's family situation to produce comic effects.

In the light of the whole text, this introduction of the comic hero and his family in Chapter I is significant. Among other things, Adam's Biblical name prophesies the beginning of his endless troubles, which start with the irresolvable contradiction between Adam's religious affiliation and his impotence in dealing with his sexual life. Meanwhile, the very nomination of the main character (and other supplementary characters) fixes a comic tone to the whole text. The very detached voice of the narrator signals the ironic treatment of the story events, especially the dilemma of the comic hero. Such ironic humour from the narrator's discourse is an important component of the general humour structure; it largely contributes to the neutralisation of various humour incongruities and contributes to the portrait of the comic hero in the development of the text.

Sometimes the narrator also uses Adam's 'interest point of view' to present his stories. But its effect is still ironic humour rather than drawing sympathy to the character's sufferings. In the following passage, Adam is already at the British museum. He is supposed to be working on his PhD thesis. Only he is unable to concentrate on his work. Instead, he is imagining all the catastrophic consequences that another pregnancy would bring about.

> Damn, damn, damn. Another child. It was unthinkable. Not all that again: sleepless nights, wind, sick, more nappies, more bottles, more cornflakes. ... This seemed the logical and inevitable design of a good Catholic home: no room for living in, only rooms for breeding, sleeping, eating, and excreting.... Perhaps he could sit in the bath, with a board across the top... but the taps dripped all the time. Besides, the bathroom was the busiest place in the house.... but perhaps he could live in the museum, hiding when the closing bell rang and dossing down on one of the broad-topped desks with a pile of books for a pillow.
>
> (Lodge, 1981: 79)

This quoted passage is in *indirect discourse*, and it contains two levels of messages. It first communicates the *story information*, which are Adam's worries about his wife's possible pregnancy and its disastrous consequence. At the same time, this passage also conveys an ironic look at the comic hero's awkward situation with comic effects. It is evident that the

worries are those of the character's that the narrator does not share (that the narrator never shares in fact). As we have seen from the analysis of other examples, Adam as the character in the story world is capable of a certain self-irony. But whether or not the character shares the irony here and actually uttered the words can be a question. As Chatman says: "it is precisely the nature (and charm) of indirect free discourse to make it hard to know" (Chatman, 1990: 147). However one thing is sure: the story content shows that Adam is at this moment preoccupied with his worries, and he is unlikely to be in a mood for telling jokes. So the comic effects produced by the actual wording are more likely the product of the narrator's work.

This quoted passage is a location where strong comic effects are produced. Comic effects first stem from the series of words used with *rhyme and rhythm*. Nash once discussed how "rhyme and rhythm" work towards engendering comedy. He says that "rhyme and rhythm" in comic versifying can provide a setting for the humour. "The subversiveness of humorous prosody, however lies in its whimsical play with the notion of expectation and probability - with the game of prediction...Comic rhymes are effective either because they are banal and easily predictable, or they are so remote as to defy expectation" (Nash, 1985: 155). The first humour register here is composed a series of words that represent very common and low value ("sleepless nights, wind, sick, more nappies, more bottles, more cornflakes..."). In the first place, this list of words in rhyme and rhythm create an expectation for a flow of such words and the continuation of its very banality; meanwhile, this 'banality' confronts sharply the context of the Catholic discourse ("Catholic home": high, sober) and the seriousness of Adam's worries.

Rimmon-Kenan once pointed out that the one speech representation "that has recently given rise to a proliferation of studies on the part of both linguistics and narrative theorists is free indirect discourse" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 110). Then she summed up five functions of free indirect discourse. What is interesting in Rimmon-Kenan 's summary is her emphasis on the "plurality of speakers and attitudes" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 114) in free indirect discourse. She also says that "each of them may have varying thematic manifestations in different fictional texts." The above example in particular is what Rimmon-Kenan interprets in these terms: "the presence of a narrator as distinct from the character may create an ironic distancing." In this case, "the free indirect discourse hypothesis can assist the reader in reconstructing the implied author's attitude toward the character(s) involved" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 114). As a matter of fact, one serious meaning that the narratee and

consequently the implied reader can infer is the 'profanation' of the religious discourse when the effects of ironic humour are engendered.

In this passage, the story events are provided with an illusion of cartoon-like images. These images are presented as a typical caricature of men of letters: how Adam is working on his PhD thesis in the bathroom with a dripping tap over his head, or how he should hide in the British Museum like a thief and then sleep "with a pile of books for a pillow" because of a shortage of space in his house. Though such an awkward situation may be derived from Adam's imagination, the narrator is likely to have made special efforts to highlight the portrait of the comic hero. For example, a neutral statement like "Adam has to sleep in the library" would hardly be comic compared to the detailed description "dossing down on one of the broad-topped desks with a pile of books for a pillow". Here we can identify a play structure: the story content is Adam's anxiety, the ironic message is given in the narrator's words, who pokes fun at Adam's worries. The paradox of humour lies in the coexistence of pathetic story content and the comic interpretation of it. As Yaari once mentioned, the simultaneity of pathetic and comic sentiments is a source of paradoxical effects in ironic humour. To obtain such effects, an effective measure is the comic mode adopted in the narrator's discourse which "proceeds with exaggeration, degradation, accumulation of details and/or repetition" (Yaari, 1988, 174-175).

Jouve, in his study of the reception of the 'reader' ('implied reader' for this thesis), considered "un monologue narrativisé"[12] (narrated monologue) a well-suited measure for the communication of an ironic message (cf. V. Jouve 1992: 178). In this case, the character is in the first place presented at a "distance" so that sympathy arousal is hindered. Then the production of irony is due to the *gap* between the story world and the narrator's discourse world. As is shown in this example, this 'gap' lies between Adam's worries in the story world and the ironic tone in the narrator's presentation of his worries. Due to the different occupancy of the narrative levels, the narrator's ironic attitude is beyond the character's reach.

Now we may turn to how the serious meaning of the ironic humour in this text is constructed. On the basis of his distinction between the character's "filter" and the narrator's "slant", Chatman further explored the "kind of irony ... peculiar to narrative" (Chatman, 2001: 119). He says that "a narrator can ironise a character's opinions, attitudes, or feelings by phrasing them in diction more lofty than they deserve" (Chatman, 2001: 119). Up till now I have tried to display this gap between the narrator's lofty or detached voice and the main character's filter. What can further help us to penetrate this ironic structure is a sub-distinction

made by D. Cohen (1978) and highly recommended by Chatman. According to these two theorists, there exists in addition the "distinction between 'dissonance' - where the narrator, ... markedly separates himself from the character whose thinking he represents - and 'consonance', where the narrator's slant is little distinguished from the character's filter" (Chatman, 2001: 122). In the above quoted passage, it is a moment when Adam's thoughts are so tumultuous that chaos engulfs his soul. Accordingly, it must be the narrator who intercedes to speak in his own words what the character feels but is unable to formulate in clear words. It is true that the narrator, by his cool and humorous phraseology, is ironising about the character imprisoned in his difficult situation. But there is not any serious moral criticism of this character here. In the whole text, there is in fact never any such indication. As we initially concluded from the analysis of the story world, the portrait of the comic hero, with all the paradoxical features in his personality and above all with his sense of self-irony, only suggests the uncertainty of the world and a "general irony" attitude towards it. The narrator, though capable of momentary mockery at the comic hero's attitudes or feelings, never seriously condemns Adam's opinions or his personality from his discourse world. Hence the disparity between the narrator's slant and the character's filter is principally "consonance". What is more, there is nothing in the implied author's design against the moderate ironic attitude in the narrator's discourse. We can surmise that all these narrative agents are in fact on the same side of the irony: they are in the same trench to confront the universe ruled by paradoxical uncertainty. That is why the portrait of this character is presented as more comic than villainous.

In *B.M.F.*, the narrator may also come to the front and launch irony in an overt voice. In the following passage, Adam was hesitating whether to ask the priest Father Wildfire for a solution to his frustrated sexual life:

> Adam wanted to ask if it was better to make love to your wife using a contraceptive, or not to make love to her at all; but somehow it did not seem to be an appropriate question to ask Father Wildfire. ... In contrast, Adam's moral problem seemed trivial and suburban, and to seek Father Wildfire's advice would be like engaging the services of a big-game hunter to catch a mouse.
>
> (Lodge, 1981: 64)

Here an evident signal of the narrator's presence is the reference to the character by his name, for the character will not do it himself. The narrator's slant on the story world is realised by his *interpretation* (cf. Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 98-99) of Adam's state of mind and then by his ironic *commentary* (cf. Chatman, 1997: 228-230) on Adam's worries. The first humour register is a sexual problem ("trivial and suburban") and the second humour register is "seeking religious advice" (serious, noble). This humour incongruity is actually nominated by the narrator's overt voice. Then the narrator uses a simile ("would be like...") right afterwards to ironise the comic hero - a 'false analogy' that unites and neutralises the incongruity to comic effect. The irony in the last sentence is not hinted, but announced audaciously. As Chatman says, one recourse used by the narrator to show his presence is "figurative language" (Chatman, 2001: 125). To compare Adam's worries about his sexual life to "using a big-game hunter to catch a mouse" is of course funny; and to compare in this way is also presenting the comic hero with humorous irony.

Another comic moment of the text is when Adam tried to "brace himself" to buy a condom. It is his preparation for his attempted adultery with the young girl Virginia. Of course he actually accomplishes nothing: neither does he really buy the condom, nor does he commit adultery in the end. Only throughout the whole process, the narrator doesn't hesitate to jump to the front to mock at his hesitation, his weakness, and his worthlessness.

When Adam was about to enter to the chemist shop:

> ...a heavy hand caught him by the shoulder, and he froze in the attitude of an arrested thief.
>
> (Lodge, 1981: 133)

The heavy hand that grabbed him from behind happened to be that of the church's Father Finbar. Scared as Adam was, the Father insisted in talking with Adam about his religious belief and practice. Adam wanted to escape,

> Father Finbar took Adam firmly by the arm and led him, struggling feebly, into the shop.
>
> (Lodge, 1981: 134)

Pursued by the priest's fierce questions yet incapable of finding the proper answer, Adam had to follow the conversation,

> ...leaping desperately from the frying pan to the fire.
> (Lodge, 1981: 135).

To present Adam's unlucky meeting with the church's Father Finbar, the narrator has recourse to figurative language. He uses a simile ("in the attitude of an arrested thief") and then a metaphor ("leaping desperately from the frying pan to the fire") to describe Adam's embarrassment. The adverbs used are also very effective to enhance the comic effects: how the priest catches Adam "firmly" and how Adam, in contrast, struggles "feebly" and leaps "desperately". Such description in fact includes the narrator's ironic commentary on the character. Here the first humour register is the religious authority represented by the priest (high and powerful), while the second humour register is "thief" or even "desperate insect" trying to escape from a frying pan (low and pitiful). The logic mechanism is principally the 'false analogy' that compares the comic hero with a series of wretched creatures.

Numerous theorists have considered 'commentary' as the most distinct demonstration of the narrator (Chatman, 1978: 228; Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 98 -100), and it is also a revelation of the narrator's moral stand. In a reliable narration (see Part I, Chapter 5. 3), the narrator is meanwhile the spokesman of the implied author. In terms of humour structure, Adam the comic character is treated as the victim of irony in the narrator's discourse. This ironic play in the meantime helps to construct the ironic meaning. Despite all the troubles Catholic teaching has brought to Adam, its religious authority is not shaken. As Björk summed up about "the discourse of the church" in this text: "the testing and scrutinising of the discourse of the Catholic Church in *The British Museum is Falling Down* sometimes for comic purposes, do not amount to a rejection of it. The liberation process that was hinted at initially is not accomplished, but ends in passive waiting and thus affirmation of the Church's authority" (Björk, 1993: 80). This is what the 'dialogue' is genuinely about: though religion and sex are in constant conflict, no solution is indicated. What matters is the very consciousness of this uncertainty and an ironic attitude towards it. Adam's sexual quest goes with his religious bewilderment, and the text does not bring about new consciousness of this character and allows no transformation of its comic hero. This is the very paradox of the portrait of this comic hero.

As we have understood, "general irony" lies in the awareness of those fundamental and irremediable contradictions beyond man's handling. Such an ironic attitude can free men from a real sense of guilt or the true burden of serious accusation. The above examples either tease at any serious worries about this impossible situation, as shown in this light-hearted remark: "advice would be like engaging the services of a big-game hunter to catch a mouse", or simply show human beings' weakness in the face of this overwhelming world. 'Dialogue' in the story world mainly expresses the psychological dilemma of the comic hero; in the narrator's discourse, 'dialogue' is mainly realised by the 'double texture' that helps to set off the portrait of the comic hero and enhances the meaning of 'paradox'. The narrator plays with this permanent humour incongruity in his lofty phraseology to poke fun at the comic hero rather than criticise him seriously. In this humorous text, we may say that this paradox is both the 'cause' and 'effect': 'cause' for this 'paradox' is the source of the comic, 'effect' for this 'paradox' is also the *serious meaning* revealed by the humour structure. The particular thing in this text is that character, narrator and the implied author are somewhat in the same boat, casting an ironic look at the world around from the same position.

Axis II: Literary Quest ←→ Real Life

Adam's second worry is his PhD thesis, for it seems that this work will never come to an end. The subject he is studying is long and complicated: "The structure of long sentences in Three Modern English Novels" (Lodge, 1981: 48). Although which three novels have yet to be decided, Adam's final scholarship is rapidly and inevitably approaching its end. The long and complicated quality of his PhD work is ironically in accordance with his life troubles. The progress of his thesis is hindered by his first worry (see Axis I); Adam's literary quest seems about to end in failure together with his other failures in life. This is another variant of the permanent dilemma of intellectual characters: their intellectual world is incompatible with the real world. The conflict between 'literary quest and real life' becomes another important "dialogue" in the thematic development of the text.

It is explained in the analysis of <u>*Candide*</u> that the *setting* of the story in <u>*Candide*</u> is a fantastic world which parodies the picaresque novel. The fantastic atmosphere created in the story world contributes to the production of humour in this text. In <u>*B.M.F.*</u>, it is the *literary fantasy* that creates a general fantastic atmosphere in favour of humour production.

Apart from the general fact that all writing reflects and is therefore a collage of other writing, of language, and of tradition, *B.M.F.* in its texture also strongly refers us to specific texts or authors (cf. Ammann, 1991: 60), and such literary references are abundant in this text. All these references create a general fantastic atmosphere in the text that I label 'literary fantasy'. Such inter-textual dialogue varies in form as well as in its degree of transparency. Just to name a few, there are of course the numerous direct quotations from well-known literary texts (Axis II.1. below). There are also many other literary references alluded in one way or another, as exemplified by the pastiche of Kafka's *Castle* (beginning of Chapter Two), or the parody of the beginning of Hemingway's short story "In Another Country" (first paragraph of Chapter Seven) and the parody of the soliloquy at the end of James Joyce's *Ulysses* (end of the novel).

In terms of *humour structure*, the literary fantasy derives from the implied author's design, and is then actualised in the narrator's 'showing' and his 'telling'. In other words, this inter-textual play may be embodied by the general story structure, it may also be entrusted to the narrator's discourse or to the story world. In this case, the "dialogue" is carried on between "the straightforward realistic text and its inter-textual subtext. The *story* is fitted into a scrupulously realistic framework, complete with thermometers, safety-pins and nappies together with detailed topographical description of London and, of course, the British Museum" (Björk, 1993: 71-72). Meanwhile, the 'literary fantasy', of which the character is half conscious, reflects Adam's confused mind. In the *narrator's discourse world,* the play of inter-textual references, which is deliberately worked out and played upon the character by the narrator, reveals the narrator's ironic intention. All the literary references are replaced and then twisted in a decidedly humorous light so that their original words and texture are deprived of their (more) serious context and content in favour of their renaissance in this humorous text. This dialogue can both make up the humour registers and set off the switching to comic climax. The main 'strand', with all the humorous micronarratives chosen for analysis, is tied to the central humour incongruity between the literary register (fantastic) and real life register (dull and commonplace). In terms of the construction of the serious meaning, this 'dialogue' also functions to attribute to the portrait of the comic hero and contribute to the ironic meaning of the text.

Axis II.1. A Quotation At The Head Of Each Chapter As The Implied Author's Design

In *B.M.F.*, each chapter starts with a quotation. They are either extracts from well-known literary works or just an item found at random that can be related to the chapter in question. These quotations, though separated from the main body of the text, function as a prelude to each chapter. To use Genette's terms, this intertextual dialogue is a kind of "paratextuality" with regard to their position in the text; these quotations are also a kind of "intertextuality" with regard to their dialogic form. With regard to the humour structure, these quotations function like the first 'pier' of the *bridge*, for the ironic humour is to be built up and enhanced through the resonance from the whole chapter following the quotation. As Attardo explains that the concept of 'bridge' "is the degree to which hearers (or readers) retain a memory of the actual text they have heard/read" (Attardo, 2001: 58), these quotations depend on the chapters that follow them and recall them from time to time through their texture in order to be integrated into the humorous text. Of course, it should be emphasised again that the central interest of this thesis is in humorous text rather than jokes told orally; and the addressee of the humorous text considered in the main body of this thesis is no more than the implied reader.

In the present discussion, what interests us particularly are those quotations that refer to well-known literary works. They include words from Oscar Wilde (beginning of the book), Graham Greene (head of Chapter One), Ruskin (head of Chapter Two), Carlyle (head of Chapter Four), W. B. Yeats (head of Chapter 5), etc. They are placed either at the beginning of the book or at the head of certain chapters with the intention to set off the portrait of the comic hero as an intellectual character. Adam, as a PhD student, is supposed to possess a wide reading experience. As a character of the story, he may have come across all these quotations in his previous reading himself. In relation to the story world, such inter-textual dialogue resonates and highlights the literary fantasy of the comic hero. Meanwhile this dialogue ironises the character's infertile quest in the restriction of his story world.

Now we'll see just one example. The following quotation appears at the beginning of Chapter Five of the text:

> I spent my days at the British Museum, and must I think, have been very

> delicate, for I remember often putting off hour after hour consulting some necessary book because I shrank from lifting the heavy volume of the catalogue.
>
> W. B. Yeats (Lodge, 1981: 70)

Ammann once discussed the "degree of transparency" of references in <u>*B.M.F.*</u>. He said that such references vary widely "ranging from vague allusion to annoted quotations" (Ammann, 1991: 60). Quotations are indeed the most transparent form of the intertextual dialogue , especially with the writer's name indicated each time, as in this example. Like the story content, it is Yeats, the famous Irish poet, who tells of his experience in the British Museum in this quoted passage.

The humour provoked by this quotation is due to the resonance from the whole chapter right afterwards, apart from its incorporation with the whole text of course. Like Yeats who "spent days at the British Museum", Adam also frequently went to the British Museum, as is indicated at the very beginning of the book. During the time spent there, Yeats put his work project off hour after hour, Adam on this day (like many other days quite probably) spent his time searching for food, reading the newspaper, chatting with friends about his worries, etc. rather than reading books. The *bridge* emerges in evidence right from the first paragraph of this chapter.

> As Adam approached the British Museum, lethargy and despair oppressed him. By now, a pile of Lawrence books would be on his desk, but he felt no quickening of his pulse at the prospect. In Great Russell Street he lingered outside the windows of bookshops, stationers and small publishers. The stationers particularly fascinated him. He coveted the files, punches, staplers, erasers, coloured inks and gadgets whose functions remained a teasing mystery, thinking that if only he could afford to equip himself with all this apparatus his thesis would write itself: he would be automated.
>
> (Lodge, 1981: 70)

In this first paragraph of the chapter, the presentation of the comic hero's story is mainly through the *narrator's commentary* (see analysis in Axis II, 3). An important source of humour lies in the function of the *bridge,* or the "surface structure recall"[13] between this paragraph and the quotation given at the head of the chapter. The *setting* of the story in these

two passages is similarly "the British Museum". Like Yeats who had to deal with the "heavy volume of the catalogue", Adam faced the challenge of "a pile of Lawrence books". While Yeats was "putting off hour after hour consulting some necessary book", Adam this day "lingered outside" instead of working in the British Museum. Yeats became "delicate" and "shrank", being frightened by too much work; Adam is reduced to a more pathetic "apparatus" out of the same fear. Within the first paragraph of the chapter alone, the first humour register is 'literary quest' (high, elegant) and the second one is a series of items of "apparatus" (low, measly). The degradation in "he would be automated" can be said to be worse than if someone only "shrank" in size. In this context, literature as Adam's research field represents that particular human intelligence: his imagination; and "automated" "apparatus" only represents the contrary value: the death of literary intuition and imagination. The logic mechanism is firstly a "parallelism" (Attardo, 2002: 12) between the initial quotation about (and by) Yeats and the first paragraph of the chapter about Adam which recall each other for ironic humour: as Yeats' misadventure goes in parallel with Adam's misadventure, the parallel text structure imposes the constraint of parallelising their interpretation so as to achieve sharp irony (cf: Attardo, 2002: 12). In the introductory quotation alone, humour mainly stems from the logic mechanism of "proportion" (Attardo, 2002: 12): the size of the body relatively "shrinks" as one should lift "the heavy volume of the catalogue" of course; and its figurative meaning can be that one's courage wanes as his work accumulates. In the first paragraph of the chapter, the logic mechanism is mainly 'false analogy' (cf. its definition in the *Candide* analysis, Axis I. 2., Chapter 1.2.) that matches Adam's PhD research work with some "automated" movement. Albeit that certain material equipment is a necessary condition for both PhD work and some "automated" procedure, it is certainly not the sufficient condition for obtaining efficient progress in PhD thesis writing, and this is why this 'analogy' is 'false'[14]. As this analogy reaches the highest inappropriateness, the humour production process reaches its climax and the *ironic meaning* becomes most salient. What is more, both the comic effects and the ironic meaning are further highlighted by the humorous *bridge* built across the two passages.

The ironic message revealed by this humour structure is mainly about the infertility of Adam's literary quest. The ironic humour initiated by the quotation from Yeats is compatible with the character's real experiences presented in this whole chapter, which is however beyond the character's knowledge. With regard to the whole text, the chapter structure headed by meaningful quotations lays a foundation for the paradox of ironic humour: the character's awkward situation is not to be digested as a tragic story; it may be just one of the literary

jokes. This is a guideline provided by the implied author for the understanding of humour in this text.

Axis II. 2. The Paradox Structure of Humour in the Story World

Axis II. 2. 1. In Terms of the 'Actantial Model':

As I explained earlier, the *setting* of the story is part of the story content. In Hamon's terms, it is also the "territory" of the "actantial model" (cf. Hamon, 1983: 205).

In this text, next to the realistic account of Adam's daily life problems (his impotence in dealing with sex, the hindrances to his literary research, etc), there is also the building up of an unrealistic atmosphere, which is a fantastic world based in multiple literary works. The comic hero's story is then presented against this background. An example is found in Chapter Three: the *setting* of the story event is the British Museum, which is implicitly compared with Kafka's 'Castle' due to an inter-textual dialogue. In this case, the British Museum is not only the location where the story about Adam happens, it is also the crossroad where the two texts in dialogue meet so that the portrait of the comic hero is much enriched (see the analysis in Axis II. 3.) As Chatman explains, "the setting 'sets the character off' in the usual figurative sense of the expression; it is the place and collection of objects 'against which' his actions and passions appropriately emerge." (Chatman, 1978: 138-139). In *B.M.F.*, literary fantasy in the story world first reflects the interior confusion of the comic hero (see Axis II. 2. 2. below). The atmosphere meanwhile deprives the story of realistic values and favours the comic coexistence of all the contradictions in Adam's personality.

In terms of the 'actantial model', Adam under the present axis is principally the 'subject' of literary day-dreaming, and never the 'subject' of any effective action. His literary whims do not function to transform his personality. The poles of opposing forces in permanent dialogue make up the important humour registers in the portrayal of this comic character, which can be interpreted as below:

PhD study

↑

subject of desire (Adam) ← opponent (Adam)

↑ ↑

'register' of literary quest (in dialogue with) 'register' of real life

Again, this outline can be enriched by examining the three 'actantial spheres' of the actantial model. Adam as (non-)actant and the dialogic form in the portrayal of this character can be further interpreted as below:

In the sphere of **knowing**, Adam is the 'subject' of a very knowledgeable person, a researcher at PhD level; but in practice, he is the 'subject' of 'not-knowing' the distinction between the realm of literature and the realm of real life, as he is very clumsy in dealing with daily life problems.

In the sphere of **longing**, Adam is the 'subject' of desire to fulfil his PhD study and to succeed in his career; but due to his ineptness in life, he is also the cause of many obstacles to his literary quest.

In the sphere of **power**, Adam is very good at literary fantasy and empty talk, but is incapable of achieving any real progress in his PhD study.

In summary, the actantial model shows a paradoxical structure in the frame of the story. Adam's 'split personality' lies in the permanent "dialogue" between different, even contradictory, ideas within this character. All these contradictory aspects also make up the various humour registers in the portrayal of this character.

Axis II. 2. 2. Adam's Literary Fantasy

Religion controls Adam's domestic life; his literary quest is obstructed by his family concerns. Adam can interpret his dilemma 'literary quest ←→ real life' himself: "Scholarship and domesticity were opposed worlds, whose common frontier was marked by the Museum railings." (Lodge, 1981: 96). Adam explains his failure in his sex quest also by this opposition between literature and life: "Literature is mostly about having sex and not much about having children. Life is the other way round" (Lodge, 1981: 56). Here the humour incongruity is comprised of the two inextricable domains: literature and life. The logic mechanism involves

exaggeration and a hasty conclusion: literature and life are different but may not be necessarily "opposed worlds". The distinction between the two domains certainly should not only be defined according to the involvement of sex in them.

These quotations are the character's speech act in the story world. These quoted speeches are also the comic hero's self-irony. As Adam is conscious of the predicament he is stuck in, he is also mocking himself by such remarks. Self-irony may not be a real pleasure for Adam, it is however his interpretation of life and his technique for survival.

Overwhelmed by his numerous worries, Adam is lost in his daydreaming, which is mostly a kind of literary fantasy. Early in the morning when he is stepping out of his house to go to the Museum, he stumbled over "a soft, yielding object." Then "he recalled a novel he had read about a man who had been locked up by the Gestapo in total darkness with a sinister, soft, moist, yielding object, which the man in his terror imagined to be all kinds of horrible things, such as a piece of human flesh looking like a lump of raw meat, but which turned out to be nothing but a wet cloth" (Lodge, 1981: 22). Later in the day, Adam failed in his attempt at adultery with Virginia, and this is how he is described escaping from her home with bare legs:

> As he cautiously descended the ladder he was conscious of re-enacting one of the oldest roles in literature.
>
> (Lodge, 1981: 145).

In such passages, Adam's interior world is reported by the narrator in the form of "indirect discourse" (cf. Rimmon-Kenan, 1976: 109). To use Chatman's terms, such speech acts involve both the narrator's 'slant' and the character's 'filter'. In other words, the "perception" of the events belongs to the character while the "recountal" of the events belongs to the narrator's discourse (cf. Chatman, 1990, 139 - 145). So here it is the narrator who is reporting or telling, but it is the character who is feeling and thinking within the story world. Though in a less pure form of "showing", what is revealed as the story information about the character is still his literary fantasy. Adam's "perception" here reflects his confused mind and shows how he is lost in the 'common frontier' between literature and reality.

Adam once made a long speech to his friends. In this speech he even developed a theory of his literary fantasy:

"... You might pick up a book at any time and read about an ordinary chap called Joe Smith doing just the sort of things you did yourself. Now, I know what you're going to say - you are going to say that the novelist still has to invent a lot. But that is just the point: there've been such a fantastic number of novels written in the last couple of centuries that they've just about exhausted the possibilities of life. So all of us, you see, are really enacting events that have already been written about in some novel or other. Of course, most people don't realise this - they fondly imagine that their little lives are unique ... Just as well, too, because when you *do* tumble to it, the effect is very disturbing."

(Lodge, 1981: 118)

The humour registers in a relation of incongruity are still literature and life. The logic mechanism that unites and neutralises them is "reasoning from false premises" (Attardo, 2002: 10). In this case, if one accepted Adam's premise that literature can disturb life and anything once being written in a novel can exhaust a possibility of life, his reasoning then would become perfectly logical. Yet anyone with common sense understands that literature, though in some way linked to reality, is a separate category. As a PhD student of literature, it is not strange that Adam is able to refer some life events to literary works. What is unusual is that Adam should be so 'disturbed' by his literary fantasy that he should find life obstructed by literature. Adam, indulgent in his garrulous speech, ignores that he is caught in the general texture which exposes his stupid mental confusion. This is how the comic hero falls into the ironic trap designed by the implied author.

Because of his eccentric behaviour, Adam became a laughing-stock in the story world. In <u>*B.M.F.*</u>, certain *secondary roles' comments* on Adam help to enhance the comic tone in the portrayal of this literary dreamer. Here is a dialogue between Adam's friends Camel and Pond in Adam's presence:

Camel and Pond looked meaningfully at each other. "I told you," said Camel. "Appleby is cracking up."

"I can see," said Pond. He is becoming one of the Museum's eccentrics. Before we know it, he'll be shuffling around in slippers and muttering into a

beard."

"It is a special form of scholarly neurosis," said Camel. "He's no longer able to distinguish between life and literature."

(Lodge, 1981: 56)

Just to repeat, in terms of narrative levels, the characters' words given in quotation are the characters' speech acts within the story world, though such speech acts can convey similar ideas as to the narrator's discourse in conformity with the implied author's general design in this text. Here no doubt Adam's friends are poking fun at him, and they do not hesitate to tease him right to his face.

In Hamon's model for the analysis of characters, he also studied the function of certain secondary roles. As he notes, certain secondary characters serve to look, to see and even to speak about the main character. Some of them not only observe well but also express things well according to the design of the text (cf. Hamon, 1983: 69-89). One type of such characters is what he labelled the "voluble talker" ("le bavard volubile" Hamon, 1983: 89) who functions like the spokesman of the implied author. Here the two friends' commentary on Adam is compatible with the general ironic tone towards the comic hero in the text. Their remarks do function to highlight the portrait of the comic hero in conformity with the implied author's intention.

In these speeches, Adam's friends use a series of vivid expressions to describe Adam's state of mental crisis. We notice the typical *syntactic patterns of definition* repeated three times (typically involving the copulative "be"): that Adam "is cracking up", that he is one of "the Museum's eccentrics", and he is a case of "scholarly neurosis". "Definitions and verdicts" can be a source of humour when the definition given is associated with the subject with witty surprise (cf. Nash, 1985: 38). There is a certain comic *exaggeration* in these definitions, for a real neurotic can not be aware of his real situation and perform self-irony as in Adam's case. Another source of humour here is what Nash called "witty compression and comic expansion" (Nash, 1985: 13-14). In the phrase "he'll be shuffling around in slippers and muttering into a beard", "witty compression" lies in the fact that every word makes a contribution to its comic power. Meanwhile, "comic expansion" shows that the message is not limited to the scope of the *specific* experience to which the witticism refers. Rather it invites us to grasp a category, to recognise the kind of images that are raised (cf. Nash, 1985: 13-14), which is the general eccentric state of the comic hero that his peers are mocking. With all these comic means, the

account of Adam's problems time and again provokes switching to a comic climax. The last comment "he's no longer able to distinguish between life and literature" lays bare a basic feature of this character and therefore adds a critical touch to this portrait of a comic intellectual character. When literature and life tear apart and cause sufferings to Adam, it is humour that unites and brings comic harmony in the account of this tragic-comic story.

Another observer and commentator of the comic hero is his wife Barbara. Now we'll look into another part of Barbara's interior monologue at the end of the text. The story information here is Adam's wife's opinion about his literary fantasy and her mocking attitude towards him.

> ... he is always in a dream, what was it he said, a novel where life kept taking the shape of literature, did you ever hear anything so cracked, life is life and books are books and if he was a woman he wouldn't need to be told so.
>
> (Lodge, 1981: 56)

The humour incongruity here is still between the literature register and the real life register. The humour production process switches to the first comic climax through the mischievous word "cracked" used to describe Adam's confused mind. A comic climax is soon reached again via the logic mechanism of "reasoning from false premises" (Attardo, 2002: 10), which further enhances the comic tone. In this case, if one agreed with Barbara's premise that women are cleverer than men (at least in certain aspects), her conclusion about her husband's stupidity would be perfectly logical. Barbara's 'logic' is also a case of "sex humour". Sauvy once gave a brief review of the subject of 'sex' in humour. He indicates that to express opinions at the expense of the opposite sex is a particular comic source: the emitter of humour is inviting his/her comrades of the same sex to share the superior feelings with regard to the opposite sex among themselves (cf. Sauvy, 1988: 321).

The comic tone becomes more striking when high irrelevance arises in the humorous narrative. It is somewhat less shocking if Adam is said to be "so cracked", for we may accept a comment that Adam's literary fantasy has gone beyond the normal standard. But it is a bigger surprise to define Adam's madness according to a discriminative idea about man's inferior intelligence level, which has however no supporting ground either from scientific discovery or from any moral standard of nowadays. Hence irony becomes highly salient when we

encounter a noticeable contextual inappropriateness in the text (cf. Part I, Chapter 5.2.1.). The victim of the ironic humour here is obviously Adam and his eccentricity as a typical intellectual character discussed in the context of this thesis.

We see that Adam, due to his literary fantasy and consequent behaviour, is an eccentric in the eyes of others within the story world. To use Olbrecht-Tyteca's argument again, the 'ridiculous' is an important feature of this comic hero, for 'ridicule' depends on this incongruity with what is taken as 'normal' by other people. Ridicule punishes blindness and tends to place the adversary in a situation of apparent incoherence (cf. Olbrecht-Tyteca, 1974: 160). Then the 'ridiculous' person is often trying to escape from a real choice and manage a compromise; only his efforts turn out to be insufficient (cf. Olbrecht-Tyteca, 1974: 163). This is also Adam's case. Half-blind, he is above all the victim of some ironic situations; half-conscious (esp. in the case of self-irony), Adam is searching in vain for a resolution to his dilemma. In general, Adam as the comic hero is treated only as a laughing-stock rather than a real villain. This is an important paradox in the portrayal of this comic hero.

The atmosphere of literary fantasy within the story world deprives the story material of realistic illusion in favour of humour production, and within this element of the story, that is the direction that literary fantasy pulls in. Meanwhile, the other characters' look at the main character produces humorous irony rather than serious rejection. At the centre of this is a typical story of an intellectual character: the confusion or the 'dialogue' between the literary world and the world of reality, which in turn makes up the principal humour registers under the present axis. In this context, there is little room for any sincere sympathy for Adam's troubles. Instead, it is the humorous irony that prevails.

The humour produced in the story world is in accordance with the eventual ironic humour directed at the main character as designed by the implied author. However, the building up of the story world alone cannot complete this humorous narrative. Someone troubled in mind and teased by people around is however rather pathetic. For the pathetic to become comic definitely necessitates the co-operation of the multiple worlds of the whole text. This leads us to examine the ironic play of the extra-diegetic narrative levels superior to the story world.

Axis II. 3. Ironic Play Upon The Story World

In the presentation of the comic hero's literary quest, the narrator sometimes voluntarily

joins the character in his (game of) literary fantasy. Only the wry words in the narrator's discourse betray the narrator's detachment and his ironic attitude towards the character imprisoned in the story world.

Adam's daydreaming is often mixed up with his literary fantasy. As explained in the previous part, such fantasy is in the first place Adam's "filter", i.e., the literary whims are often Adam's mental production. If there is any inter-textual dialogue with other texts, the character himself is half "conscious of appropriating someone else's discourse" (Ammann, 1991: 71). But the presentation of this fantasy is often doubly-orientated discourse, i.e., it is the narrator's report of Adam's thoughts through both his "showing" and "telling". If, within the story world, Adam is in any way conscious of his dilemma and capable of any self-irony, the irony in the narrator's discourse is however beyond the character's reach.

In the beginning of Chapter Three, Adam was trying to get into the British Museum. But Adam had a problem: his Reading Room Ticket had expired. Pressed by time, he attempted to sneak in without renewing it:

> When he passed the doorkeeper *with just a nod of greeting he assumed, he hoped, an air of importance* for the group of casual visitors who invariably hung about outside the door, trying to peer into the Reading Room.
>
> 'Could I see your card, sir?"
>
> Adam, his hand *already* on the swing door, *halted and looked with astonishment and hurt pride* at the doorkeeper, who *grinned* and pointed to a notice requesting all readers to show their cards that day.
>
> (Lodge, 1981: 35; emphasis added)

Next, Adam of course had to go through the administrative procedure to renew his library card. Unfortunately, and to Adam's chagrin, he was sent back and forth several times between two librarians, until one of them had gone and Adam was left with no proof of the existence of his expired Ticket, while the other one was yelling at him:

> "'I'm afraid I can't renew a ticket which, as far as I'm concerned, doesn't exist.'"
>
> (Lodge, 1981: 36)

So Adam had to wait. But for how long? "Oh there's no telling", said the remaining librarian.

> Adam, or A as he would now more vaguely have identified himself, had been all through this before, but could not be sure whether he had dreamed it or actually experienced it. *He was trapped.* (Lodge, 1981: 36; emphasis added)

Here the humour sources are multiple, and the ironic structure is manifold.

First, there is an 'irony of events' in the story world which makes up "the ironic incongruity between the expectation and the event" (Muecke, 1969: 102). Adam, as the character in the story, at first expected to enter the Museum by cheating. Only he outsmarted himself. The set-up phase or the suspense is relatively long, and the upshot of the event is striking: Adam was caught, and the frustration is huge for him. With regard to the humour structure, the suspense and the unexpected end compose the humour registers within the story world; and the irony is due to the character's initial pretension and his eventual embarrassment.

Such irony is highlighted and turned to comedy when an extra treatment is given to the story. The **second** source of irony stems from the narrator's mockery at the character through his 'telling', which makes the ironic situation even more ironical. Muecke, while referring to "dramatic irony", explains: "Generally speaking the irony is more striking when an observer already knows what the victim has yet to find out" (Muecke, 1969: 104). The character's filtration is 'psycho-narrated', but is rendered in the narrator's words. The ironic words (see emphasis in italics) reveal a narrator who is the observer and controller of the event. The character in his filtration is unable to pre-tell what would really happen at last, while the narrator in his 'slant' is certain of the trap waiting for his character. The narrator first emphasises Adam's initial blind self-complacency ("with *just* a nod of greeting *he* assumed, *he* hoped") and then his eventual embarrassment (Adam later "halted and looked with astonishment and hurt pride..."). Repeated use of "he" in reference to Adam indicates the narrator's distance from the character; the supplementary details given and the qualities attributed to the character throughout the whole event are the narrator's device for the production of ironic humour. As a result, the ironic event becomes more dramatic and the comic effects are time and again switched to a climax due to the narrator's emphasis on this incongruity. The last sentence "he was trapped" is the narrator's synthetic commentary, which

is certainly the narrator's cheer for the triumph of irony over the character.

In this passage, Adam is in for a Kafkaesque adventure confronting vexatious bureaucrats. 'Inter-textual dialogue' is then the **third** source of irony. Through this inter-textual dialogue, Adam's dilemma is ironically compared to Mr. K's adventure in that "Castle" imagined by Kafka. The character himself is only half conscious of this irony (Adam "could not be sure..."). But the narrator, by his confident ironic tone in the 'telling' of the story, is lucid and deliberate in this ironic project.

The dialogic form of this inter-textual play with Kafka's *Castle* is close to Genette's "pastiche". In other words, it is not really a verbal play on the original text. What is involved in the dialogue mostly concerns the thematic characteristics, the story structure, and the atmosphere against which the similar adventure of the main character is to be presented.

Now let us compare the story structure drawn from the parts of the two texts in dialogue:

Castle	***B.M.F.***
1. K	1. Adam, or A (exceptionally shortened for this "dialogue")
2. tries to enter the Castle	2. tries to enter the British Museum
3. "Personne n'en a le droit sans la permission du comte." (Kafka, 1938: 8).	3. "a notice requesting all readers to show their cards that day"
4. A young man who woke up K to question him however "s'excusa très poliment d'avoir réveillé K..."	4. the two librarians who baffled Adam with their questions however greeted him politely and explained to him "the reason for our apparently contradictory behaviour"
5. Due to the misunderstanding caused by a telephone information, K was refused and insulted: "Je le disait bien, s'écria-t-il, pas plus d'arpenteur que sur ma main, un vulgaire vagabond qui raconte des histoires, et puis encore probablement." (Kafka, 1938: 11)	5. Due to the misunderstanding caused by the exchange of seats of the two librarians, Adam was refused and insulted: "I'm afraid I can't renew a ticket which, as far as I'm concerned, doesn't exist." (Lodge, 1981: 36)
= the beginning of K's misadventures in the Castle	= event as the beginning of Adam's misadventures in the British Museum

We see from the analysis above how this passage imitates the beginning of Kafka's *Castle* in its story structure: both A(dam) and K have a difficult entry into the 'labyrinth': the entry for both of them requires a 'permission'; both of them are suspected, misunderstood, rejected before the entry; an entry that leads to a labyrinth where they will be equally lost ... Ammann in his discussion of *B.M.F.* sees in particular "irony as a functional facet of intertextual references" in this text (Ammann, 1991: 77). The story frame displayed above is indeed ironical with regard to the character imprisoned in his story world. We should first understand that this story structure is designed by the implied author. Meanwhile, this project is actualised with great efficiency by the narrator, for we have just seen that the narrator's discourse has decisively enhanced the ironic humour to comic effect. The implied author and

the narrator are actually united together hatching a plot to ironise about the comic hero behind his back. According to Chatman, this is a case of reliable narration: "the narrator reports the character's thought or speech but in addition implies or asserts a certain unacceptability of that thought or speech" while this discourse "is not countermanded by the implied author" (cf. Chatman, 1990: 151).

When Ammann studied the inter-textual dialogue in *B.M.F.*, "allusion" for him is a less transparent form regarding the references involved in the dialogue. He explained that in "allusion", the *target text* "merely flirts with" the (absent) *source text*[15] (cf. Ammann, 1991: 67). In this case, "allusion" "is generally characterised as an implicit reference to another work of literature. In a broad sense, references to persons and events are also included" (Ammann, 1991: 63). Ammann's account of the term "allusion" further clarifies the inter-textual dialogue between this passage of *B.M.F.* with Kafka's *Castle* as its source text.

The two texts flirting with each other then compose another important pair of humour registers. Added on to the humour structure already existing in the target text, humour with this inter-textual dialogue is further amplified and its serious meaning is also enriched.

As for the revelation of the 'serious meaning', Ammann also points out that "intertextual references can have an *illustrative function* by conveying meaning in a condensed form" (Ammann, 1991: 73). The serious meaning implied by this inter-textual dialogue then refers to Kafka's particular way of presenting reality and the philosophy of life embodied in his works. In this case, "illustration" "is a short cut, so to speak, to information that would take up a great deal of space in the novel or short story" (Ammann, 1991: 74). With regard to the portrayal of the comic hero, the serious meaning of humour mainly concerns the ironic situation he is put in and his confusion and incompetence while facing his reality.

Of course, humour engendered by this inter-textual dialogue is intended for the kind of implied readers who have sufficient literary knowledge so that they can recognise and appreciate this humour. This possible failure suffered by a real reader (not only in this occurrence of the inter-textual dialogue) could be given more consideration in a study of extra-textual elements, which is however beyond the major concern of this thesis[16]. Once again, we are aware of the limitation of pure text study as advocated by narratology.

It has been the central purpose of my investigation to locate those factors in the text that work together to turn the story into a comic event and the unfortunate character into a comic hero. In this adventure, we have also confronted a labyrinth of complex humour structure. In this presentation of the comic hero's Kafkaesque experience, many narrative elements are

involved in the inter-textual dialogue or have joined the play structure of different narrative levels within the target text. As a result, these narrative elements have together comprised a complex spatial structure of humour.

At this point in my discussion I want to call attention to some advantages of my spatial structure of humour compared with Attardo's linear formula of humour. A critical difference is that my spatial structure of humour emphasises the *simultaneous functioning of multiple narrative elements*, while Attardo's linear formula of humour is very much confined by his awareness "that you can only get one item at a time" (Attardo , 1997: 417; cf. Part I, Chapter 4. 4. of this thesis). As a result, I surmise that Attardo's formula of humour (with all its intrinsic worth, of course) may appear to be rather clumsy when it is applied to a manifold humour structure in a complex humorous text like the texts I am analysing.

As we have seen, the narrator's voice can be overheard when the presentation of the story goes beyond pure story information providing. In *B.M.F.*, the main task of the narrator's discourse, as far as our present discussion is concerned, is to construct humorous irony at the expense of the character in his bewildered literary quest according to the implied author's design. Next, we'll retake (part of) the passage at the beginning of Chapter Five for analysis. We studied this paragraph earlier as a *comb* recalling the headed quotation of this chapter for the production of humour. Now there is one important reason for my re-examination of this part. My **spatial humour structure** (once again) presumes that there are multiple sources of humour active at the same time. The study of register-based humour, rather than being hindered because "you can get one item at a time" (Attardo , 1997: 417), should break this limitation and give prominent consideration to studying humour entities from different points of view when we approach complex humorous texts. Besides, irony is complex and exhibits a great variety of manifestations in this text, as in many complex humorous texts in fact. This time, we'll see that the narrator's discourse, apart from using attributive words or expressions, is also capable of using different grammatical phrases to build up humorous irony.

Now we'll look into the latter half of this paragraph again. As we concluded earlier, the victim of irony is Adam and the infertility of his literary quest. Next, we'll see how the narrator's discourse plays upon the story world and contributes to the humorous irony.

> He (Adam) coveted the files, punches, staplers, erasers, coloured inks and gadgets whose functions remained a teasing mystery, thinking that if only he could afford to equip himself with all this apparatus his thesis would write itself: he

would be automated.

(Lodge, 1981: 70)

The story information presented is Adam's activity at the Museum. The character, in his serious indulgence in the manipulation of his stationary, believes at least to some degree that he is working for the progress of his thesis. The modifying word "teasing" and the conditional tense used however reveals an opposite opinion. Here the narrator is expressing his ironic attitude towards the character through his "interpretation". As I stated more than once, "interpretation" is one version of the narrator's overt commentary. Here I am using Chatman's definition of this term in the narrow sense, i.e., it is a "relatively value-free attempt to account for something in terms of the story itself, without going outside it (as do judgement and generalisation)" (Chatman, 1978: 237-238)[17]. In this sample case, the narrator is explaining or predicting by inferring ironically what the character is unable to explain in his state of confusion (cf. Chatman, 1978: 240).

In terms of *narrative levels*, humour incongruity lies in the ironic play between the character's blind bustle and the narrator's ironic presentation of the story. As Sareil says, the tragic hero is lucid, the comic hero is blind." ("le héros tragique est lucide, le héros comique est aveugle." Sareil, 1984: 87). As a modern comic hero, Adam is capable of a certain self-irony and is to some degree lucid about his situation at certain moments of the story. But it still can not help him from falling into the ironic trap set by the narrator, nor can he escape from the ironic destiny designed by the implied author. And certainly the character is unable to be aware of such ironic play upon him, trapped as he is in his story world. Hence the narrator takes this advantage opportunity to invite the narratee (and the implied reader in the case of reliable narration) to enjoy a feeling of superiority over the character's blindness. The set-up phase of humour is definitely switched to a comic climax through the wording of the narrator's presentation. Meanwhile, the delivery of comic effects accompanies the revelation of the *serious meaning* of this ironic humour: how can a thesis write itself if Adam doesn't work well? How can Adam expect to be automated with all his inextricable problems if he cannot find a way out? The comic hero is also a failure in his literary quest.

Adam's gigantic research project has been held up by numerous troubles. His misadventure at the Museum has by now gone from bad to worse. This time, he failed to reach his wife by phone, for he made himself misunderstood to the operator who thought that the

Museum was on fire! ... He had finally escaped from the panic at the Museum caused by himself, leaving his coat behind... Now we find an even more ostensible manifestation of the narrator in his 'summary' of the character:

> He (Adam) had a vivid mental image of the duffle coat draped over the back of his padded chair, its hood drooping forward like the head of a scholar bowed over his books. ... It seemed like a ghost of his former self, or rather, the external shell of the Adam Appleby who had, only a few days ago, been a reasonably contented man, but who now, haunted with the fear of an unwanted addition to his family, divided and distracted about his academic work, and guilty of a hoax he had no intention of committing, wandered like an outcast through the foggy streets of Bloomsbury. (Lodge, 1981: 95)

Here irony is announced by a humorous comparison between Adam and some wry images. Besides, the narrator is using a sequence of simile and metaphor to summarise all of Adam's troubles, which is however beyond the character's synthetic competence at this moment of his mental chaos. The first humour register represents high and decent value ("scholar", "contented man", etc.), while the second register is degraded to low and pathetic value with a series of ghostly images ("ghost", "external shell", "an outcast", etc.), their movements ("drooping forward", "draped over", "wandered", etc.) and the accompanying atmosphere ("foggy streets", etc.) The logic mechanism that unites and neutralises the humour incongruity is again 'false analogy'. Humour incongruity in terms of narrative levels lies in the character's "fear", his lost pleasure in reading, and the narrator's mocking attitude towards him. As Adam's anxiety gets on top of him, the narrator's lofty mockery of him also reaches its peak. As usual, high inappropriateness activates the switching to a comic climax and reveals ironic salience. Adam's failure in his literary quest is more than ever teased; but this mockery still never goes beyond a playful tone. Such ironic form may vary, but the theme remains the same: clear distinctions between life and literature are often hard to arrive at. The comic hero is driven mad in his quest and lost in the common frontier ground between literature and real life; the narrator, guided by the implied author's intelligence, casts an ironic but understanding look at the comic creature and joins Adam in this inextricable intellectual dialogue.

Sex Quest ←→ Literary Quest ←→ Religious Quest

Or

Summary

1. Paradox Structure of Humour

B.M.F. tells us a story of a PhD student's misadventures in one day of his life. The concept of 'paradox' above all implies the co-existence of incongruous values. To display the paradox structure of humour in this text is among other things to answer this question: how a pathetic story is narrated to comic effect. Narrative theory inspires us to address this issue from the play structure of the multiple worlds of the narrative.

Bakhtin's concept of 'dialogue' involves the confrontation of all the conflicting elements in the texture of some typical modern fiction. 'Dialogue' between the incongruous elements makes up the various humour registers and it is the driving force that leads to the paradox of ironic humour in this humorous text.

'Dialogue' exists in the story frame, in the theme development and in the building-up of the comic hero's interior world. In terms of narrative levels, 'dialogue' may be embodied in the general story structure, it may also be entrusted to the narrator's discourse or to the story world. A general design of the implied author in this text is to construct the text in dialogue with the text structure of James Joyce's *Ulysses* so as to highlight the important theme of 'literary fantasy', while the title (modelled on a well-known nursery rhyme) fixes the comic tone of the text.

The paradox structure within the **story world** has multiple sources. *First*, the atmosphere of literary fantasy in the story word to a certain degree deprives the (pathetic) story material of realistic illusion in favour of humour production. *Second*, there is the ironic situation the comic hero confronts: the possibilities of life for Adam are banned by Catholic teaching and disturbed by his literary fantasy. As a result, both his sex quest and literary quest tend to end up in frustration. *Third,* there is also a 'paradox' in the comic hero's personality: Adam is simultaneously confused and lucid; he is aware of his dilemma but still keeps on in the same direction. His capacity for self-irony betrays his split-ego. As a modern comic hero, Adam differs from Candide in this very self-consciousness.

As in *Candide*, **the narrator's discourse** in this humorous text also exhibits itself by adopting various comic writing skills to compose ironic treatment of the story material. The

narrator's 'showing up' can be seen in its highly-charged interpretation of the story events and its elaborate contribution to the portrait of the comic hero. He assists the implied author with efficiency in the actualisation of various dialogic forms. When the previously implicit becomes now the explicit via the narrator's discourse, the pathetic story material world becomes now the non-serious story events. When the narrator's ironic voice highlights various humour incongruities, it often activates definite switching to comic effects and reveals ironic salience.

2. Revelation of The Serious Meaning

In *B.M.F.* dialogues are multiple and the ironic humour has different sources. Like the humorous text *Candide*, there is of course the reversal of the implicit and the explicit in terms of the humour structure, i.e., the potentially pathetic is turned into the comic through the ironic play of multiple narrative levels; but unlike *Candide*, there is not really a reversal in what the humour structure reveals as the 'serious meaning'. In this text, the character himself is half conscious of his literary fantasy and is able to see his (story) world as half real. Also the character is capable of a certain irony towards himself and towards life in general. In fact, we can notice that the narrator's voice sometimes goes in parallel with the comic hero's voice in a dialogue of secret agreement.

The following are just two sample cases of such revelation, in which we can see how the comic hero's identity crisis, for instance, is defined and reconfirmed in a harmonious dialogue between the character and the narrator. If, in the very beginning of the book, it is the narrator's voice that announces the multiple troubles Adam is to be put in, Adam in the story world gives the best summary of his dilemma:

Narrator:

It was Adam Appleby's misfortune that at the moment of awakening from sleep his consciousness was immediately flooded with everything he least wanted to think about... (Lodge, 1981: 7)

Adam:

"I don't see the point of life at all," said Adam. 'The only thing about it that seems really mine is sex - literature has annexed the rest. But sex is my big problem. I don't have enough of it, and when I do I get sick with worry." (Lodge, 1981: 74)

Inextricably lost in his troubles, Adam's personal identity is called into question. If the narrator's discourse takes joy in poking fun at the comic hero bewildered in his infertile literary quest, Adam himself is no less eloquent in recapping his confused state:

Narrator:

...he realised how closely his sense of personal identity, uncertain as this was, was involved in these fragile, vulnerable sheets, cards and notebooks, ... almost everything he had thought and read for the past two years was recorded there. It wasn't much, but it was all he had. (Lodge, 1981: 88).

Adam:

"...You might pick up a book at any time and read about an ordinary chap called Joe Smith doing just the sort of things you did yourself. ... because when you *do* tumble to it, the effect is very disturbing." (Lodge, 1981: 118)

As we have understood, the narrator's discourse in *B.M.F.* carries on a reliable narration, i.e., it goes in conformity with the implied author's design. On the other hand, as we see that there is no essential contradiction between the narrator's voice and the main character's voice either, the serious meaning of the ironic humour must come from the mixed but basically harmonious chorus composed of both the diegetic agent (the character in the story world) and the extra-diegetic narrative agents (the implied author and the narrator outside the story world). This conclusion leads us to better recapitulate this humorous text as a modern literary work.

3. *B.M.F.* As A Modern Fiction

In a sense, Adam's living space is a universe ruled by 'Catch 22'. He finds himself stuck at the crossroad where no way out seems possible for him. As a matter of fact, his sex quest, literary quest and religious quest all obstruct each other which results in his total incompetence in life. This story fits into a literary type, at least in the realm of modern European literature. Deguy in his book *L'intellectuel et ses miroirs romanesques* (1993) gave an account of the modern European fiction based on intellectual characters as a special phenomenon in modern western literature. As he explained, such works are "merciless texts about ridiculous intellectuals" ("Que de textes impitoyables sur les ridicules des 'intellectuels"), which expose in particular "the displacement between their thoughts and deeds, their incompetence to open up to real life" ("sur le décalage entre ses pensées et ses actes, son incapacité à s'ouvrir à la vraie vie." Deguy, 1993: 9).

In the presentation of this story, the comic hero, being on the other side of the discourse barrier, is often the victim of irony launched by the implied author and the narrator united together. This is how Adam in *B.M.F.*, in the same way as Candide in *Candide*, is caught in the humour structure. In spite of their weakness, neither of the two comic heroes is the eventual target of irony revealed by the serious meaning. Nonetheless, unlike the text *Candide* which does have an object for negation, *B.M.F.* does not really have anything for definite devaluation. With his half lucidity, Adam's self-consciousness cannot be the real target of the irony of the text. This is what Muecke evokes as the kind of irony that expresses "paradox and dilemma", i.e., when "the ironist or the ironical observer feels the dilemma as a real one" (Muecke, 1969: 25). It is true that

the ironist is a victim because he is put in an ironic situation. But it is not so certain that the irony ends there, or works only in this direction. Isn't it possible that such a dilemma in turn signifies a more general truth? This very ambiguity corresponds with what Yaari once explained as the "modernity" ("modernité") of some more recent literary writing. Yaari then expounded that 'modern irony' in particular has two mutual complementary components: one is philosophical and the other is artistic ("l'ironie moderne comprend deux composantes - l'une philosophique, l'autre artistique - qui se complètent réciproquement" Yaari, 1993: 124). In this sense, the humour structure I have displayed concerns just the artistic side of the text, while the serious meaning revealed by this humour structure concerns the philosophic side of the text. For Yaari, uncertainty or paradoxical irony in this modernity signifies the retreat of a speaking agent who used to stand out finally to define what is right or what is wrong with great power. This is also an important reason why there is no "transformation" of Adam as a fictional character. The death of this agent in the ironology of modern literature matches well with the "death of God" in "modern philosophy"[18]. In other words, while the art of the textual construction implies the domination of plural even infinite dialogue, the general irony conveyed also indicates an infinite paradox beyond human beings' real grasp (cf. Yaari, 1993: 128-130). As said earlier, this kind of irony is very self-conscious, very philosophical and is open to dialectical exposition (cf. Part I, Chapter 4. 2. 3.).

Next, I will analyse another humorous text which comes beyond the frontier of European fiction. It is a Chinese fiction which, I believe, has many similarities with *B.M.F.* at least at the story level. In addition, with an intellectual character as the central personage and the humorous irony in the portrayal of this character, I consider it to be a humorous text sharing some 'norms' (determined by its 'implied author') with the two humorous texts already analysed.

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[1] Lodge, David (1981) *The British Museum is Falling Down*, London: Penguin Group. This book title will take the short form of *B.M.F.* in the following text analysis.

[2] According to Björk, "literary portraits of scholars can be found well back in the Middle Ages (ex. Chaucer portrays a Clerk of Oxford in 'the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales')" in English literature. However, subsequently this university character becomes "crude, and often vulgar, the tales seem to have been something more than scandalous exaggerations; they were, in fact, popularisation of a prevailing attitude which from time to time received more dignified literary expression." (Björk, 1993: 19). Modern campus fiction can usually be noted for these characteristics: 1) "the scholar's (since the 'eternal student' of Chaucer's good clerk of Oxford) aloofness from the 'real' world"; 2) "the surviving flaw in the Clerk's character concerns his irrelevant eloquence"; 3) the "negative

portrayal of the academic world" (Björk, 1993: 20).

[3] The original French version of this part is: "Mais j'ai choisi de me limiter ici à cet aspect de l'"esprit comique" ... où ce sont le culte de l'incongru, l'indécision du paradoxe, l'irrationnel qui dominent, ...; où le jeu et le gratuit sont encore de la partie, où rien n'est fige en grimace de désespoir, c'est-à-dire où la dominante de l'œuvre dans son ensemble est l'ironie paradoxale. ... l'attitude morale et l'esthétique qu'on choisit pour y répondre peuvent bien être absurdement légère ou ludiques, ... le fond qui permane n'est réductible à aucun système, sauf au non-système du paradoxe." Yaari, 1990 :126).

[4] The first category is "direct, unmediated directed exclusively toward its referential object, as an expression of the speaker's ultimate semantic authority" (Bakhtin, 1984: 199) which is then not a case of "dialogue" and thus not a case for study in this thesis. The second category is "objectified discourse (discourse of a represented person)"; the third category is "discourse with an orientation toward someone else' discourse (double-voiced discourse)" (Bakhtin, 1984: 199). The latter two cases are different forms of "dialogue".

[5] Such interpretation with reference to the cultural background of the text will be further developed in part III "Further Perspectives".

[6] Translated from French version which goes: "Imaginons que deux répliques d'un dialogue extrêmement intense, mot et anti-mot, au lieu de se suivre et d'être prononcées par deux bouches différentes, soient appliquées l'une sur l'autre et se fondent en un SEUL énoncé mis dans une SEULE bouche" (Bakhtin, 1970: 244).

[7] V. Raskin made a summary about the traditional research on sexual humour: "Traditionally, sexual humour has been researched by proponents of the suppression/release-based theories... and the prevalent thesis has been that sex, along with other physiological functions as direct violence, is normally suppressed and repressed, and humour provides an outlet for its release in a way which may be more appropriate and socially and ethically acceptable than the more direct and natural way. In other words, sexual language is substituted for sexual humour, and the pleasure from sexual humour is of a sexual nature. In fact, some researchers claim that this pleasure is a complicated mixture of sexual behaviour, a resistance to it, and the overcoming of the resistance." (V. Raskin, 1985: 148).

[8] Chatman explains that "*direct free thought* ... is a form of enactment that in extended form is called 'interior monologue'. The critical features are: (1) The character's self-reference, if any, is first person. (2) The current discourse-movement is the same as the story-moment; hence any predicate referring to the current moment will be in the present tense. this not an 'epic present' depicting past time, but rather a real present referring to contemporary time of the action. Memories and other references to the past will occur in the simple preterite, not the past perfect. (3) The language - idiom, diction, word- and syntactic-choice - are identifiably those of the character, whether or not a character elsewhere intervenes. (4) Allusions to anything in the character's experience are made with no more explanation than would be needed in his own thinking, that is, (5) there is no presumptive audience other than the thinker himself, no deference to the ignorance or expository needs of a narratee" (Chatman, 1978: 182-183).

[9] Cf. (1) G. **Genette** explains: "...J'entends par là toute relation unissant un texte B (que j'appellerai *hypertexte)* à un texte antérieur A (que j'appellerai, bien sûr, hypotexte) sur le quel il se greffe d'une manière qui n'est pas celle du commentaire. ... tel que B ne parle nullement de A, dont il résulte au terme d'une opération que je qualifierai, provisoirement de *transformation,* et qu'en conséquence il évoque plus ou moins manifestement, sans nécessairement parler de lui et le citer." (Genette, 1982: 11-12). (2) Then **Jardon** interprets Genette's ideas as: "Un texte A, déjà existant, peut subir, sous la plume d'un tiers, des transformations simples et ce, dans une intention ou *ludique* ou *satirique* ou *sérieuse.*" (Jardon, 1988: 174).

[10] "Interest point of view" is one of the further divisions Chatman made to the traditional term "point of view": it is a "matter of concern" for the character, by which "we identify with her (the character), interpret events as they affect her, with her good luck or good comeuppance" (Chatman, 1990: 148).

[11] Jouve in 1992 dedicated a whole book mainly to address the problem of how a narrative (eg., a novel) is constructed so as to project a certain image of its characters for the perception of its (implied) readers. Among other things, he explained that the portraits of characters can be delivered with "distance" or with "proximity". Such portraits are first offered with various degrees of transparency; meanwhile it may also involve the narrator's comments which communicate his ideas on the characters. So there exists the direct presentation of the characters so as to produce the illusion of how the characters really are in the actual situation of the story; or another kind of presentation *with distance*, which shows the different identity of a narrator. The former case favours sympathy with the characters in their story situation, whereas the latter case mainly addresses the narratee (or may be the implied reader in the case of a reliable narration) and favours a detached perception of the characters as distant from the situation in the story world. (cf. "Les personnages *livrés* se divisent en *distanciés* et *proximisés.* Ils se signalent tous par leur transparence, mais il y a ceux dont les pensées nous sont rapportées par un narrateur qui les commente...et

ceux dont l'intériorité nous est révélée telle quelle, dans une illusion d'immédiateté. Les occurrences *livrées distanciées* entraînent une identification au narrateur, tandis que les occurrences *livrées proximisées* poussent à la sympathie pour le personnage. En se sens, on peut dire que les personnages *distanciés* s'adressent plutôt au *lu* et reposent sur l'effet-prétexte...") (Vincent Jouve, 1992: 178).

[12] "Les personnages *distanciés* se signalent au travers de trois techniques d'écriture: (1)le psycho-récit à dissonance marquée, (2)le monologue rapporté ironiquement et (3) le monologue narraivisé ironiquement" (V. Jouve 1992: 178; numbered by me) He gave an extract from Dostoïveski's novel <u>*Le double*</u> as an example:

> *"Le voilà donc, messieurs, qui attend maintenant en tapinois, et il attend depuis exactement deux heures et demie. Et pourquoi donc ne pas attendre?* (2) *Villèle lui-même attendait. 'Mais qu'est-ce que Villèle vient faire ici? songeait M. Goliadkine, pour quoi faire Villèle? Et si maintenant, là... comment dirait-je...si d'un seul coup, ni une ni deux, j'entrais? Espèce de figurant, va!' se dit à lui-même M. Goliadkine en pinçant de ses doigts engourdis sa joue engourdie, 'espèce de nigaud, espèce de Goliadkine bien nommé!...*(3) *Au reste, ces gentillesses adressées à lui-même n'étaient en la circonstance que mots en l'air, dit au vol, sans but apparent.*(1)" (V. Jouve, 1992: 179)

[13] Cf: Attardo, 2001: 58-60. While Attardo explains the function of "bridge", he used some other theorists' discoveries in psycholinguistic research to suggest that it is possible to retain the surface structure to certain degree after a relatively short time span. Then he concludes that "by putting lines in a prominent location, humorists maximize the natural likelihood of verbatim retention of the humorous lines, which derives from their semantic markedness." (Attardo, 2001: 59) These suggestions explain to certain degree how some (relatively "distant" cf. foot note 11 and 12) text structures can be recognised so that their humour can be appreciated.

[14] Cf. Axis I. 2., Chapter 1.2. in my <u>*Candide*</u> analysis for Attardo's explanation of "false analogy".

[15] Ammann's terms the "target text" and the "source text" (Ammann, 1991: 67) in his explanation of the intertextual dialogue in <u>*B.M.F.*</u> correspond respectively with Genette's "texte B" and "texte A" in his "hypertextualité" (Genette, 1982: 11-12).

[16] However see a development of this point in part III "Further Perspectives".

[17] According to Chatman, "'interpretation' can be seen as the broadest category of overt commentary. In one sense, it includes the others: if an interpretation proper is any explanation, a judgement is an explanation whose basis is moral evaluation, while a generalization is one that compares an event or existent in the story with real ones in the nonfictional universe. But we shall stick to the three-way distinction, limiting 'interpretation" to any relatively value-free attempt to account for something in terms of the story itself, without going outside it (as do judgment and generalization)" (Chatman, 1978: 233-234).

[18] Cf. "Ainsi, la 'mort de l'agent, dans le domaine de l'ironologie, rejoint la 'mort de l'auteur ... en littérature, qui avait suivi, comme on le sait la 'mort de Dieu' en philosophie" (Yaari, 1993: 129).

CHAPTER 3

FORTRESS BESIEGED[1]

The first published edition of *F.B.* appeared in 1947 and it was originally written in Chinese. However, in consideration of the language barrier, the following analysis of this humorous text will be based on the English version translated from Chinese. With an awareness of possible problems caused by translation (e.g. alteration or even loss of message), further explanation of the original text (e.g. additional word for word translation) will be given at certain moments of the discussion. In the meantime, since the focus of study of this thesis is not on translation, the original text will be referred to only when it is necessary for the explanation of humour.

Like the two preceding humorous texts, the main character (together with all other important characters in fact) is an intellectual (anti-)hero; and the *story* is also about his dilemma in the face of reality. Funny, distracting, *F.B.* is nevertheless not a cheerful book. The main character (Fang Hong-jian) is the son of a Chinese family sent to study abroad in Europe. He returns home with a false PhD diploma at the beginning of the Japanese invasion of China. Then he starts his pursuit of both career and women. He obtains a sinecure in Shanghai but loses it soon after. Then he goes to teach in a small provincial university and loses his post one year later again. He dallies with several women but is terribly hurt the only time he falls in love sincerely. The story ends with his quarrels with and separation from the woman that he has married in a hurry. In the end Hong-jian is left lonely and jobless. The *portrait of this character* is full of paradox: our hero is in fact comic and tragic at the same time. He is eloquent in speech and good at humour, but is fairly "useless" (Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 191) and worthless in real life; a rather kind-hearted person but scarcely appreciated; quite pretentious but weak in action. He wants to play with life but only fools himself.

In this humorous text, the elaboration of words for comic effects very often prevails over the story presentation[2]. Unlike the story world in *Candide* or in *B.M.F.* which is largely deprived of realistic illusion by way of fantastic atmosphere building, the story world in *F.B.* offers little comic fantasy. This is at least one reason why this work is generally viewed as a realistic novel.

Ironic humour in this text then stems almost purely from the garrulity of the narrator as well as that of the characters. There is an obsession with words and word-play in both the story world and the narrator's discourse. Much of the 'play' on the language level seems to be only for play's sake, and the implied reader of the text is meant to be carried away by the comic effects almost entirely provoked by the exquisite language. The story about the comic hero's misadventures is pathetic, like the other two analysed humorous texts. The consecutive jokes made by the characters do deliver comic effects. Such humour is meanwhile amplified by the narrator's discourse. Next to the humour provoked by the language play, the play structure of the multiple narrative worlds also construct the serious meaning of humour according to the implied author's design. This is the frame of the paradoxical structure of humour in this text. Bergson once said: "we should make the distinction between the comic that a language expresses and the comic that the language itself creates." ("il faut distinguer entre le comique que le language exprime et celui que le language crée." Bergson, 1997: 79). For this humorous text, it is the latter case that is the principal source of humour and is therefore the focus of our analysis. Some humour theorists have used the term 'word play' to refer to certain comic effects caused by the usage of language. As Chiaro says, "word play, the use of language with intent to amuse, is, of course, only one of numerous ways of provoking laughter... once words become part of the stimulus, whatever the type of verbal conceit, it is bound to be the verbalisation of a state, an event or a situation" (Chiaro, 1992: 5). In the following text analysis, we shall see many examples of this kind, in which 'word play' becomes the stimulus of humour: various language skills are given full play in both the character's speeches and in the narrator's discourse for the humorous interpretation of the story events and the intellectual character(s) in question. Above all, the manipulation of language produces an ironic treatment of the story material and contributes to the portrayal of the comic hero. In this text, the (loss of) balance between the incongruous elements involved in humour production eventually reveals a serious meaning that tends to overshadow the playful tone and to convey something more tragic than the previous two texts analysed.

'False' or 'valid analogy' in a sense is the main logic mechanism used for the union and the neutralisation of various incongruous elements for humour production in this text. Humorous analogy in this text is produced by the principle of association that lies beneath the protean and original language usage and the resultant imagery. In addition, 'analogy' in this text is less

concerned with the particular linguistic form of the different figurative usage of language than their joint expression as powerful language skills: various kinds of analogy are used not only as effective humour skills but also as most eloquent narrative skills in general.

As said earlier, 'analogy' used in a playful form for humour production is a notion borrowed from Attardo's terminology for the explanation of humour, though Attardo himself did not provide much explanation of this logic mechanism (2000; 2002). To further understand how it functions in the case of humour, it is worthwhile to look into some discussion of the notion of *'analogy' alone* first. Based on Aristotle's explanation of 'analogy' in his *Rhetoric*, Kirwan shows how analogy relies upon the correspondence between two ratios: A:B as C:D, which then leads to the formula "A is C", though it is only the most formal expression we can give to the relationship. An example given is the equation "sunset : day" as "old : life", which then leads to the similarity between "sunset" and "old" (cf. Kirwan, 1990: 12-13). An extended explanation of such a relationship is the relationship between all the particular existing examples of x and the overtones or associations evoked by x (cf. Kirwan, 1990: 17-18). This explanation may lead us to understand that analogy implies some association and interaction between two (or several) entities or two groups (or several groups) of entities. As a result, analogy can also allow us to perceive, think, feel about or interpret one thing in terms of another, which is indeed exploited in both the general and local narrative structure of humour.

Kirwan also pointed out two important aspects of 'analogy': it implies simultaneously "a perception of *resemblance*" and "a certain *distance*" (Kirwan, 1990: 12; emphasis added) . While I surmise that it is relatively easier to understand the former, I feel the need to give a supplementary clarification of the latter. As Kirwan explains: "one 'compares', for instance, Edinburgh University with some other university but one 'draws an analogy' between a ship and the state" (Kirwan, 1990: 12). In other words, drawing an analogy implies the capacity to see some similarity between (at least) two entities which is not recognised in a usual case. The creation of analogy then also means the creation of originality and surprise. In this sense, association through the use of analogy between usually very distant entities is a striking feature of the humorous language in *F.B.*.

Of course, neither Aristotle nor Kirwan studied 'analogy' to explain humour, for 'analogy' limited to their explanation indeed does not necessarily produce humour. Analogy in the present

discussion concerns us more when it functions as a logic mechanism for *humour production*. In other words, it must in addition (among other things) involve humour incongruity which can be neutralised in the textual context. For Attardo, 'false analogy' and 'valid analogy' are two sub-divisions within the category of 'humorous analogy'. Then 'false analogy' can be analysed as: a and b (possibly multiple elements), are alike in respect to x (whereas they are not in all respects, or x does not exist, or is a marginal aspect of a and b)" (Attardo, 2002: 13). 'Valid analogy', according to Attardo, is distinguished from the 'false analogy' for it "is one that is focused on one of the central, essential traits of the two entities being compared" (Attardo, 2002: 10-11).

Analogy as an effective device for comic writing can be found at every narrative level in this text, for the character, the narrator and the implied author are all involved in this language play for humour. In such comic writing, humour incongruity is recurrently united through surprising[3] juxtaposition. The paradox of humour in such humorous analogy very often depends on the register opposition of real/unreal: what is expressed is somewhat true as an account of certain human behaviour or a certain aspect of life; only the twisted or exaggerated part turns out to be unreal to some degree. The abundant humorous analogy or word play in general in this text exhibits an obsession with or even abuse of language; meanwhile, it also reveals intellectual consciousness. In a sense, this indulgence is compatible with the main character's temperament as an intellectual. Such comic writing also directly or indirectly contributes to the portrayal of the intellectual hero in *F.B.*.

Unexpected analogy is an important source of humour in *F.B.*. In the context of the analysis of this text, 'humorous analogy' is used to refer to any implicit or explicit connection of two (or several) entities through humorous comparison, including humorous simile and metaphor, which are frequently used in this text. Meanwhile, some 'non-humorous analogy' is also taken into consideration when it is related to the portrayal of the tragic-comic hero.

It is still 'ironic humour' that dominates in the portrayal of the comic hero. In other words, as elsewhere, humour production in this text only leads to a moderate scorn rather than a definite criticism of this character. In the analysis of *F.B.* however, the term 'cynicism' is employed in addition to explain a main characteristic of the humour in this text. 'Cynicism' is essentially a "scorn of goodness or established moral standards" (Fontanille, 1993: 9). According to certain theorists, cynicism is a cultural value[4], i.e., the cynical attitude is judged against a generally

shared attitude among a people/peoples with the same cultural background in the real world. As Fontanille says, cynicism relies on a certain life style, a certain conception of values related to a certain society (cf. Fontanille, 1993: 10). Since this thesis does not purport to go beyond text study as its main task, our discussion for the time being will take place within the limits of the text. In *F.B.*, there is the characters' cynicism in the story world and cynicism is also an important trait of the portrait of the comic hero: 'cynicism' as a derogatory value attributed to the character can be seen from much of the ironic commentary in the narrator's discourse. What is interesting is that there is also the cynicism expressed in the narrator's discourse that accompanies the character's cynicism. The cynicism shared in these two discourse worlds is also exposed and mocked at by the general texture as designed by the implied author. In this sense, cynicism is to a certain degree analysable within the scope of text study only.

The notion of 'cynicism' has been studied as a *comic device*. Cazeneuve (1984) once analysed how cynicism functions to produce the comic: the exaggeration of faults is a common device for the production of humour and it is particularly compatible with cynicism ("l'exagération d'un défaut est ainsi un principe très courant de la plaisanterie verbale, et elle fait en certains cas bon ménage avec le cynisme." Cazeneuve, 1984: 51). In cynical humour, the pursuit of comic effects is based on contempt for taboos, including the most serious subjects like death, illness or calamity. Violation of logic and custom is found in the very context where the comic effect occurs. (cf. "Là, on cherche l'effet comique jusqu'au mépris des tabous les plus sérieux, et même en faisant semblant de ne pas se soucier de la mort, de la maladie, des calamités. La rupture avec la logique et les routines réside alors dans le contexte même où se situe le comique." Cazeneuve, 1984: 52). A Chinese expression that provides a more precise explanation of such attitude can be (almost word for word) translated as "play with the world and respect nothing".

The previous textual analyses have shown that it is possible to examine the narrative structure of humour to search for the 'serious meaning' of the text. As far as *F.B.* is concerned, cynical humour is a kind of 'ironic humour', and there is a certain 'seriousness' in such an attitude. As Jankelevitch says, "inside the (cynical) individual one sentiment remains serious in his very cynical consciousness. Seriousness serves as a foil to whatever is comic or tragic; meanwhile comic or tragic themes can in turn set off the seriousness which then stands out through this

contrast." (cf. "à l'intérieur de l'individu, un seule sentiment est resté sérieux dans une conscience toute cynique. Le sérieux est la toile de fond sur laquelle se détachent la drôlerie et le tragique, mais ceux-ci à leur tour accentuent, par contraste, le Sérieux, qui devient un effet de relief." Jankelevitch, 1950: 18). In this text, a suspense is whether the intellectual hero's cynical humour can help him to survive in a hostile world; as we follow the story of the intellectual hero, we can also search for the serious meaning conveyed by the special humour in this text.

Next, we shall dissect the narrative structure of the text to see how humour is realised and what serious meaning is to be revealed by the humour in this text.

The Implied Author's Design

1. The Title of the Book and the Naming of the Comic Hero

The book title is a (false) introduction to the story to be presented and creates suspense: is it really a book about a 'fortress besieged' in its literal meaning? If so, the story should be about war and battles. Of course the story content soon refutes this presumption. The revelation of the title metaphor is entrusted to a conversation among several characters on the topic of marriage. Chu Shen-ming, a pseudo-philosopher, who likes to boast about his acquaintance with the famous English mathematician and philosopher Russell, starts:

> "... He (Russell) quoted an old English saying that marriage is like a gilded bird cage. The birds outside want to get in, and the birds inside want to fly out. So you have marriage and divorce, divorce and marriage in endless succession."
>
> Miss Su said, "There is a French saying similar to that. Instead of a bird cage, it's a fortress under siege (*forteresse assiégée*)[5]. The people outside the city want to break in and the people inside want to escape. Right, Hong-jian?" Hong-jian shook his head to indicate he did not know.
>
> (Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 91).

Here it is the voice of some secondary roles that reveals the 'metaphor' of the title. In the

above passage, "marriage" is first compared to a "bird cage" by simile. The **name of the main character** (the names of his two brothers as well) also refers to bird, or more precisely it is an ambitious 'swan goose' that attempts to fly far and high. "Bird en-caged" certainly implies the frustration of ambition. "Marriage" is then compared to "fortress" by the second simile. Here, both the "gilded cage" and the "fortress" are interpreted as the kind of confinement that seduces but does not provide satisfaction in the end. What is worse, whether inside or outside the confinement, one is condemned to go on with this infertile battle, like the tragic Sisyphus in the Greek myth. At this moment of the text, Hong-jian's ignorance about this French saying, whether pretended or not, can be an indication of his ignorance about his destiny. In other words, it indicates the main character's ignorance of the trap laid for him in the story by the implied author.

In terms of **humour structure**, the first humour register ("en-caged birds" and "besieged fortress") turns on the negativity of attack and confinement and contrasts the positive value represented by "marriage"[6] which is then the second humour register. Besides, "en-caged birds" in particular also represents non-serious value[7] that contrasts with the serious and high value represented by 'marriage'[8] in this context. The logic mechanism is 'false analogy' and 'exaggeration', for even if there are some people involved in numerous 'marriage and divorce' sequences, it cannot be a general case as implied by these two similes. These two similes form a *comb* playing on the subject of 'marriage' to comic effect. With regard to the whole text, the 'ironic humour' stems from the fact that these characters' scholarly talk only turns against themselves, for all of them are more or less turning in the same vicious circle (at least) in their pursuit of marriage.

The metaphor of the title is invoked again later in the text. Having been jilted by several women now, Hong-jian is on his way to San Lü University to take a teaching job. With disappointment about the past and no more optimism about the future, Hong-jian starts to comment on life in general:

> "I still remember that time Chu Shen-ming or Miss Su said something about a 'fortress besieged.' Lately, I've been having that feeling about everything in life."
> (Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 136)

This passage is not really very funny by itself. Humour here is largely due to its recall of the previous *comb* playing upon the subject of 'marriage'. It is this comb-bridge combination in the context of this particular element of story presentation that develops the ironic humour initiated by the title. Meanwhile, this humour structure illuminates the 'serious meaning' of this text. The metaphoric meaning of the title is here taking a larger dimension. It is more and more clear that the 'fortress besieged' does not refer to 'marriage' only. In fact, all of Hong-jian's pursuits in life, whether it is in his 'quest for women' or in his 'intellectual quest' (see the two axes analysis below), will end up in a "besieged fortress". So the main character's destiny is presaged by this metaphor contained in the title.

Here is another good occasion for us to understand that the humour production process in a complex humorous text should not be limited to the analysis of some local humorous incongruity; awareness of the involvement of overall narrative elements is important. That is why the humour structure in such complex humorous texts is considered *spatial* rather than 'linear' in the present discussion; this view is also highly advocated as an approach to humour in similar cases.

Hong-jian is doomed to go round in a vicious circle and end up in failure. With this story design, the title becomes a striking irony. It is a typical case of what Muecke called the "irony of self-betrayal": "It is exemplified whenever someone, by what he says or does (not by what happens to him), exposes unawares his own ignorance, weakness, errors, or follies" (Muecke, 1969: 107). This comic hero has much of the eccentricity of intellectuals: very keen on witty talk and parading his learning, which is also a major source of humour in the story world. Only what he says often turns against himself by betraying his weakness. In terms of narrative levels, the main character is then the victim of irony in relationship to the story events as designed by the implied author, for what will happen to him constantly contrasts with his boasts and pretensions.

As has been pointed out, 'humorous analogy' (including the use of metaphor) is a principal logic mechanism that neutralises the various incongruous elements for humour production in this text. The usage of metaphor by the title also *hyper-determines the general humour structure* and lays the foundation for all the humorous comparisons that adorn the whole text.

The fact that several characters are involved in the humorous talk related to the title is significant. This text does not present a story about one person. It in fact offers the ironic portrait

of intellectuals as a type of person. Though Hong-jian is the main character, all the other characters with some importance in the story share the same experience and personality: they have all received both Chinese and western education at a high level and they all like to boast about it because of their vanity. Meanwhile, their words and deeds largely betray their unadaptability and stupidity - they are all 'besieged creatures' in a hostile world. This (unhappy) story is happily presented with strong humour; it is also presented with acute irony towards these characters and towards an element of the general human condition as well. In this sense, the title of the text also *hyper-determines the serious meaning* of the whole text.

2. The Story Structure:

Herts (1977) divided the text of *F.B.* into four sections according to Barthes' concept of "functional sequences"[9]; i.e., each sequence segmented is considered to be tied to some logic and allows one element of the sequence to germinate and then to develop to maturity later (cf. "l'âme de toute fonction est d'ensemencer le récit d'un élément qui mûrira plus tard, sur le même niveau, ou ailleurs, sur un autre niveau". Barthes, 1977: 16). For the present discussion, the story structure of *B.F.* is, like the other two humorous texts, considered to function (among other things) for the portrayal of the kind of intellectual hero as designed by the implied author. In this humorous text, the metaphor implied by the title is also a key to the structure of the text. In a sense, the story is built upon endless circles of 'into' and 'out of' different kinds of 'fortress'.

Section I (chapter 1-4) is an account of Hong-jian's first frustration after his return from Europe in 1937: his brush with his family and particularly his misadventures with several women. Out of disappointment, Hong-jian accepts a teaching appointment at a newly established university, and that concludes the first section. **Section II** (chapter 5) is relatively short. This section is mainly an account of the hard journey to the university that Hong-jian and some other appointed teachers experienced at a time of turmoil of China. On this journey, Hong-jian already proved his unadaptability in social life and in his communication with others. This section ends up with his good friend's remark on his "uselessness". **Section III** (chapter 6-8) is a caricature of a group of pseudo-intellectuals within the confines of an academic environment. Again, Hong-jian proves himself ill-adapted to the teaching job and to the amoral atmosphere of this university.

By the end of this section, he has lost his job but got married. **Section IV** (chapter 9) details the misunderstandings between Hong-jian and his bride and ends up with the dissolution of their marriage.

The above four sections division of the text can also be interpreted in terms of getting in and getting out of the metaphoric "fortress". *Geographically*, the story starts with a ship (the first "fortress") surrounded by the sea, with passengers longing to re-find the land. Hong-jian already experiences frustration with the first woman on this ship. Once back in his homeland, Hong-jian undergoes a series of misadventures in his home town and in Shanghai. By the end of the first section, Hong-jian, out of disappointment, decides to search for another professional "fortress". In the second section, the main character and other travellers are again confined in broken coaches or shabby hotels, longing to arrive at a new place. Another "fortress" is found when Hong-jian starts his new adventures on the campus of a university in the third section. Only here his adventures again conclude with new disappointment. In the fourth section, Hong-jian with his new bride returns to Shanghai. Now Hong-jian finally enters the 'fortress of marriage'. Unfortunately, both his marriage and profession end in failure by the end of the book.

My analysis of this text will then be based on the metaphor of the title, with the two-way movement of 'into' and 'out of' of the 'fortress' as the framework of the texture. This double orientation will serve as the key for grasping the humour structure and for the comprehension of the whole text.

3. The Two Axes

The comic hero in *F.B.* is not a comic puppet with a single trait as in a classic comedy. His portrait is mostly realistic: it is a character presented with some complexity and strong self-awareness.

Like the other two humorous texts, the portrayal of the main character revolves around two similar themes. In the following text analysis, the two major themes will be considered as the two axes labelled '**quest for women**' and '**intellectual quest**'.

Axis I: Quest for Women[10]

Axis I. 1. The 'Actantial Model' in the Story World:

The story under this axis is mainly about Hong-jian's frustration in his 'quest for women'. His failure is to a certain extent due to his unadaptability to real life. His dilemma again fits into the permanent predicament of intellectual characters: theory hinders practice in life. Meanwhile, the character also faces a hostile universe that obstructs his quest in life.

The paradox in the portrait of this character can be interpreted in outline by the actantial model as below:

object (women)

↑

subject of desire (Hong-jian) ← opponent (Hong-jian with his weak personality)

As explained in the previous textual analyses, this actantial model outline can be amplified by the three 'actantial spheres':

In the sphere of **knowing**: Hong-jian is the 'subject' of vast knowledge and romance (learnt from books); meanwhile, he is also the 'subject' of clumsy and unrewarding courtship with ladies.

In the sphere of **longing:** Hong-jian is the 'subject' of 'longing' in his quest for women; meanwhile, he is also a conscious and cynical ironist about courtship and marriage in general.

In the sphere of **power**: Hong-jian is the 'subject' of eloquent speeches which occasionally makes him a good seducer; but eventually he turns out to be an incompetent wooer and fails in his search for true love.

The above outline shows plenty of contradiction in this personality. With regard to the humour structure, all the incongruous elements in this portrait largely compose the incongruous 'humour registers' in the text. The delivery of consecutive comic effects however necessitates other narrative tactics. In this text, the mutual play of the multiple narrative worlds and especially the actual wording in the narration (of different narrative levels) are the decisive factors for the

activation of numerous comic effects. As we already know that the actantial model is insufficient for the display of the complex humour structure and the richness of the character's portrait, the text analysis is to be complemented with other analytical perspectives.

Axis I. 2. The Play Structure of the Multiple Worlds of the Narrative

In this humorous text, the presentation of the story event is often followed by an overwhelming commentary by the narrator. The narrator's voice sometimes even overshadows the story and provides abundant comic effects. Meanwhile, humour in the narrator's discourse is on the whole in harmonious chorus with the character's cynical humour.

Outside the Fortress of Marriage

The First Woman: Miss Pao

Miss Pao is the first woman Hong-jian paid court to. She pursued two years of study in England and had a brief but intimate relationship with Hong-jian on the ship back to China. Here is a passage introducing this character:

> Some called her a "charcuterie" - a shop selling cooked meats - because only such a shop would have so much warm-coloured flesh on public display. Others called her "Truth", since it is said that "the truth is naked." But Miss Pao wasn't exactly without a stitch on, so they revised her name to "Partial Truth".
>
> (Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 7)

Miss Pao that night left Fang Hong-jian with this phrase: "We'll both be sleeping alone tonight, she said almost carelessly." Miss Pao's words had so much impact on Hong-jian that he could no longer feel peaceful:

> Hong-jian bathed and returned to his cabin, lay down, and then sat up again.

Trying to dispel the thought, once it had lodged there, seemed as hard as it is for a pregnant woman to think of abortion.

(Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 16)

These two passages are taken from Chapter 1. It is the beginning of the story, and the *setting* of the story is a French ship on its way to China. In this ship, the main character, after years of idle study in England, France and Germany, is on his way home. Several other overseas Chinese students in this ship are in similar circumstances, including Miss Pao. In parallel to the ship's quest for a final port, these characters are seeking a home for their wandering souls.

In the first quoted passage, Miss Pao is introduced by the *narrator's definition* with strong ironic humour. Such a definition implies "the narrator's prior knowledge about or acquaintance" with the character; it also "suggests an abstraction, generalisation or summing up on the part of the narrator as well as a desire to present such labelling as *authoritative characterisation*" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 98; emphasis added).

The local humour structure is a *comb* of two metaphors for the mockery of this character. In the **first metaphor,** the entity of a 'young educated lady' (first humour register: high and elegant) is however drastically reduced to a piece of "cooked meat" for sale (second register: low and sordid). With this high inappropriateness, the humour production process *switches* to the *first* comic climax. The logic mechanism is 'false analogy' producing 'degradation', which is a very frequent humour skill used in this text. Here a detailed description is elaborated ("warm-coloured flesh on public display") to emphasise the humour incongruity. As a result, the comic effect becomes more striking. In the **second metaphor,** the humour production process switches to the second comic climax when Miss Pao (low) is compared to "Truth" (high). Humour stems from the humorous incongruity between the two entities compared: the implied double use of 'naked' is incongruous - once in a very literal, physical sense, and once in the philosophical, metaphorical sense (truth is without rhetorical adornment). The comic effect is even more enhanced when Miss Pao is nicknamed "Partial Truth" (high) in reference to her semi-nakedness (low, vulgar): this comparison is first supplemented with a detailed description of her semi-nakedness ("wasn't exactly without a stitch on") that emphasises her vulgarity and highlights the incongruity involved; the humour incongruity is in addition stressed by the association between the two terms

"stitch" (low, common) and "revise" (high, academic). Besides 'degradation', it is still the logic mechanism of 'false analogy' that unites and neutralises the humour incongruity to comic effect in the second metaphor.

High inappropriateness in the paradox structure of humour also reveals *ironic salience*. In the narrator's discourse, the image of Miss Pao is presented as far from pleasant or desirable. This presentation reveals the narrator's authoritative contempt and mockery towards this character. Once again it reminds us of Bergson's explanation of how ironic humour in the description of certain physical features is related to the questioning of moral features (cf. Bergson, 1997: 87; see *Candide* Axis I, 2., Chapter 1).

In the second quoted passage, there is firstly story information providing. But very soon, the narrator's commentary on the main character's feelings about Miss Pao supersedes it. The story information is about Hong-jian's (sexual) longing for Miss Pao, which is not really funny by itself. Humour comes from the *exaggerated interpretation* of the character's mental entry rendered in the narrator's words. Ironic humour in the narrator's discourse here is expressed by a humorous simile ("seems as hard as ..."). The first humour register is serious and conveys Hong-jian's reluctant separation from his desired woman, while the second humour register is switched to non-seriousness, and the idea of "abortion" is excessively appropriate in the context. The logic mechanism is 'exaggeration' plus 'false analogy'. The 'ironic humour' locally stems from the incongruity between the narrator's lofty and teasing attitude and the intellectual hero's apprehension in his difficult courtship; 'ironic humour' is enhanced in the context of this chapter since Miss Pao has been presented as so unpleasant and even sordid as a woman. As a result, the comic hero is caught in the ironic trap laid for him by the narrator according to the implied author's design. In this text, the narrator is constantly an active observer and voluble ironist, waiting to catch the comic hero (and other intellectual characters as well) and turn him into the victim of his ironic discourse.

The following passage is a scene of flirtation between Hong-jian and Miss Pao.

Miss Pao remarked with a smile, "Mr. Fang, you remind me of my fiancé. You

look so much like him!" ... When an attractive woman says you look like her fiancé, it is tantamount to saying that if she were not engaged, you would be qualified to win her love. A real *cynic* might interpret this as meaning: she already has a fiancé, so you can enjoy a fiancé's privileges without having to fulfil the obligation of marrying her.

(Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 16; emphasis added)

The brief story information provided is about the two characters' frivolous flirtation . As usual, the narrator's voice soon takes the dominant role. We may label the narrator's comments here as 'generalisation'. Such comments are quite frequent in this humorous text. Chatman says: "Critics have long noted the frequent citation in fictions of 'general truth,' that is, philosophical observations that reach beyond the world of the fictional work onto the real universe" (Chatman, 1978: 243). Rimmon-Kenan also gives a similar definition: "*generalisation,* is not restricted to a specific character, event, or situation but extends the significance of the particular case in a way which purportedly applies to a group, a society or humanity at large" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 99). These theorists all agree to see such comments as the narrator's overt manifestation.

With regard to the humour structure, the humour incongruity here lies in the opposition real/unreal, and the logic mechanism is 'exaggeration'. In other words, the narrator's view about the frivolous courtship between man and woman may well correspond to some reality, but it is certainly not a general case. A little common sense can enable us to see the flaw of this exaggerated conclusion.

The narrator's comments are to a certain degree the expression of the narrator's moral stance (cf. Chatman, 1990: 143-144). With exaggeration, the narrator is here expressing a certain 'cynicism'. A good understanding of this cynicism involves an awareness of the moral position regarding relationships between men and women held in the real world in China in the early twentieth century, and the exclusion of such extra-textual elements in the narrative study based on strict formalism is sometimes a real limitation of this approach to literary texts: I will return to this matter in Part III. However, within the text, the word "cynic" is employed and can serve as an indication of the narrator's attitude. There is no doubt that the narrator is aware of the anti-moral nature of these characters' behaviour. The elaboration of the wording also shows that the narrator is taking joy in exaggerating a negative example of moral standards. Here is a case where we can

see the double function of cynicism: the cynic enjoys playing the role of the "bad" and rejoices in his spite and malice[11], and by doing so he is provoking cynical humour; meanwhile, the cynical attitude is also a "challenge"[12] by which the narrator is, though indirectly, being moral and criticising the cynical characters.

The narrator is here mocking the characters with cynical humour. In the context of the narrator's constant playful tone in his presentation of the story, some local incongruous elements can divert the text to high non-seriousness and provoke a switch to a comic climax. Just imagine how the above passage may be taken as a serious statement of a point of view if it appears out of context. The narrator's overt intervention into the story also enriches the portrait of the comic hero and highlights his personality in his quest for woman.

The courtship between Hong-jian and Miss Pao is brief. This adventure ends with the ship's arrival in port. Once Hong-jian got out of the 'fortress of the ship' confined by the sea, he heads for some other 'fortress' to confront new obstacles and confinement.

Second Woman: Miss Su

Having obtained a doctorate in France, Miss Su is on the same ship with Hong-jian on their way home. She woos Hong-jian, while Hong-jian does not share the same feelings for her. The text dedicates a lot of space to the depiction of this female character, and her courtship with Hong-jian is also comparatively complicated. The following passage is a humorous account of their relationship:

> Though they were quite close, he was confident his friendship with her would develop no further. Like two parallel lines, no matter how close they are, or how long they are extended, they will never join together.
>
> (Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 25)

This passage is taken from the beginning of Chapter 2, which is also the beginning of the narration about Hong-jian's (mis)adventures on land. So the inextricable courtship between Hong-jian and Miss Su started right after this group of passengers left the ship and Miss Pao retreated

from the story.

The *story information* provided is Hong-jian's view about his relationship with Miss Su, which would not develop into love at least on Hong-jian's part. The narration of this story information is hardly humorous, either. However the narrator again quickly puts in an appearance to comment on this story information with ironic humour. What the narrator offers here is a brief summary that undermines the story suspense regarding their relationship, which also indicates that the interest of the text is the presentation of the courtship process rather than just telling a love story. Such narration also favours the unfolding of the intellectual characters' portrait rather than the resolution of the intrigue of any story suspense.

The humour skill used *in the narrator's discourse* is again humorous simile. The humour incongruity here derives from the inappropriateness of a mathematical ('parallel lines') comparison to love ('man-woman courtship'). The logic mechanism is 'valid analogy': un-shared love and parallel lines do share a feature: there is no meeting point. If, as Attardo defines it, a 'valid analogy' "is one that is focused on one of the central, essential traits of the two entities being compared" (Attardo, 2002: 10-11), this kind of analogy is paradoxical by itself as is shown in this example: while the shared trait produces a certain congruency, the different values represented by the two compared entities also produce incongruity. Here when the mathematical notion contrasts with the value of humanity represented by 'love', the salience of irony emerges. As usual, it is again the narrator's intervention that disrupts the story development and provokes a sudden burst of comic effect with important humour incongruity. The narrator is no doubt mocking at this vain courtship. With regard to the portrayal of the comic hero, the 'victim of irony' is the main character and his doomed quest for women.

Hong-jian noticed that Miss Su is capable of behaving like a little girl when she tries to seduce him. The following passage contains both Hong-jian's observation of this woman and some detached commentary by the narrator:

> Yet for some reason, he always felt this 'little-girlishness' did not quite suit her. It had nothing to do with her age; she wasn't much older than Miss Pao. Besides, in the presence of the man she loves, every woman has the amazing power of

rejuvenation. One could only say that it was out of character: for example, we think it's funny to watch a kitten go around of chasing its tail, but when a puppy follows suit and turns hectically around after that stubby tail, then it isn't funny any more. (Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 26)

In this passage, Miss Su is seen from Hong-jian's point of view. There is ambiguity about whether it is the narrator or the character who actually utters the comments here. Chatman studied more than once the nature and charm of indirect free discourse where the narrator's slant is little distinguished from the character's filter and they merge into "consonance" (cf. Chatman, 1990: 147; 2001: 120-126; also cf. Axis I. 2. in *B.M.F.* analysis). In consideration of the shared cynical attitude both in the comic hero's discourse and that of the narrator, it is inferable that they at least agree upon the generalisation about women's flirting manner expressed here. Words like "every woman" and "one could only say" is a sign of leaving the actual story event for some external ideas. What is expressed is a harsh mockery of Miss Su's coquetry. Hong-jian as an intellectual character is to a certain degree capable of such abstract reflection. Only we doubt he can be so uneasy (see the next quoted passage for an example) and so cool at the same time in front of this woman. Besides, in view of the narrator's constant interference in the story world and his cooler and harsher attitudes towards the characters, we tend to apply the actual wording in the comments on Miss Su to the narrator's discourse: they are more likely the narrator's address to the narratee rather than the character's address to his story world.

With regard to the 'humour structure', the two local humour registers are composed of "amazing power of rejuvenation" (high) and its sharp but playful degradation to "cat or dog chasing its tail" (low). Comic effects mainly stem from the *comb of similes*. The logic mechanism that unites and neutralises the humour incongruity is again 'false analogy'. As always, such high inappropriateness generates the switch from the set-up phase of humour to the comic climax, which in turn reveals 'ironic salience'. The direct victim of irony is Hong-jian's lady partner (at this moment) Miss Su, what is further ironised is then the main character's hopeless quest for women. This is how the production of humour co-operates with the construction of the serious meaning of irony throughout the text.

Miss Su has tried to seduce Hong-jian in every way. Since Hong-jian does not feel the same way for her and is not an unscrupulous seducer either, he is very scared. However, his weak personality ensures that he is incapable of clarifying the situation:

> The whole situation with Miss Su made him feel uneasy. Washing handkerchiefs, mending socks, and sewing on buttons - these were the little chores a wife performed for her husband. ...Was there anything in what he had said or done that could make her mistake him for her husband? When he started thinking about all that, he shuddered in horror. If the engagement ring were a symbol of the trap one had fallen into, button-sewing was likewise an omen of being tied down.
>
> (Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 28)

The psychic content here is presented from Hong-jian's point of view, but interpreted in the narrator's words. The basic humour incongruity is still the opposition real/unreal in the narrator's comments on the story, which views the story situation with irony.

In this passage, the narrator manifests himself twice overtly, both are his ironic comments on the story event through 'generalisation'. His *first manifestation* is signalled by a dash " - ", and it is not the only place in the text that a 'dash' is used to indicate a switch of narrative levels, which often precedes the switching to a comic climax in this text. The humour registers lie in the incongruity between the trivialness of the "little chores" ("washing handkerchiefs, mending socks, and sewing on buttons") and the big and high-valued term "perform" that generalises the case. His *second manifestation* is realised by *a comb of two metaphors*, and the production of comic effects is based on word play. Here I feel the need to make a comparison between the original words in Chinese and the wording in the translated English version. In the first metaphor, the word "ring" by evoking the real material object can remind us of the form of a circle; the original Chinese words for "trap" are "Quan (a circle) Tao (to trap or to catch)". In the second metaphor, the pronunciation of "button" in Chinese is 'NiuKou'. But once the order of the two syllables is inverted, the meaning will be changed to 'detain, arrest, hold in custody'. It is a play of sound in the original text; in the translated English version, the play of words is based on the fact that both "sew" and "tie down" are associated to 'thread' or 'rope'. In both the two cases, we notice that

metaphor is not fully established until the initial part is associated with its subordinate part(s): "ring" is associated with the verb-object structure of "fall into" and "trap"; and "sewing" is associated with "omen" specified by "tied down". It is close to Crosman's concept of "continued metaphor": "the basic conceit was made up of two (occasionally more) metaphors working together within the same syntactic unit to establish a single code, the continued metaphor consists of an initial metaphor extended by two or more successive metaphors that illustrate or develop its various implications" (Crosman, 1978: 56). In this case, the initial metaphor (here the "ring" or "sewing") would remain indefinite if there were not a subordinate part to complete it: "the relationship to the initial metaphor of those that follow is therefore one of subordination: they explain, qualify, or repeat in altered words the sense of the initial metaphor, and thus extend an already established code" (Crosman, 1978: 56). The initial humour register is Miss Su's solicitation (to Hong-jian), which represents relatively positive value. Once again, the logic mechanism used recurrently is 'false analogy'. This humour register is first degraded to "little chores" in the narrator's first manifestation; it is further degraded to 'ring/trap' and 'thread' when the narrator manifests himself the second time. As the humour incongruity becomes more striking, comic effects are more than ever enhanced. Meanwhile, as the initial humour register is overshadowed and its represented value replaced, the ironic meaning becomes salient: the comic hero's quest for women becomes as ridiculous as the woman that he dislikes but has no courage to break up with.

The success of this text is in large measure due to the original writing skills at the language level, which is also an important comic source in the text. In humour cases, what is most interesting is often an observation of how the emerging humour register is connected to the initial humour register in an unusual way, and this connection holds *only* in the special context of, say, an individual passage in particular and in the context of this text at large. A typical writing technique is word play supported by extended interpretation where the extended part is often the key recipe. As exemplified in the above quoted passage, the association between a "ring" and a "trap" or the association between 'sewing' and 'confinement' are largely created through the use of language; supplemented with humorous 'explanation', such associations not only make good sense in an unusual way but have strong expressive power under this circumstance[13]. Many examples of such writing techniques and humour construction skills will be illustrated throughout

my analysis of this text.

One night, Miss Su arranged things so that she and Hong-jian were alone in the garden in the moonlight:

> She smiled triumphantly and said in a low voice, "embrasse-moi!" As soon as the words were out of her mouth she was at once abashed and surprised at her courage to be foolish, but then she only dared order him to kiss her while hiding behind a foreign language. Having no way to escape, he turned his head to kiss her. The kiss was so light and covered such a small area, *it was like* the way a Mandarin host brushed his lips against the brim of the tea cup as a subtle hint to the guest who has overstayed his welcome in the Ching dynasty, or else *it was like* the way a witness taking the oath in court in the West touched the Bible to his lips. At most it was *similar to* the way female disciples kissed the living Buddha of Tibet or the Pope's big toe - a kind of respectful intimacy.
>
> (Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 98; emphasis added for analysis)

This passage is an example of the sophisticated wording and extravagant parade of learning in the narrator's discourse. The general humour incongruity lies between the trivialness of a love scene caused by misunderstanding and the cultural and religious phenomena evoked that represent a higher and even sacred value. This is one source of the irony. The other source of irony stems from the ironic play between different narrative levels. In this sense, the humour incongruity lies between the presentation of the story event and the narrator's detached comments on it.

The abundant cultural references evoked in the narrator's commentary, drawn from both Chinese and western cultural resources, are aimed at the initial story information provided: Miss Su expressed in French her solicitation for a kiss from Hong-jian. The following irony is then built on the basis that these characters are intellectuals well acquainted with such linguistic and cultural knowledge. The ironic message is first indicated by the narrator's 'interpretation' of the story event. Such word choice as "only dared" and "hiding" is the narrator's overt mockery of the

vanity and deceit of such characters given their educational background.

What follows is again *a comb of similes*. Here irony emerges when the narrator interrupts the story to interpolate his long, parenthetical remark. In each simile, the initial humour register is the uneasy kiss that Hong-jian gave to Miss Su (comparatively low, awkward). In the first simile, this kiss is compared to a lip-touch to the tea-cup of a Mandarin host (dignified) when he's fed up with his guests. In the second simile, this kiss is compared to a Bible-kiss (dignified, holy) at court in the West. In the third simile, still the same kiss is compared to a female disciple kissing Buddha or to the Pope, which are both noble and sacred conduct. While the humour incongruity becomes more striking with each different simile, the narrator is leading us to step out of the story world and cast an ironic look at it and the intellectual hero's clumsy reaction to his unloved lady in particular. The general logic mechanism is 'valid analogy', for the different humour registers are linked together at least by an actual physical lip-touch; meanwhile the humour incongruity stems from the different values represented by the different entities associated by these similes.

In this series of similes, different entities representing very incompatible values are united for the production of ironic humour. What is belittled and ridiculed is first the courtship between Hong-jian and Miss Su. The victim of irony is among other things the intellectual hero and his quest for women, which is an important theme of this text. The narrator's comments here remind us of the cases of humour in *B.M.F.* when the narrator mocks Adam's sexual worries in the name of Catholicism: "In contrast, Adam's moral problem seemed trivial and suburban, and to seek Father Wildfire's advice would be like engaging the services of a big-game hunter to catch a mouse" (Lodge, 1981: 64; see *B.M.F.*, Axis 1.2.). Yet in *B.M.F.*, the ironic humour in dialogic form does not shake the Catholic authority. Adam still stays a Catholic and makes efforts to behave, though reluctantly, like a religious person. In *F.B.* however, Hong-jian has scarcely any faith. He is not even truly proud of the broad knowledge that he has acquired at home and abroad. Besides, the narrator also takes joy in teasing these intellectuals and their knowledge, which is often in harmony with the characters' cynical humour. In the above quoted passage, all the cultural and religious references are in fact degraded in the meantime when they are associated by humorous analogy to the initial low-valued humour register. An evident ironic clue is the "big toe" (low and vulgar) in reference to the prestige of Buddha and the Pope (high and sacred). This humour incongruity thus signifies the reduced value of the second humour register in each simile,

which is in accordance with the narrator's constant cynicism. As a result, the parade of language and cultural references invoked are more ironical than complimentary. As such cynical humour goes on throughout the whole text, there is not really any authoritative value maintained to the end of the text. The comic clown hero is therefore lost in a whirlpool of doubts where no true values can be found.

In this humorous text, we find many occasions of this combined use of similes or mixed use of simile and metaphor. The precision and extension of the imagery through the joint presence of different analogies often functions to provoke ironic humour. In such humour cases, particular emphasis through certain details contributes largely to the portrait of the main character as a type of intellectual hero, who is alternately pathetic and comic. Such humour in addition reveals the narrator's viewpoint and guides the implied reader's interpretation in the reliable narration of the text.

Because of his weakness, Hong-jian was slowly trapped by Miss Su. However, not a vicious man by nature, Hong-jian did not want to give Miss Su further illusions. At last he made plain his true feelings for her, which then aroused her fury against him. Miss Su's anger, jealousy and cunning later became a major cause of Hong-jian's failure in his pursuit of his true love.

Third woman: Miss Tang

Miss Tang is presented as "a genuine girl", and she is the girl that Hong-jian really loves. Hong-jian made her acquaintance through Miss Su, and this is how they met each other for the first time:

> Miss Su led out a cute little girl about twenty and introduced her to Hong-jian, "This is my cousin, Tang Hiao-fu." On Miss Tang's charming, well-proportioned round face were two shallow dimples; *one look at* her fresh and natural complexion, which most girls would have had to spend time and money to imitate, was enough to make one drool and forget his thirst, as though her skin were a piece of delicious fruit. (1) Not especially large, her eyes were lively and gentle, making the big eyes of many women seem like the big talk of politicians - big and useless. (2) A classic scholar,

upon seeing her lovely teeth when she smiled, might wonder why both Chinese and Western traditional and modern poets would want to turn into the pin in a woman's hair, the belt around her waist, the mat on which she slept, or even the shoes and socks, that she wore, and not think of transforming themselves into her toothbrush. (3) Her hair unwaved, her eyebrows unplucked, and her lips unadorned by lipstick, she appeared to allow nature to take its own course with regard to her looks and had no wish to amend it in any way. In short, she was one of those rarities of modern civilised society - a genuine girl. ... Hong-jian immediately wanted to impress her.

(Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 51; numbered by me for analysis)

This passage also starts with the presentation of story information: Miss Tang, another female character, appears and is introduced to Hong-jian (by Miss Su). As usual, the narration of the story event is relatively a "serious relief", i.e., "a patch of text with little or no humour in it" (Attardo, 2002: 19; cf. *Candide* analysis, Axis I. 2. Chapter 1). Humour mainly stems from the commentary afterwards. Unlike the previous two women, Miss Tang is presented largely in a positive sense. Although Miss Su is also presented with ironic humour, the victim of irony this time is not the character in question.

Miss Tang's first appearance is presented at least in part from Hong-jian's viewpoint and as Hong-jian's mental content; yet again the garrulous narrator appears to have usurped the major role in commenting on Miss Tang's beauty. Once Miss Tang shows up, Hong-jian is immediately impressed by her charm as different from certain sophisticated city girls. While Hong-jian observes this girl, an intellectual reflection that tends to generalise certain human behaviour (again) predominates. Such expressions as "one look at ... which most girls would" indicates the attempt to transcend the story world and view it from a more detached level. In a sense, the intellectual main character is both used to and capable of this kind of intellectual discourse. Only we doubt that the short time-span and Hong-jian's enchanted state in the story world could really allow him to make such a long and rational commentary. While this passage informs us of the main character's first attraction to this girl, it also "suggests an abstraction, generalisation or summing up on the part of the narrator as well as a desire to present such labelling as

authoritative characterisation" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 98; emphasis added; cf. *Candide* analysis, Axis I. 2. Chapter 1).

After endless discussion and arguments about the different voices in narrative, a number of recent theorists realise that sometimes "it is not at all certain that the narratorial voice can control all the characters. Nor is it necessarily the case that the narrator's voice will always be distinct from those of the characters" (Cobley, 2001: 104). This suggests that on certain occasions there is little reason for us to make clear-cut distinction between the narrator's voice and that of the character. Generally speaking, in the three humorous texts chosen for analysis in this thesis, the (ironic) play between the narrator's discourse world and the story world where is located the main character is an important component of the general narrative structure of humour (cf. Part I, Chapter 2.2.2. and Chapter 3.1. for the theoretical formulation). Accordingly, the distinction between the narrator's voice and that of the character is in principle very important for the understanding of these texts, and particularly for the understanding of how the intellectual hero becomes the victim of ironic humour in these texts. However, when the viewpoint of the character in question is NOT incongruous with that of the narrator, which happens sometimes, what we should seek is rather what the text intends to convey with a unanimous voice pronounced in harmony by the character and the narrator according to the implied author's design. As typified in the above quoted passage, the key message conveyed is that both the character and the narrator must have come to an agreement to see Miss Tang as a relatively positive example of woman's beauty, and that there are no other narrative elements contradicting it.

The commentary on Miss Tang's beauty is again a *comb* united by humorous analogy, which is complemented by some other local and sub-logic mechanisms.

Miss Tang is *firstly* compared to a "delicious fruit" in a simile. The 'exaggeration' (see *Candide* analysis, Axis I. 2. Chapter 1) lies in the fact that "fruit", though capable of quenching thirst, cannot "make one drool and forget his thirst" just by seeing it. Though the opposition of the humour registers is real/unreal, both the two compared entities (Miss Tang and "delicious fruit") mainly represent positive value. If there is any slight irony, the victim is the intellectual hero and his immediate longing for this girl.

The second simile stresses Miss Tang's natural refinement by contrast: Miss Tang's eyes, though not especially large, are "lively and gentle", while the "big eyes of many women seem like

the big talk of politicians - big and useless". We notice that it is rare to compare "big eyes" to "big talk of politicians", and the full significance of this simile necessitates an additional explanation. To describe Miss Tang's eyes as "lively and gentle" is a direct praise and emits little humour. Humour stems mainly from the simile in which certain women's "big eyes" are degraded with humorous irony. The humour incongruity lies between "big eyes" (potentially positive) and "big eyes + big and useless" (negative). The construction of humour here is based on word play: the two compared nouns are only haphazardly linked to the shared adjective "big", for the "big" in the former case refers to physical size only, while the latter "big" can refer to 'emptiness', 'pompousness', 'no value' and even 'dishonesty' in political talk. Hence the *comic climax* is engendered by this unexpected interpretation about the "big eyes" of some other women which creates a sharp humour incongruity. The resultant ironic salience devalues the latter humour register and enhances the praise of Miss Tang's special beauty.

The *next comic climax* is mainly provoked by the surprising term "tooth brush", a trivial and unromantic entity suddenly connected to the lyric theme of Chinese and Western poetry. The first humour register is still Miss Tang's beauty, related to her "lovely teeth when she smiled" this time. The second register is broadly the Chinese and Western literary tradition; it is also an indirect reference to man's solicitude to woman, and Hong-jian's quest for women in particular. We notice a set-up phase of humour in which the second register is gradually degraded to "hairpin", "waist-belt", "mat for sleeping", and even "shoes and socks" which are however linked to the high-valued register of literary tradition, at least according to what is said in the text. The occurrence of "toothbrush" creates high inappropriateness for it has never been a romantic term. As it is explained, such high inappropriateness again leads to ironic salience. In conformity with the constant cynical humour in the text, both the Chinese and the Western literary traditions are devalued here; meanwhile, the intellectual hero who knows well these literary traditions also becomes the victim of irony. There is rich ironic humour in this passage. Meanwhile, since the compared entities do not represent real opposing values, such humour does not lead to any serious criticism of whatever is involved in the ironic humour.

What ends this passage is relatively a piece of 'serious relief' which continues to praise Miss Tang's natural beauty in a direct way. Here the narrator's voice and the character's voice interweave together in 'consonance' in the final presentation of this female character. Once again I

call attention to the fusion between the narrator's 'slant' and the character's 'filter' which appreciate this character as a "genuine girl" in agreement with each other.

The important story information provided in this passage is the main character's fondness for this girl and his decision to impress her. Now the main character's quest for women takes a new direction, for this time he falls in love indeed.

Hong-jian and Miss Tang fell in love with each other soon after their first meeting. Then they started to write to each other frequently. Hong-jian was heart-and-soul in this affair:

> He wished he could have written in English, since the tone of a letter in literary style was so impersonal, while the tone of a letter in colloquial style too easily turned into obnoxious familiarity. Only a letter in English *would* permit him to write openly, "My dear Miss Tang," and "Very truly yours, Fang Hong-jian." These common terms of address in Western correspondence only sounded too audacious and sickening in Chinese. He was well aware that his English was imbued with the free speech of the British and the Declaration of Independence of the Americans in not being bound by the rules of grammar. Otherwise, were he really to depend on a foreign language to "dear" Miss Tang, it *would be like* a political offender carrying out his activities while hiding in the foreign concessions in China.
>
> (Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 80; emphasis added for analysis)

This passage is about Hong-jian's passionate love for Miss Tang. The event is perceived from the character's point of view and narrated in indirect free discourse. The mental content is mainly that of the character's: Hong-jian would like to express his love for Miss Tang in English because of his shyness and because of his knowledge about the usage of several languages. This mental activity is again presented with pungent ironic humour.

There are abundant references regarding different language usage here, which are again an expression of scholarly obsession. A certain ambiguity lurks behind the actual wording which may make us wonder whether it is the narrator or the character who is actually producing the intellectual discourse (again cf. Chatman about the "nature and charm" of the indirect free

discourse, Chatman, 1990: 147; Chatman, 2001: 119-121). We have already noticed that both the narrator and the character in their respective discourses have shared the same passion for the parade of learning. However, we can notice here the incongruity between the character's intellectual consciousness in his infatuated state and the narrator's cooler attitude in his comments on the character's stupor. The character's intellectual consciousness then shows his happiness and also his self-irony at his poor language ability for expressing his feelings of love. Meanwhile, the narrator's ironic voice expresses his ironic attitudes towards Hong-jian's temporary happiness and his blindness to the trap and eventual failure in his quest for true love. The character's voice and the narrator's voice however fuse together in their shared cynical humour towards the intellectual world and even some social and political phenomena. The charm of the indirect free speech is that multiple narrative voices can co-exist and interact ambiguously and leave room for the narratee and the resultant implied reader (in this case of reliable narration) to find his own access to the narrative play.

In this passage, there are several occasions where the narrator signals his overt intervention. The first time is indicated by the sentence pattern "only ... would permit him to write openly" together with the earlier third person reference. The subjunctive mood used shows the narrator's lofty position and his detached mockery of the character who differs from the narrator in his sincere and anxious search for a proper way to express his love. Humour incongruity here also lies in the clash between the character's apprehension in his love-letter writing (trivial) and the lecture about different language usage (grand).

The narrator manifests himself the second time by the sentence initiated by "He was well aware...", which not only expresses the narrator's prior acquaintance with the character but also his authoritative characterisation. Humour incongruity becomes more striking now with the juxtaposition of 'love letter writing' (triviality) and "free speech of the British and the Declaration of Independence of the Americans" (high-valued and significant historical events). This high inappropriateness provokes the switching to a comic climax; meanwhile it also engenders ironic salience and highlights the mockery at the main character's weakness and his (vain) love quest.

The narrator's third manifestation is again a humorous simile. This simile introduces an analogy in which humour incongruity lies between "hiding behind a foreign language" (trivial cheating in a love affair) and "hiding in the foreign concessions in China" (national betrayal in a

political affair)[14]. As a result, another comic climax is reached and ironic humour is further enhanced.

In this passage, the initial humour register of Hong-jian's love-letter writing is successively associated with some big terms that represent more significant values. In the context of the whole story, the local ironic humour mocks the main character's temporary joy, which is almost 'much ado about nothing'. The narrator's mockery of the main character here later resonates with a similar commentary on Su that she "only dared order him (Hong-jian) to kiss her while hiding behind a foreign language" (Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 98; see the analysis above). This humour *bridge* not only amplifies the humour structure but also reinforces the narrator's irony at such intellectual characters as a type of comic character with their risible flaws. In this text, the ironic humour that constantly aims at the intellectual characters to a certain degree transcends the story and expresses a real dislike of intellectuals in general.

Though it is Hong-jian's only genuine love experience, his happiness does not last. It is Miss Su who, out of jealousy, creates a misunderstanding between Hong-jian and Miss Tang and causes their separation. On the other hand, Hong-jian's weak nature is also an important cause for the failure of his love pursuit: he dares not defend himself in front of the woman he truly loves. The presentation of Hong-jian's adventure outside the fortress of marriage ends up on a tragic tone:

> The new wound in his heart gave him pain whenever anyone "touched" it. Some people when jilted will immediately display their broken hearts in public and drip with blood *like* a beggar's scraped legs to stir pity. Or else, after the whole affair is over, they will pull up their clothes *in the manner of* a veteran, and point it out like an old battle scar in order to arouse awe and wonder. Hong-jian only hoped he could conceal his scar in the dark recesses of his mind, like the infected eyes which shun the light or the torn flesh which fears the wind.
>
> (Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 109; emphasis added for analysis)

This passage that describes Hong-jian's love-sick state is, according to Attardo's definition,

a 'serious relief'. As has been discussed earlier, a serious relief is mainly characterised by its relative absence of humour in a humour-rich context[15]. The central interest of Attardo's discussion of this concept is in its identification rather than in its function, and its study is related to Wilde's work *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime* only (cf. Attardo, 2003: 1). In our present text analysis of *F.B.*, the **function** of 'serious relief' is a more interesting point for the account of the narrative humour structure in this text. As a result, some efforts will be made for the development of the idea of 'serious relief' created by Attardo in the context of this text analysis.

Up till now, numerous sample cases taken from the text have been displayed and analysed, while our analysis is organised according to the hyper-determination of the title metaphor. We have seen that the narrator's intervention in the story, often full of ironic humour, is regularly preceded by a 'serious relief' that mainly conveys story information. In this passage, the third person reference, elaboration of figurative speeches and detached commentary all indicate the narrator's overt intervention. It is again the first sentence that provides relatively more story information: Hong-jian is suffering from his newly lost love, while this chagrin is compared by the narrator to the "pain" of a new "wound" that cannot be "touched". Then this metaphor is reinforced by a series of sub-similes, which largely abandons the story world and dwells on far-searched imagery for the reinforcement of expression.

The narrator manifests himself again by suggesting some general truth about human behaviour in a love-sick state. Hong-jian's suffering is first emphasised by contrast to those love-losers, who however can afford to show their wounds: like a "beggar" showing his "scraped leg" or a "veteran" showing his "old battle scar". By contrast, Hong-jian's even greater chagrin is compared to "infected eyes which shun the light or the torn flesh which fears the wind" - he suffers so much that he cannot even stand to show his wound.

The similes used here can practically provoke tear-shedding instead of emitting detached humour. An obvious reason is that there is little humour incongruity in all the entities compared. There is no counter-part in the narration that can ease the painful images and provide a neutralising mechanism for humour production. The different images evoked all amount to an expression of Hong-jian's deep frustration in his quest for true love.

It is true that the narration of the main character's adventures in this text, into or out of any metaphoric fortress, are filled with occasional detached humour and deliver abundant comic

effects. Nevertheless, the presentation of the important story events always ends with a similar 'serious relief' dominated by a tragic tone. Such a serious relief may on occasion contain some humour, but it allows little room for any possible non-serious interpretation regarding the hero's genuine destiny. This feature of this text distinguishes it from the previous two texts analysed here. It also explains why the portrait of the main character is tragic-comic rather than dominated by comic colour. Thus we can sum up the *two major functions of 'serious relief' in this humorous text: 1) it mainly serves to provide story information and assists in the story development; 2) it also serves to amplify the portrait of the main character with tragic colour.* We can see some other examples in the following text analysis.

Entering the Fortress of Marriage

Fourth Woman: Miss Sun

The comic tone is much reduced in the narration of Hong-jian's relationship with his fourth important woman. Miss Sun is Hong-jian's colleague in San Lü University. With this woman, Hong-jian finally enters the fortress of marriage and experiences complete disillusion in his quest for women.

There is **no real courtship** between Hong-jian and Miss Sun presented in the text. It is Miss Sun who works out the trap and Hong-jian goes "right on in like an idiot" (Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 140). In a sense, Hong-jian is engaged to Miss Sun in answer to the rumours about their relationship - Hong-jian needs to hide himself in a 'fortress' for a rest. The only joyful moment in the presentation of their relationship is when Hong-jian's friend Hsin Mei jokes about them, warning Hong-jian about Miss Sun's solicitation of him and his blindness to what is on her mind:

"... Everyone knows women won't spend their money on books. Men will buy candy, dress material, or cosmetics to give to a woman, but in the case of books, they'll lend them to her, never buy them as presents. And women won't want them, either. Why? Once borrowed, it has to be returned. It's borrowed once, returned once. One book can be an excuse for the two of them to meet twice, and it leaves no trace

behind. That's the first step towards romance a girl and a boy have to take. Once the book is lent, complications follow."

Smiling, Hong-jian said, "you are a real terror. But what you said about Miss Sun is complete rubbish."

(Qian Zhongshu, 1979:141)

This passage mainly conveys some story information: Hsin Mei's remark is given in quoted speech. At this moment of the story, Hong-jian, Hsin Mei and Miss Sun, all appointed to the same university, are on their way for this new adventure. Hong-jian makes his first acquaintance with Miss Sun, while Hsin Mei observes how Miss Sun tries to approach Hong-jian. Like the narrator, most of the intellectual characters, cynical and pretentious, also like to relate life anecdotes to some general truth with comic exaggeration, and here is one typical case.

Here the humour incongruity lies in the real/unreal opposition in Hsin Mei's exaggerated account of courtship. It is evident that book-lending is only a habit of certain intellectuals, while the formula "women won't" or "men will" is an attempted account of all human behaviour. This remark also expresses cynical humour, because the speaker here tends to see all courtship as a flirting game without sincere feelings. The logic mechanism is 'hasty generalisation' (cf. *Candide* analysis, Axis II. 2.) plus 'exaggeration'. Hong-jian's light-hearted reaction in the end only informs us that he is not emotionally involved with this woman. The direct victim of irony is Hong-jian and his ineptness in dealing with women. While this friend is poking fun at Hong-jian, he is also expressing a certain self-irony and mocking intellectuals' risible habits in general.

Perceived as naïve by Hong-jian but interpreted as "calculating" by his friend Hsin Mei, Miss Sun's personality turns out to be exactly as this friend has predicted. Only when Hong-jian starts to know Miss Sun through his sufferings, the situation is already beyond his control.

During their **engagement,** Hong-jian starts to feel some disillusion because of their increased quarrels, but still keeps hope. Here is his ironic interpretation of their situation, which is a variation and development of the title metaphor:

... The way he explained it to himself was that passionate love reached its peak by the time of engagement and was all over after marriage. In the case of their engagement now, there was room left between them for their feelings to develop, and that was a very good thing. He remembered what the philosopher with a goatee had said in a class on moral philosophy in London, "there are but two kinds of people in the world. If given a bunch of grapes, for example one kind will eat the best ones first, while the other kind will leave the best for last. In principle, the first kind of person should be an optimist, since with each grape he eats he is eating the best of the remaining grapes, while the second kind should be a pessimist, since with each grape he eats he is eating the worst of the remaining grapes. But in actual fact, it's just the opposite, the reason being that the second kind of person still has hope while the first kind has only memories." From first falling in love to growing old together it's like a bunch of grapes: There is always just one best grape remaining at the end to provide hope. Isn't that wonderful?

(Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 280)

In this passage, the mental content belongs to the character, while the third person reference indicates the presence of the narrator. Here again, there is little divergence between the narrator's voice and that of the character. Both the two narrative agents come into 'consonance' in their interpretation of the subject of 'courtship and marriage', which is a very important theme in this text.

The marriage quest for Hong-jian is a process of disillusion, and Hong-jian starts to realise it now. In the context of the meta-metaphor of battle around the 'fortress', stepping into marriage is here compared to "eating a bunch of grapes", only with the remaining grapes worse than what is consumed before. The conjoined expression of different metaphors and similes associated with the same theme not only provides variation of imagery but also enriches the ironic humour by adding details related to the story content. Hong-jian is engaged at this time. The metaphoric story about eating grapes implies that Hong-jian's present state is also the beginning of his disillusion about marriage. The local ironic humour is, at the meantime, amplified in the context of the whole story hyper-determined by the implied author's design. It corresponds to the general

metaphoric formula about the change from longing to disappointment before and after the entrance into the 'fortress'.

The reference to a western philosopher again indicates Hong-jian's indulgence in scholarly talk. His temporary smugness in his broad learning only turns against himself in the context of the story. In this sense, he is caught in the narrative structure of ironic humour. With a sense of self-irony, Hong-jian is simultaneously aware of his dilemma and still hoping for something positive in his relationship with Miss Sun.

The humour incongruity mainly lies between "moral philosophy" (high) and "eating grapes" (low). Despite such incongruity, the deviation between the two entities compared is not so much in opposition in this context, for it is however not so surprising that a professor should use a daily life anecdote to explain philosophical reasoning. Therefore, the juxtaposition of the two humour registers tends to be more than illogical[16]. Consequently, it is a place in the narrative where the comic effects are engendered in a lesser degree. And this is the overall tendency of the narrative.

After marriage, Miss Sun started to show her true nature and turned out to be a narrow-minded woman. Their quarrels became more fierce day by day. Supported by a rich and gossiping aunt, Miss Sun (now Mrs. Fang) became harsh and intolerant towards Hong-jian, until she finally went away with her aunt. Now Hong-jian was abandoned in a dark house, hungry, cold and desperate:

> He fell asleep *like a night* when all the lights have gone out. At first his sleep was brittle. His hunger tried to nip through his stupor *like a pair of forceps*, but he subconsciously blocked it. Gradually the forceps became loose and blunt, and his sleep became so sound it could not be pinched. It *was a sleep* devoid of dreams and sensations, the primordial sleep of mankind that is also a *sample of death*.
>
> (Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 361; emphasis added for analysis)

This passage is no doubt a 'serious relief'. While Hong-jian is falling asleep, it is the lucid narrator who stands in a detached position and makes a summary comment on the destiny of this comic-tragic hero.

The frequent use of simile and metaphor is consistent through to the end of the text, only the comic tone disappears little by little until a tragic tone dominates completely. This passage contains a series of (serious) analogies and provides abundant imagery for strengthened description. *Firstly*, Hong-jian's "sleep" is compared to the "darkness of the night". In the second entity alone, the two noun metaphors in apposition are in a relationship of metonymy: one noun being the item, the other standing for the realm of quality for which the item is employed. Since "darkness" further stands for hopelessness, the two entities compared - "sleep" and "darkness of night" - are united to stress the desperate state of the main character. Thus the two compared entities are congruous and result in no humour. *The second analogy* compares Hong-jian's "hunger" to "a pair of forceps": both give pain. Similarly the two compared entities representing congruous values emit no humour. *Finally* his "sleep" is further compared to "death", with a series of attributive phrases to stress its utmost degree of desperation. With an overt voice, the narrator is indicating that Hong-jian has now reached complete disillusion in his quest for women. Since there is no incongruity among all the compared entities here, these comparisons are devoid of any comic effect.

The next paragraph, which is also the last paragraph of the text, ends up with a broken clock that strikes the wrong time:

> The irony and disappointment of men unintentionally contained in this out-of-date timepiece went deeper than any language, than any tears or laughter.
>
> (Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 361)

In a sense, the text itself recapitulates its humour structure and reveals its serious meaning at the end. Despite the abundant comic effects engendered from the elaboration of language throughout the narration, not optimism, not even the serenity offered by cynical humour has the last word. Humour in this text results from the paradox of irony capable of provoking both 'tears' and 'laughter'. "Disappointment" is the last word that sums up this ironic world, in which man is trapped by the endless process from illusion to disillusion.

*　　*　　*　　*

The portrait of the main character is unfolded gradually in our examination of the narrative structure of humour: Hong-jian is in general a kind-hearted but weak personality. Under the axis of 'quest for women', this character is unable to handle his love affairs in a decisive manner. He is unable to resist the seduction of a sexy woman that he does not respect really; he dares not refuse the solicitation of the woman he has no feelings for; he is incapable of winning the heart of the woman he sincerely loves; and at last, he is unable to keep the family he initially cherishes. Next, our text analysis follows another important theme of the text, which is the main character's 'intellectual quest'.

Axis II: Intellectual Quest

Axis II. 1. The 'Actantial Model' in the Story World

The story under this axis is mainly about Hong-jian's frustration in his intellectual quest. Because of his educational background and his over-seas study experience in particular, Hong-jian, like many of the other intellectual characters in the story, has a strong awareness of both western and eastern culture. Only it is seldom a serious reflection. Instead, superficial boasting about knowledge and cynical mockery at everything are his passion. What is paradoxical is the level of 'truth' revealed in his cynical garrulity, though such revelation is often exaggerated for comic effect.

Hong-jian's rambling talk and wandering mind in fact betray his intellectual crisis: he can not find his place in society and cannot come to terms with reality in spite of his broad learning. His frustrating experience in his intellectual quest results in his split ego, which can be interpreted in outline through this actantial model:

object (professional career; social acknowledgement)

↑

subject of desire (Hong-jian) ← opponent (Hong-jian with his weak personality; crucial reality)

We can expand the above formula by exploring the three spheres of the 'actantial model':

In the sphere of **knowing**: Hong-jian is the 'subject' of broad knowledge; meanwhile, he is also the 'subject' of failure in his professional pursuit and social integration.

In the sphere of **longing:** Hong-jian is the 'subject' of 'longing' for general success in society; meanwhile, he is also a conscious and cynical ironist about man and society in general.

In the sphere of **power**: Hong-jian is occasionally the 'subject' of eloquent speech which brings him a certain admiration from others; but eventually he turns out to be ill-adapted to any profession and suffers a great deal from his intellectual frustration.

The above outline shows abundant contradictory features in this personality. Since humour largely depends on incongruity, these features are an important source of humour in the portrayal of this character. In other words, the incongruous elements displayed above co-exist and co-operate in the construction of the paradox structure of humour and contribute to the portrayal of the intellectual hero. However, the complex humour structure and the richness of the character's portrait in such a humorous text cannot be limited to this actantial model. Next, the text analysis will go further with other analytical perspectives.

Axis II. 2. The Play Structure of the Multiple Worlds of Narrative

In the story world, the main characters are a bunch of intellectuals who have received both Chinese and western education at a high level. These people believe that they have entered the 'fortress' of knowledge and have understood thoroughly the laws of the universe. It is with cynicism, often overlapping with comic exaggeration, that they express their views on different cultural phenomena and on all aspects of life.

In the narrative structure of humour, the narrator's discourse is often in 'consonance' (cf. Chatman, 1990: 147; 2001: 120-126; also cf. Axis I. 2. in my *B.M.F.* analysis) with the characters' cynical humour. They are relatively united in their harsh questioning of the universal order that man is put in.

Meanwhile, the main character in the story world cannot predict the tragic destiny in his professional quest (and in life in general) as hyper-determined in the text. Because of the discourse barrier, the intellectual hero's cynicism eventually turns against him and thus he becomes the victim of irony as designed by the implied author.

In the story world, the main character's self-consciousness already questions the true value of his learning and of his intellectual identity. In the meantime, the narrator's ironic voice keeps mocking all the weakness and defects of such intellectuals without reserve.

The paradox structure of humour conveys 'general irony', and there is nothing positively affirmed in this text. The whole universal order is called into question, not even the knowledge about this universe or those who possess such knowledge is spared.

Axis II. 2. 1. Professional Quest

After coming back to China from his studies abroad, Hong-jian, like the other intellectual characters in the same situation, starts an anxious search for a professional position. An ideal for him is to find a job in the field of education. Despite his desire, Hong-jian has a critical view of what education has been in China. The following quoted speech is taken from Chapter 4. Hong-jian made this speech before he was engaged in teaching, and he was addressing a friend working for a newspaper:

> "... The former policy of keeping the masses ignorant prevented people from getting an education. The current policy of keeping the masses ignorant only allows the people to get a certain kind of education. The uneducated are fooled by others because they are illiterate. The educated are taken in by printed matter like your newspaper propaganda and lecture notes on training cadres because they are literate."
>
> (Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 128)

The intellectual hero made this speech before his entrance into the 'professional fortress'. It represents a cynical view of education. A civilised view can make us understand that the reduction of the illiteracy rate in society through education is however a human progress. Yet Hong-jian is interpreting education only in negative terms, though this remark does in reality reveal a certain truth. The humour incongruity is then the opposition real/unreal. Also there are sub-humour registers near the end: while the entity 'education' represents high and noble value, the counter-posed entity "printed matter" and "lecture notes" represent relatively low and trivial value. The logic mechanisms involved are humorous 'exaggeration' plus 'degradation'.

At this moment of the story, Hong-jian already knows that he is to teach in a newly opened university. His cynical speech here expresses his pessimism. He certainly has no passion for what he is to be engaged in. Besides, he does not know yet that he will fail in this profession. This cynical character then becomes the victim of the global ironic scheme in the text.

When Hong-jian arrives at San Lü University, he realises that he is skilful neither in

teaching nor in dealing with people. Now that Hong-jian **has entered the professional fortress** he experiences constant frustration. In the following two passages, it is the narrator's ironic commentary on the story event that prevails. The narrator again uses a series of similes and metaphors to compose humorous irony and to mock at the character's vanity and incompetence.

Now, at least two things disturb Hong-jian during his lecture:

One was calling the roll. He recalled that among the prominent professors he had had, none of them ever called roll or reported student absences. This was how a great scholar went about: "if you want to listen, then come listen. It's all the same to me." Overcome with admiration, he could not but imitate them. At the first class; *Hong-jian was like Adam* in the "Book of Genesis" calling the names of the newly created animals. After that, he even didn't bring his roll book. By the second week he discovered that of the fifty odd students, seven or eight were absent. Those *empty seats were like* the empty gaps in a mouth after several teeth have been lost. They gave one an uncomfortable feeling. .... At this rate there'd be no one left to listen to him but the desks and chairs, which had feet but were without the power to run away. But how humiliating it was suddenly to go from the permissiveness of a great scholar to the tediousness of a grade school teacher!

The other thing was the lectures. *It was like trying to make clothes* out of a piece of materiel that is not big enough. He thought he had prepared sufficient material, only to find when he got to the class that as he spoke, it *shrank* faster than he could stop it. ... An empty stretch of time in which there was nothing to say approached *like a white torrent* of rushing water heading toward a car driven at a full throttle. ... Once *just like a man given a laxative* after going hungry for a few days, he could not even squeeze anything out no matter how hard he tried, and he just had to dismiss class a quarter of an hour early.

(Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 214; emphasis added for analysis)

In terms of narrative levels, a general humour incongruity governing the two passages lies between the main character's embarrassment in his teaching experience and the narrator's

detached mockery of him..

The main story information in the first passage is about how Hong-jian wants to imitate a great scholar's manner in his teaching but only falls flat in his pretension. The story event is catastrophic for Hong-jian: there are less and less students present in his class. But the presentation of the event is rendered in the narrator's words. The general humour incongruity, as the text itself summarises at the end, clashes between the initial "great scholar" (high, pretentious) and the eventual "grade school teacher" (low, "tedious", "humiliating"). This 'degradation' is realised through abundant imagery provided by a series of humorous analogies. We can first notice a *general decline* of values in the three entities compared to: "Book of Genesis" represents high and sacred value; "empty gaps in a mouth" represents low value and perhaps provokes disgust; "desks and chairs" represent lifeless low value. There is further interior humour incongruity in each humorous analogy which enriches the imagery with details and reinforces the irony:

In the **first simile,** Hong-jian's 'calling roll' in class (comparatively common) is compared to Adam's speech in the Bible (sacred). With such complementary details as "calling newly created animals", the implied humour register of "college students" is in fact down-graded to 'animals', which then reveals the true intention of the narrator. With this high inappropriateness, the narration activates the switching to the first comic climax and reveals the ironic salience.

In the first simile, the logic mechanism is 'false analogy' plus 'degradation'. In the second simile and a following metaphor, besides 'degradation', a consecutive comic climax is reached with a 'valid analogy' which makes the imagery even more vivid each time.

In **the second simile,** the empty seats in Hong-jian's classroom (comparatively high) are compared to "empty gaps in a mouth" (low, ugly). The complimentary sentence "they gave an uncomfortable feeling" hints at the disgust of the image and enhances the humour incongruity. As a result, the narration is switched to the second comic climax and the irony is reinforced. What follows is a metaphor, the implied entity "legs of the deserting students" (alive, high) are compared to the "legs of the desks" which have no similar power (lifeless, low). While it is a stereotype to describe empty seats with reference to the absence of the students, the association between "gaps in a mouth" and the "empty seats in a classroom" or the association between "students' deserting legs" and the "desks' powerless legs" is original. In such new combinations,

the narrator makes use of the physical resemblance of the compared entities to create surprising humour. The stereotype of "students deserting the class" is then time and again renewed and concretised, thus gaining fresh expressive force.

The comic irony winds up with an even more overt comment that sums up Hong-jian's embarrassing situation. Such adjectives as "tedious" and "humiliating" adopted by the narrator expose his ironic attributes towards this character, which in turn illuminate the portrait of this intellectual hero with ironic colour. Though it is a straight statement, the comic tone still goes on, for this deplorable ending is incongruous with Hong-jian's grand pretentiousness at the beginning.

The narrator's ironic voice is maintained in the account of Hong-jian's second trouble concerning his teaching experience. Besides the difficulty in preventing his students from running away from his class, he finds it hard to fill the time of each course. The narrator again uses a series of humorous similes to mock at the character imprisoned in his story world. Hong-jian's difficulty in controlling the time in class is consecutively compared to a series of negative situations, and the irony becomes more striking with each new simile. The initial humour register is Hong-jian's lecture, which represents relatively high value. The *first simile* provides a humorous analogy between the lecture register and "making clothes out of a piece of material that is not big enough" (low, embarrassing) so as to achieve ironic degradation. The verb "shrank" further expanses the simile and lends dynamic content to the awkward situation teased at. In the *second simile*, Hong-jian's lecture is compared to "no escape before a torrent of rushing water in a high-speed car" (low, embarrassing, dangerous) which makes the humour incongruity more striking and thus reinforces the irony. In *the third simile*, this lecture is compared to "a hungry man having taken a laxative" (low, embarrassing, disgusting) which ridicules the lecture to an unprecedented degree. The verb "squeeze" is used as a pun. By implication this verb further expands the simile with an imagery capable of provoking strong disgust, which in turn ironizes Hong-jian's difficulty in searching for words for his lecture to the supreme point. The whole narration is pushed to numerous comic climaxes with various humorous analogies, while the intellectual hero is also time and again exposed in the limelight as the victim of irony.

At the end of the academic year, the university refuses to renew Hong-jian's contract.

Despite all his ambition after his study abroad, Hong-jian lacks courage and ability to make a career. As his best friend Hsin-mei defines him: "You are not annoying, but you are completely useless" (Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 191). 'Weakness' and 'incompetence' are two vital defects of this character. Whether he wants to stay in this professional 'fortress' or not, he is now out of it. Like his quest for women and for marriage, it is still a vicious circle around disappointment and failure.

Axis II. 2. 2. Irony at Intellectuals

As an intellectual character, Hong-jian is very conscious of the predicament related to his intellectual identity. As textual analysis has shown, this intellectual hero, like many of his peers, is very fond of idle thought and rambling, more or less due to his scholar's temperament. The mental content revealed expresses not only a certain cynical view of the exterior world but also a strong self-irony as a critical view of intellectuals in particular. We can find abundant and relatively long patches of text that express such intellectual self-consciousness. Besides, the narrator is also keen on exposing and mocking the special flaws of such intellectual characters. In the text, these narrative moments are usually a disruption of the story development dominated by humour, which in turn helps to highlight the personality of the intellectual hero. The following quoted passages are just a few examples taken from the text.

<u>On University People</u>

Once, Hong-jian pointed out to Ts'ao Yüan-lang, a former university student who had majored in European literature, that the latter had stolen a German poem to dedicate it to Miss Su as his own work. Hong-jian emphasised that he had noted down the poem and his memory could not be wrong:

> "... You didn't have to jot down everything the way I did. You were attending classes in your own major and your not taking notes just showed how knowledgeable you were, and you knew already everything the professor said. But I was an auditor

from the Chinese literature department; if I didn't keep my pen busy in the classroom, I'd have been laughed at by you for being so ill prepared for the course that I couldn't understand the lecture well enough to take notes."

... Ts'ao Yüan-lang guessed that Fang Hong-jian's knowledge of German was about as good or as bad as his own. Besides, Hong-jian was a Chinese major, so he couldn't be too brilliant. - For in a university, science majors look down on philosophy majors, foreign language majors on Chinese majors, Chinese majors on philosophy majors, philosophy majors on sociology majors, sociology majors in turn on educational majors. Since educational majors have no one to look down upon, they can only despise the professors in their own department.

(Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 75)

The first passage is a quoted speech of the main character. Humour comes from his cynical exaggeration of how majors or non-majors of a field of study should behave in university courses. Hong-jian's point of view is primarily negative: not taking notes in class is a sign of arrogance while doing the contrary is a sign of incompetence. The humour incongruity is based on the opposition real/unreal. In other words, what Hong-jian recounts here indeed corresponds to a certain reality, only it can not be taken as a general truth.

The second passage is mainly the narrator's interpretation of Ts'ao's interior reaction to Hong-jian's speech. The beginning contains more story information providing than commentary on the story: Ts'ao does not believe that Hong-jian is knowledgeable enough to discover his plagiarism in his composition of the poem. Then the narration is switched to the narrator's dominant commentary by a dash " -". It is the narrator's generalisation about the 'mutual contempt' among the university people. Here the narrator is maintaining the cynical tone of Hong-jian's speech. Only the narrator goes even further in his capture of the intellectuals' special behaviour among themselves in a university environment: with a chain of similar sentence patterns, each sentence provides an additional detail and together they make up a plentiful portrait of university human types with the main character as a typical example. The humour incongruity is still based on the opposition of true/untrue: what is stated corresponds in part to the reality of university people; but to see it as a general case is however a comic exaggeration.

On Studying Abroad:

Despite numerous defects in his personality, Hong-jian is however an honest person by nature. For example, he does not like to flaunt his overseas study experience. Especially he feels ashamed about the PhD diploma that he purchased from an Irishman in New York, contrary to one of his colleagues at San Lü University who swindled and bluffed with the same diploma. He loathes this kind of faking and has a strong sense of self-irony regarding his own studying-abroad experience. Once Hong-jian was talking to Miss Tang on this subject, and here is his remark:

> "Miss Tang, studying abroad today is like passing examinations under the old Manchu system... It's not for the broadening of knowledge that one goes abroad but to get rid of their inferiority complex. *It's like* having smallpox or measles, or in other words, it's essential to have them. Once a child has had smallpox or measles, he can grow up protected, and if he comes in contact with these diseases later on, he has no fear of them. Once we've studied abroad, we've gotten the inferiority out of the system, and our souls become strengthened, and when we do come across *such germs as* PhD's or M.A's we've built up resistance against them. Once we've had smallpox, we can forget having ever caught it; similarly, someone who's studied abroad should also forget about ever having gone abroad."
>
> (Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 77; emphasis added for analysis)

This passage is the main character's direct speech. Here again the humorous analogy is the major source of humour. The comparison between "studying abroad" (high) and "having smallpox or measles" (low, disgusting) could be groundless without the extended explanation. The extension is firstly assisted by two sentences in parallel: one starts with "once a child..." and the other starts with "once we...". They function to expand the simile by particularising the special aspects of the two entities to be compared. In this context, the humour register of "studying abroad" is considered similar to these diseases for they both provide 'protection': one protects against the same physical disease, and the other protects against those having lived the

same studying-abroad experience. In the light of this analogy, the further descriptive elaboration amplifies the ironic context: "children's smallpox or measles" may provoke an uncomfortable feeling; the single noun metaphor "germ" in reference to various western qualifications incites even stronger repugnance. Striking humour then leads to the 'degradation' of the initial high-valued humour register. As a result, 'studying abroad' is ridiculed and the vanity of certain intellectuals is exposed in the limelight of sharp irony. The two sentences that end the speech repeat the previous sentence pattern triggered by "once", and continue to explain the case of "smallpox disease" and the metaphorical disease of "studying abroad". Though humour still persists, it is the forthright statement of the speaker's position that prevails. The auxiliary verb "should" shows the intellectual hero's firm attitude towards certain intellectuals' dishonesty, which in turn reveals the straight side of this character.

We notice that it is not the first time that humorous analogy depends on some supplementary extension for its final accomplishment. It is often this extension that fully demonstrates the originality of the humour skills and the imaginative power in the language use of this text.

SUMMARY: *F.B.* as a More Sombre Text

F.B. is in a sense a comedy of manners, which offers us the caricature of a special human type - Chinese intellectuals during a certain historical period. On the one hand, the analysis of this text is conducted with a strong awareness that western and Chinese cultural differences may be an obstacle for the western audience to fully understand this text and the humour in this text in particular. On the other hand, this text analysis is also a test: how far can narratology, by showing various narrative components working together within the text, lead us to delineate a narrative structure for the understanding of this text with its particular humour.

In *F.B.*, the **implied author** in a sense organises the text around the metaphoric frame designated by the title: getting into and out of various metaphoric fortresses is an important narrative strategy and a key for the comprehension of this text. Besides, *analogy*, especially the *humorous use of analogy* is the animating principle of the whole narration. The joint utilisation of various figures underlines the (surprising) contiguity between things, impressions or ideas to

achieve expressive force. Though it would be ideal to consider all of these figurative writing skills as they appear in the text, the wealth of figures to be dealt with would make this an impossible task for a single thesis. The primary aim of the above study is to relate some of these writing skills to the narrative structure for the portrayal of the comic-tragic intellectual hero.

Compared to the other two humorous texts analysed, *F.B.* is a more sombre text despite the abundant comic moments throughout its narration.

Like the other two humorous texts, **the story material** is mainly tragic, for it is also a story of the intellectual hero's frustration. Meanwhile, the presentation of this story is full of humour. The *paradox of humour within the story world* lies in the character's contradictory personality, his frequent comic interpretation of life and of the intellectual human-type's buffoon-like behaviour. An obsession with words is the main character's intellectual eccentricity, which in fact resembles many of the intellectual characters in western fiction. As Viart summarises in her study of some French intellectual characters: these literary figures have a special passion for words. They twist words, lie with words and transform words into efficient but vain playthings[17] (Viart, 1993: 222). The intellectual characters' sense of humour, sense of self-irony and their language skills for the expression of all this is a major source of humour. Yet the story world is presented in a realistic way, and there are few fantastic elements to deprive the tragic story events of realistic illusion. Such realistic presentation of tragic story events then favours sympathy arousal and is at least in part responsible for the eventual tragic effect of this text.

The narrator in this text resembles the intellectual hero in his obsession with words. The special narrative behaviour of this narrator is exhibited by his frequent ironic commentary that interrupts and prevails over the story presentation. Again Viart's formulation about the narrator's function in certain French novels with intellectual (anti-) heroes matches a great deal here: what counts is the discourse itself, a discourse that speaks about the weakness and the faults of the other discourses[18]. In this humorous text, the narrator's discourse is also largely responsible for the frequent (though momentary) comic atmosphere in the text. The humorous usage of language in this discourse serves to switch the narration to concurrent comic climaxes.

Albeit that *cynicism*, as Fontanille points out, largely depends on the conception of values as defined in a certain cultural context, the intellectual hero's cynicism can be detected from the 'gap' between the narrator's discourse world and the character's story world. In other words, the

character's cynicism is exposed when the narrator's detached voice mocks blind and momentary self-complacency. To a certain degree, the intellectual hero, despite his cynicism, can still survive the ironic structure and is not reduced to a real 'negative' character; only cynicism cannot save him in the crucial life. Even though the narrator's discourse sometimes shares a similar cynical attitude to the intellectual character, the tragic story and the eventual serious presentation of it turns against a cynical attitude. What is interesting is that such cynical humour also contains certain uncertainty or a paradox: in spite of the denunciation suggested by the humorous mockery, this text is not proposing anything better either. Fontanille is no doubt right to see cynical humour in terms of its three functions: the refusal of collective tyranny, non-respect of conventions and self-affirmation (cf. Fontanille, 1993: 18). In a hostile world, cynical humour could be the last shelter that we can run to for help.

Despite rich humour in the text, important story events always end up in tragedy and finish with the narrator's serious interpretation of it in a moment of 'serious relief'. It is usually the moment in the narration when the incongruous elements, instead of being neutralised, lose the balance between their elements so that the narration tilts to the tragic side. When the whole text ends up with such a tragic tone, a sombre philosophic view is revealed as an important serious meaning of this text.

The **paradox structure of humour** in this text mainly lies in the co-existence of comic writing and the tragic presentation of (among other things) a Chinese intellectual character's story. In the centre of it is *a sympathetic portrayal of a comic-tragic intellectual hero*. "The intellectual is the one who does not see anything when he is in action; makes errors when he does not participate in action, is mistaken when he tries to remember it and fools others when he takes it upon himself to direct it." ("L'intellectuel est celui qui ne voit rien quand il est dans l'action, se trompe quand il n'y participe pas, s'abuse lorsqu'il s'avise de la remémoriser ou abuse les autres lorsqu'il veut l'orienter." Viart, 1993: 246) This text offers us a relentless caricature of a certain human type and a largely realistic portrait of one man.

Obsession with words in this text in fact expresses a kind of intellectual consciousness. Among other things, we can also find certain *serious meaning* from the cynical humour created by various language skills. As Jankelevitch once said, the cynical ironist "is relatively *serious*; or rather, he is neither a real fool nor just play-acting. He could not himself say whether he is 'doing

it on purpose': by playing with scandal, he is also assuming responsibility for it." ("est relativement *sérieux*; ou plutôt, il n'est ni tout à fait dupe ni tout à fait comédien, et il ne saurait dire lui-même s'il 'le fait exprès'; à force de jouer avec le scandale, il lui arrive de l'endosser" (Jankelevitch, 1950: 94; emphasis added). In this case, the cynic defies moral and logical values by playing the role of the 'bad'[19]. And among other things, "to confirm the negative, isn't it the utmost challenge?" ("affirmer le négatif, n'est-ce pas vraiment le comble du défi?" Jankelevitch, 1950: 97) Also, cynical humour is akin to 'general irony': an expression of human weakness faced with a general condition beyond human mastery and a detachment from predicament in order to survive. Then cynicism is itself a kind of general irony and can be a serious 'challenge' in its own right to any authoritarian discourse involved in the mockery launched by this text.

If the present study of a few humorous texts taken from very different literary sources hides an ambition to search for something really common to all human kind, at least it proclaims an enormous joy to have found a good occasion to laugh at all these characters and perhaps at ourselves in the meantime.

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[1] Qian, Zhongshu (1979), *Fortress Besieged*, tran. By Jeanne Kelly and Nathan K. Mao, Bloomington and London: Indiana University. This book title will take the short form of *F.B.* in the following text analysis. In the original version of this novel, there are numerous words and expressions drawn from various western language sources and kept in these languages. They are usually made understood in Chinese either in the context of the text or explained in a footnote. I shall keep these 'foreign languages' in my quotations of the text for analysis.

[2] Some critics consider this characteristic as a weakness of this book as a novel (cf. Tian, 1990: 120).

[3] Explanation of any 'surprising' effect of humour involves explanation of 'what is normal' or conventions as accepted in a culture. This is then beyond pure text study. Cf. the discussion of 'cultural references' in Part III.

[4] Cf. Fontanille's article on 'cynicism' (1993). See an extensive discussion of 'cultural references' concerning this text in Part III.

[5] This expression in French is part of the original version in Chinese.

[6] The 'positive value' represented by 'marriage' must be understood with a consideration of its historical and cultural background, for in today's China, as in most western countries, 'marriage' is mostly considered as a personal choice free from the judgement of any moral values. The 'historical and cultural references' related to these humorous texts are beyond pure text study: see extensive discussion in Part III.

[7] In China, 'keeping pet birds' is an old tradition, and walking 'en-caged bird(s)', perhaps more than 'walking dogs' in many western countries, has been a very popular and traditional entertainment.

[8]Once again the limitation of pure text study is rather obvious: 'marriage' was a much more serious matter in the early twentieth of China than today. Talking about marriage like this at that time was really a provocation.

[9] Barthes defines 'sequence' as a "logical string of nuclei, linked together by a solidarity relation: the sequence opens when one of its germs is lacking an antecedent of the same kin, and it closes when another of its terms no longer entails any consequent function" (Barthes, 1975: 253).

[10] Full understanding of the ironic humour provoked by this theme in *F.B.* necessitates some knowledge of the "talented scholar and beautiful woman" theme that has often been used in Chinese literature and art. This humorous text however elaborates a sober and realistic view of courtship and marriage to counteract this tradition: instead of a larger-than-life hero, the main character is neither really handsome nor genuinely talented, nor are the women he flirts with really desirable or perfect. What is involved in the ironic humour is then not limited to the story event and character, but is also linked to the whole literary and cultural tradition behind it.

[11] Cf. "le méchant, 'enroulé sur soi, cru et nu... cuit et recuit', habite à l'aise dans sa méchanceté et s'applaudit à lui-même" (Jankelvitche, 1950: 94).

[12] See Jankelevitch's explanation of cynicism (1950) in the "Summary" of this text analysis.

[13] A good sensitivity to such language skills and humour skills in particular requires a good knowledge of the original language, and many non-native speakers of Chinese, alas, may fail to grasp and enjoy the original use of language in this text.

[14] It is important to understand this simile against the historical background of the book: China had been occupied by various western countries and was newly invaded by the Japanese in particular. It was a period of national crises. Any references to national betrayal have a more serious implication under this circumstance. As a result, humour provoked here also appears to be more 'cynical' if the historical background is to be taken into consideration. Here is another example which shows a serious limitation in conventional narrathology which recommends strict text analysis only.

[15] I draw this conclusion from Attardo's definition of "serious relief" which refers to "any stretch of text an otherwise line-rich context that contains few or no jab lines. Thus essentially a serious relief section in a humorous text is merely a patch of text with little or no humor in it" (Attardo, 2003: 1). I avoid the term "line" in favour of my account of the 'spatial humour structure' composed of different narrative levels and many other related narrative elements that *function together* for the humour production in the text. See explanation in Part I, Chapter 3. 4. of this thesis.

[16] Lambert Deckers and Pam Avery once explained that "According to two-process theories, jokes provide incongruity plus resolution and thus are most funny. Logical endings provide no incongruity and illogical endings provide incongruity but no resolution. Thus these ending types were rated as less funny." (Lambert Deckers and Pam Avery, 1994: 313). Lambert Deckers and Pam Avery here point out the elements that decide the degree of funniness in jokes. Only their conclusion in turn blurred the distinction between humour and non-humour language phenomena. For any language expression to produce 'funniness', there must exist certain incongruity and resolution (possibility for detection of the two incongruous scripts or registers), even if the resolution is implied. Complete 'logical endings' or complete 'illogical endings' without resolution cannot produce 'funniness'.

[17] Cf: "ces hommes font mentir les mots, les travestissent, les transforment en bibelots vains et sonores, ..." (Viart, 1993: 222).

[18]"Les romans de Simon présentent une pléthore de signes dans un univers privé de sens, où le sens est toujours suspect, incohérent. Le seul discours de ses livres, si l'on veut en trouver un, c'est un discours par défaut, un discours qui dit le défaut et la défaillance d'es autres discours." (Viart, 1993: 238).

[19] Jankelevitch (1950) analysed the function of cynical expression, the characteristics of the cynical and the seriousness in cynicism. He says: "Le *cynique* joue le tout pour le tout: défiant morale et logique, il revendique hautement cela même qu'on lui reproche, il veut être canaille" (Jankelevitch, 1950: 94). According to Jankelevitch, the cynical is then an ironist: "Il y a dans le cynisme une dialectique qui est du même ordre que le Jeu: car si le cynique se parodiait vraiment lui-même, il ne serait pas autre chose qu'un *ironiste*"; and *self-irony* is the typical case: "il brave sa propre vocation, et il se renie soi-même, et il se fait du mal à lui-même" (Jankelevitch, 1950: 64).

PART III

Further Perspectives

We have seen a narrative study of humour in the previous analysis of three humorous texts. In this context, the main task of my narrative approach to these texts has been the display of the inner narrative structure with various narrative elements interacting with each other in each text (cf. Chapter 2, Part I). As a result, numerous extra-textual entities have been excluded. At the centre of this enquiry is the analysis of the comic heroes in these texts. With the narrative approach to humour, arguably, some dimensions of character have also been excluded, for 'character' is limited to a textual entity in my investigation.

As the analysis of the three humorous texts comes to an end, it is also the time to sum up the major merits of this experiment. The main advancement achieved is, of course, the analysis of humorous texts (of my choice) using narrative theory. Some of the most recent humour theories have been integrated and tested in the previous research, especially Attardo's proposal of analytical method beyond jokes.

It is true that Attardo is among the most advanced humour theorists who has succeeded in providing an analytical method to address 'longer' humorous narratives. In Attardo's most recent experiment of book length (2002), he continues in particular the linear analytic method that he already formulated and put to use in 1998. Among Attardo's case studies in this book, the written humorous narratives chosen for analysis include part of a poem, some selected parts of novels, a short story, and *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime* by Oscar Wilde as the longest sample case.

In his study of a short story taken from a newspaper, Attardo analysed four aspects of the story that he calls "strands". These four items include 1) "sexual prowess" which is in fact a theme study; 2) "onomastic puns" which is in fact a study of certain linguistic writings skills; 3) "parody of the naturalistic French novels..."; 4) "metanarrative comments of the narrator" (Attardo, 2002: 150-156). In a sense, my humorous text study not only covers all these aspects but also includes *many more narrative elements* as components of the general humour structure of the text. An example is the complex play relationship among the three major narrative levels including the implied author's general design, the narrator's discourse world and the story world where is located the intellectual main character in question. Another important difference

between my 'spatial' humour structure and Attardo's 'linear' formula of humour is my emphasis on the co-existence and the co-functioning of multiple narrative elements as a *general determination* responsible for various local switching to the comic climax as well as for the overall humorous effects of the entire narrative. As for the four chosen aspects analysed in Attardo's discussion of the short story in question, Attardo scarcely addresses the mutual relationship of these items, as if they were isolated elements with each of them responsible for only one humorous facet of the text.

In Attardo's analysis of *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime* by Oscar Wilde (Attardo, 2002: 163-201) which is the longest sample case analysed in this book, it becomes even more obvious that his linear analytical method turns out to be an over-simplified formulation of the humour in a complex humorous narrative. Technically, his analysis mainly consists in marking each of the jab lines (location of humorous stretch of the text; cf. Part I, Chapter 3. 4.) in italics and associating it to a footnote which describes this related jab line. This 'description' or analysis in the footnote is in fact the naming of all his basic concepts including SO (script opposition), LM (logic mechanism), SI (situation), TA (target for mockery), etc. on each occasion. As a result of the analysis, the whole text becomes a (repeated) list of all such concepts located as *isolated* features of segmented humorous stretches of the text. In a sense, such a list is the 'what' worked out by a competent humour specialist. But it can hardly explain 'how' the entire humour is structured or each bit of comic effect is generated. If I adopted Attardo's linear analytical method only to address the humorous texts of my choice, I would certainly fail to explain the rich dimension of numerous humour phenomena or the diverse comic effects of numerous comic moments in the text. Without a 'spatial' perspective to see the narrative structure in these humorous texts, I would fail, for example, to explain why Pangloss' speech in Chapter 1 of *Candide* is comic in the context of this text, whereas this same passage could be non-humorous narrative if it appears alone (see *Candide* analysis, Axis II. 1. 1.); I would also fail to illustrate the multiple humour sources that work together and lead to the manifold comic effects emitted in the beginning of Chapter 3 (see *B.M.F.* analysis, Axis II. 3.) or Chapter 5 (see *B.M.F.* analysis, Axis II. 1. and Axis II. 3.) of *B.M.F.*.

Despite the preceding efforts to show how a complex humorous text is analysable by searching for the play among multiple narrative elements and their active force in the construction of humour and its meaning, many would challenge this approach as more or less a

rule-governed process regardless of the creative dimension in literary writing. Now this final part of the thesis, though much less developed, is just to indicate that the previous experiments do not lead to a conclusive view of the narrative approach to humour as a perfect access to such humorous texts either. Certain limitations regarding this approach will now be discussed; some extra-textual entities are to be taken into consideration so as to open up the scope of analysis.

* * * * *

Like Cobley, more and more theorists realise "there can be little doubt that human consciousness is now suffused with narrative" (Cobley, 2001: 479). The analysis of narrative in question is further explicated by Hans Kellner as "formalist structural narratology" which "seems to have reached a state of neat technical perfection, offering an array of useful tools for foregrounding and examining aspects of texts ..." (Kellner, 2000: 280)[1]. In practice, a leading experiment is made by Barthes who designs "five codes" in his S/Z that function to give rise to the *creation of meaning* throughout the reading of a tale and who emphasises the difference of each text. The post-structuralist trajectory then continues Barthes' project to reconsider the reading process.

Among the other experiments, there have been Fludernik's *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology*[2] (1996) which seeks "to redefine narrativity in terms of cognitive ('natural') parameters, moving beyond formal narratology into the realm of pragmatics, reception theory and constructivism" (Fludernik, 1996: p.xi). For Fludernik, a principle of narrative analysis "is founded on parameters relating to *human environment and human embodiment* within that environment." (Fludernik, 1996: 312; emphasis added). Fludernik then advocates the "insight that fictional situations are visualised in terms of re(-)cognisable *real-world patterns*" (Fludernik, 1996: 312; emphasis added). Fludernik's theory in fact relates to a great concern with real readers.

It is worthy of notice that the real reader's response is more and more considered as an important factor in the more recent approach to narrative. As Dixon and Bortolussi note, "any number of scholars in modern narratology have proposed that a resolution of narratological issues requires some understanding of how *actual readers* process text. However, the field of

narratology as a whole is ill-equipped in some ways to conduct this kind of investigation" (Dixon and Bortolussi, 2001: 275; emphasis added). The research carried out by the 'Centre for the Empirical Study of Literary Response' addresses especially the issue "what happens when *actual readers* interact with literary texts?" Their research is "concerned with (real) readers' cognitive processes, emotional reactions, and aesthetic experiences, including variations in literary response that are due to differences among readers and reading situations" (Centre for the Empirical Study of Literary Response, 2003). A guideline offered by this research centre is the focus on the (real) reader': "*The Reader.* Verifiable assessment of reader characteristics requires the examination of (1) similarities between the reader and the narrator (or characters) in terms of age, gender, and attitudes or beliefs; (2) the reader's personal history of experiences related to the subject matter of the text; (3) the reader's background of instruction in literature and literary genre; (4) the reader's performance on objective measures of literary knowledge and skill; and (5) the reader's general reading skills, habits, and attitudes. (Centre for the Empirical Study of Literary Response: 2003). Cobley (2001) in his study of 'genre' shares a similar concern which is "how audiences receive narrative conventions". He argues, among other things, "that genre should properly be considered as an 'idea' or an 'expectation' harboured by readers" (Cobley, 2001: 479). Cobley's exploration of 'genre' is also a re-examination of textuality or "narrative" in general. Cobley's argument can, for instance, inspire us to see the three humorous works more or less as the genre of 'comedy'; and in the reception of such 'comedy', Cobley's proposal about the "reading formation" received by a (real) reader can be worthy of consideration for a further study of those humorous works.

I draw the essential point from these more recent research experiments and newly attained viewpoints to understand that natural human being(s) and his/their activity in the reading process has attracted fresh attention. Besides, 'texts' can (if not 'should') be treated other than as a pure object for scientific study according to a pre-defined model. As far as our present analysis of the three humorous works is concerned, we can, for example, draw more elements from them as recognisable by their native speakers. In the following discussion, some of the post-structural views will be introduced and put into use. Despite the fact that many of the topics are still in an experimental stage, we can already assemble multiple new proposals for further exploration. Meanwhile, I emphasise that the aspects to be inspected are a very limited selection, for they are considered only as some representative phases lost in our previous narrative study of these works.

The purpose of this additional discussion is to provide an additional approach to the rich dimensions of these works, which can hopefully lead to further research on similar literary works and humorous works in particular.

1. *The Real Author and the Real Reader's Knowledge about Him*

The 'real author' and his counterpart the real reader's knowledge about him are important items disregarded in the analysis derived from the narrative diagram of narrative agents (cf. Chapter 2, Part I). In our case, the real author refers to that particular empirical entity of *human being* responsible for the production of the text in question (cf. Cobley, 2001: 138, 240).

Narratology usually mentions the term 'real author' just to illustrate the concept of the 'implied author' (cf. Part I, Chapter 2. 2. 1. of this thesis). Booth says that when the real author writes, he is also creating "an implied version of 'himself' that is different from the *implied authors* we meet in other men's works" (Booth, 1983: 70-71). Chatman notes that "the real author can postulate whatever norms he likes through his implied author" (Chatman, 1978: 149), and the implied author is "implied" for he is "reconstructed by the reader from the narrative" (Chatman, 1978: 148).

Now, if we change the priority of our attention to focus on the concept of the 'real author', I think we may see some important points concerning this concept: 1) the real author as that special human being bringing to life his literary work(s) may have the pre-intention to create special artistic effects and by such effects to communicate a certain message of his own; 2) the real author as that special human being bringing to life one special literary work may have the pre-intention to create special artistic effects and by such effects to communicate a certain message unique to this piece of work; 3) the special characteristics of the real author, like his literary capacity, his own life experience and education, and then perhaps his resultant temperament, may come to decide the artistic effects of his work and the special message his literary products are capable of transmitting, whether he is consciously or unconsciously constructing it. These points show a special relationship between the real author and his literary products, which may give us the desire to make acquaintance with the real authors in question so as to better understand the humorous works discussed.

Of course it is not the first time the real author of literary works has drawn our attention. While Raymond Williams studied culture and society (1950, 1961), he also emphasised the social and cultural impact on the "creative mind". He first examined the gradual change mainly in English political, economic and cultural life. Then he turned to trace the development of common language and reveal the links between ideas, literary forms and social history. In the course of this study, he suggests that cultural and social background and the details of the individual known experiences are all important influential elements for literary creation. As a result, "I offer this fourfold classification - social description, social formula, personal description, personal formula - as a way of beginning a general analysis of the contemporary novel" (William, 1961: 312). What William advocated, as we know, had been a major analytical method before structuralism and the ensuing narrative approach to literary works became dominant. About half a century later, Foucault offered the insight into the real author as "the principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning" (Foucault, 1986: 119); Cobley then further explicates this principle as "the way that *a reader's understanding* of *authorship* might be built into the reading of a text" (Cobley, 2001: 486; emphasis added), which calls our attention to how the (real) reader's knowledge about the (real) author may assist in his understanding of the text.

Now with a fresh awareness of the *real author* and its importance for the *real reader*'s literary response, we shall follow our interest in the real authors of the three humorous texts and try to illuminate some phases of these works obscured in the preceding analysis.

Voltaire (1694-1778), the real author of *Candide* is an important intellectual persona in French literary history. He worked continually throughout his life, producing a constant flow of books, plays and other publications. His thoughts and intelligence represented by his abundant works make him one of France's greatest writers and philosophers. While he stayed in England in exile because he offended a nobleman, Voltaire was attracted to the philosophy of John Locke and the ideas of the mathematician and scientist, Sir Isaac Newton. He studied England's Constitutional Monarchy and its religious tolerance. Voltaire was particularly interested in the philosophical rationalism of the time, and in the study of the natural sciences. Such information about Voltaire's life experience tells us that this author was also a great intellectual himself, and like the literary figure Candide created by himself, he also pursued a philosophical quest.

David Lodge (b.1935), the *real author* of *B.M.F.*, is an important literary critic and novelist in current English literary history. Besides teaching English in the University of Birmingham

(retired in 1987), he has also published eleven novels (the latest *Thinks*, appearing in March 2001), several critical studies on modern literary trends and on specific literary figures, including Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh. *Language of fiction* (1966) remains one of his most important critical works. So Lodge as the real author who created the literary figure Adam Appleby shares with this character numerous features: he himself is also an intellectual, a member of the university circle, a man of letters working on literature.

Qian Zhongshu (1910-1998), the *real author* of *F.B.*, has time and again received high praise from both western and (recent) Chinese critics: "There is no doubt that he was the most complete and profound Chinese scholar of the 20th century" (Lanciotti, 1998). His published works include *Guanzhui Pian* (Limited Essays on Ideas and Letters), a single great novel *Fortress Besieged* and many other essays, short novels and literary critics. He had a perfect knowledge of French, German and English, languages that he spoke fluently, and had a reading knowledge of Italian, Spanish and the ancient classical western languages. Qian Zhongshu was not a pure philologist, linguist or novelist: he used languages to roam at his ease through most of western literature and philosophic thought. His novel *Fortress Besieged*, published in 1947 and translated into the principal European languages, is partly autobiographic: like the main character Fang Hong-jian, he also did some study in England (at Oxford) and in France; he possesses a similarly wide knowledge about Chinese and western literature and culture; and he is also a Chinese intellectual having lived the same historical period... . Qian Zhong-shu's foreign literature studies allows him to place, side by side, metaphors and literary figures of the West in order to facilitate a modern reinterpretation of the traditional Chinese people. His life experience and wide knowledge also enabled him to create his special kind of intellectual characters using wide-ranging references.

The (very) brief introduction of the three real authors above can already help the real reader to discover at least one important element of these three humorous texts: since all three real authors are intellectuals themselves, and their respective life experiences and intellectual quests very much overlap with that of the intellectual characters created in these works, the humorous irony emitted from these texts must have aimed at themselves to a certain extent and probably in the first instance. In this sense, we cannot but admire the sense of humour and the sense of self-irony in particular, the special lucidity and courage *on the part of the real authors* of these texts. I

must admit that this awareness and my pre-knowledge of these three real authors has been my first motive to unite these three humorous texts for the study done here.

Of course, acquaintance with the real author can lead the real reader to make many other new discoveries about these three literary works, and this exploration could go as far as working out another PhD thesis. Next, I shall cite just one anecdote related to Voltaire's publication of his *Candide*, for this story may show how certain information about the real author could assist in the real reader's understanding and appreciation of his works.

Voltaire addressed a letter* (cf. the appendix at the end of Part III) to the *Journal encyclopédique*, dating it 1 April 1759 (this may have been an April Fool's joke!) on the subject of *Candide*. The *Journal encyclopédique* was then a fairly high-profile periodical, and it had given a negative assessment of *Candide*.

As far as the present discussion of *Candide* is concerned, this letter can reveal to the real reader at least two interesting points: 1) Voltaire's love of literary games and his sense of humour. In this letter he disguises himself as the brother of the supposed author of the tale, Captain Demad. (It should be remembered that Voltaire also knew English well enough to create this kind of language play rather frequently.) By adopting this persona, he further displaces authorial responsibility for *Candide*, which in the original edition had been attributed to the "Docteur Ralph" (see the post-script at the end of the letter). This game of disguises is in a sense complimentary to the humorous writing in *Candide* and is certainly in tune with the ironic spirit conveyed by this humorous text. 2) Voltaire uses this letter to reaffirm some of the critiques from his tale in *Candide*, and most notably his ridicule of the doctrine of "all is well" (see the parts underlined by me in the letter below). Acquaintance with this letter then can make the real reader more sensitive to the controversial nature of *Candide*. If we associate this event with Voltaire's whole life's passion for justice and his audacious criticism of the powerful which caused his imprisonment and exile, we can better grasp the other messages intended by this work. As a matter of fact, *Candide* is considered Voltaire's signature work, and it is here that he levels his sharpest criticism against the nobility, philosophy, the church, and cruelty. In the centre of it is the ironic but benevolent portrayal of a naïve intellectual character, which is meant to reveal by contrast the evil of the world and the stupidity of the philosophical doctrine in question.

As a result of the above discussion, we have to admit that in the structure-based narratology, the disregard of the real author and the omission of abundant messages that the real

reader may draw from acquaintance with this extra-textual narrative agent is sometimes a great loss that prevents a comprehensive reading and understanding of certain texts. This example also confirms an important presumption drawn from our previous humorous text analysis: humour production may be accompanied by the construction of a (important) 'serious meaning' in a humorous narrative. And here we can see that an acquaintance with the real author and his state of mind may in addition help the real reader to better grasp this serious meaning while he locates and enjoys humour in a humorous narrative.

2. *Cultural References*

Besides 'real author', 'culture' is another important concept ignored by structure-based narratology in its treatment of literary works. The meaning and significance of culture is newly enriched in recent study and has drawn some fresh attention. Eagleton in his *Idea of Culture* (2000) explores the uses and value of the idea of culture by discussing this notion side by side with many other ideas like nature, civilisation, pluralism, etc.. He offers some new insight into this idea by recognising culture as a "double refusal": "of organic determination on the one hand, and of the autonomy of spirit on the other" (Eagleton, 2000: 4). For Eagleton the very word of culture contains a tension between determinism and freedom, rationality and spontaneity. Culture then implies both an unworked, natural material, a process of working it, and a forced, rigid moulding. In a sense, the very union of three humorous texts largely linked to different cultural backgrounds for discussion in this thesis is an act dealing with cultural phenomena. If the preceding discussion of those humorous texts have used certain common mould(s) to interpret their texture both as an analytical means and an end, an opening-up to the consideration of their different cultural references can be also a fruitful and necessary procedure. Hence I admit that a double orientation of this kind in treating literary works drawn from different cultures must be more comprehensive, though it is out of the question to try to do both thoroughly in one thesis.

In *S/Z*, Barthes tries to analyse a popular French short story, *Sarrassine* by Honoré de Balzac. In his analysis, he carefully works out an analytic method which "unveils a complex system of textual codes inscribed within the narrative body" (Luco, 1999). A starting point is his formation of the idea of the "readerly" or "classic text"[3] which, according to Barthes, is the case of the majority of traditional texts. Barthes clarifies that what "evaluation" finds in this kind of

texts is mainly "reactive value" (Barthes, 1974: 4). Then through both analytical practice and theoretical formulation, he creates an innovative textual reception: by uncovering a multiplicity of codes present in the text, Barthes "lays claim to the true 'plural' quality of discourse, which also supposes that any text is merely an assemblage of familiar 'signifiers' that the reader passively deciphers and mobilises in a purely conventional response" (Andres Luco, 1999). As Luco interprets, "if we imagine a narrative or any other type of discourse to be a threaded tapestry, then we as readers are already familiar with its fabric. In other words, Barthes argues that a reader never encounters a text for the first time, for he has already been exposed to the universal codes that penetrate all texts, only in different forms. ... From here, it is possible to conceive of the text (and the reader) as an intersection of codes within a vast *cultural network.*" (Luco, 1999; emphasis added). Accordingly, among his five codes, the "cultural code" or consideration of cultural references is also confirmed and promoted as an important aspect of the creative freedom of both the real author and the real reader. Barthes explains that the "cultural code" is "the law of a society" (Barthes, 1974: 100), a "mixture of common opinions, a smothering layer of received ideas", and more precisely "an anthology of maxims and proverbs about life, death, suffering, love, women, ages of man, etc." (Barthes, 1974: 206). Then reconstruction of the cultural code "forms a kind of scientific vulgate which it will eventually be valuable to describe: what do we know 'naturally' about art? - 'it is a constraint', about youth? - 'it is turbulent,' etc. If we collect all such knowledge, all such vulgarisms, we create a monster, and this monster is ideology. As a fragment of ideology, the cultural code inverts its class origin (scholastic and social) into a natural reference, into a proverbial statement" (Barthes, 1974: 87-98). In addition, "the supporting cultural code is discoverable: stylistic transformation 'proves' the code, bares its structure, reveals its ideological perspective." (Barthes, 1974: 100).

Barthes later revealed: "In S/Z, I reversed this perspective: there I refused the idea of a model transcendent to several texts (and thus, all the more so, of a model transcendent to every text) in order to postulate that each text is in some sort its own model, that each text, in other words, must be treated in *its difference*" (Barthes, 1971: 44; emphasis added). Barthes' "difference" is an attribute of each individual text inside a single culture, as well across cultures. With regard to our previous textual analyses, what is missing, from this point of view, is the relationship between the structure of each individual text and its cultural context. Another interesting point made by Barthes that can be associated with our previous study is his (brief)

explication about the construction of 'irony': "because of its cultural codes, it stales, rots, excludes itself from writing"[4] and "irony can only add a new code (a new stereotype) to the codes, to the stereotypes it claims to exorcise." (Barthes, 1974: 44, 98). In other words, construction of 'irony' must depend on the stereotype as accepted in a culture. If a real reader fails to understand those cultural stereotypes, he will fail to understand the irony established on this cultural basis.

The relationship between Eagleton's idea(s) of 'culture' and Barthes' "cultural code" is complex and may involve sophisticated exposition going beyond the mission of this thesis. However, in the context of our analysis of those humorous works, we can at least draw two points. First, Barthes is rather distinct from Eagleton because his 'cultural code' is one of the ways in which culture penetrates the text in the case of the type of 'readerly' text that he is analysing in *S/Z*. Second, Eagleton's exploration of the idea of 'culture' can inspire us more as a general view capable of influencing many research domains including literary criticism; while Barthes' "cultural code" is more directly related to our pursuit as an analytical technique that may help us to approach those humorous works.

In this part of the thesis, a major concern is the actual effects of communication between the real author and the real reader, the two extreme poles in the communication process, both of which are human beings and natural entities, but also necessarily cultural ones. Investigation of cultural references is to search for one category of influential factors that may decide the real author's creative purpose and the real reader's literary response. I want to note that 1) the "cultural references" of our concern here are the influential factors from the general social and historical background shared by the real author and the native real reader of each humorous work under discussion; 2) by "one category" I am expressing my awareness of many other factors that may influence the actual communication process between these two natural narrative entities, like the real author or real reader's educational background, their way of life (Williams, 1961: 254), their feelings (cf. David S. Miall and Don Kuiken, 2001: 289-302), etc., though these labels may contain either slight or great difference from the 'cultural references' of our concern.

To repeat what is declared in the very beginning of the thesis, the union of these three humorous texts is based on the taken-for-granted assumption that the humorous portrayal of the intellectual characters is consciously elaborated by the *real authors* and well received by their respective native audience or *real readers*. If, to a certain extent, we have succeeded in explaining the humour contained in these three texts with a narrative model, it could prove the

existence of some intelligent model shared by the natural human beings from these cultures, if not of all human beings. Meanwhile, if humour from different cultural sources and its serious meaning are missed during the actual communication process because of the language and culture barrier, the perspective offered by cultural study can be a step towards overcoming such obstacles for a better mutual understanding. In this case, what we have done in terms of narrative and what we intend to suggest in this section are not opposing but complimentary. If some scholars like Eaglton feel anxiety facing "culture" capable of "cementing the bonds of the nation-state" and "making men and woman at once newly aware of their cultural identities and freshly insecure about them" (Eagleton, 2000: 130), the study or just an acquaintance with such humorous works may inspire us to approach different cultures with humour and some nonchalance as a way to ease such tension[5].

Bridges has recently discussed the relationship between fictional narrative and human desire for civic freedom. Among other things, his arguments indicated one interesting point: life stories or fictional narratives are "open-criterion narratives", i.e., they are "not determined by reference to some previously decided or socially mandated narrative closure or criterion of relevance ... but only willed or desired - the attainment of a *particular* happiness ideal." (Bridges, 2003). In addition, "the fact that it is possible for human life narratives to be constructed as open-criterion narratives makes possible the cultural construction of a capacity for civic freedom" (Bridges, 2003). Bridge's viewpoint in fact confirms my surmise that cultural references investigation related to the three humorous works can help us to further discover the human desire to break through cultural confinement in this literary creation. Bridges also reminds us that this discovery can not be made in narrative terms, for it is a pursuit of "the extra-narrational standpoint of civic freedom", and "the attainment of this sort of independence requires a certain externalization of the standpoints and attitudes defined by one or another particularistic life ideal" (Bridges, 2003).

To put Bridges' ideas into use, we can attach an additional dimension to the humour structure previously established and enrich its serious meaning: humour incongruity and its real-world significance further lies in the clash between cultural confinement and the individual will to break away from it, with humour as a secure way-out perhaps. In this case, the paradox of humour *in reality* is very much embodied by this mutual contest and mutual reliance between collective identity and individual struggle for civic freedom. In their theoretical formulation of

'register humour', Attardo and some other related humour specialists realise and designate clearly both the linguistic features and cultural dimension of such humour. Only they can hardly achieve such an overall view of "register humour" in their analytical practice just because they scarcely step beyond the border of texts. Therefore, my cultural references discussion in this section is meant to suggest a possible progress in the study of humour, including "register humour" related to some complex literary works.

Next, I shall use just a few examples to show in brief how "cultural references" can help us to better detect the part of humour missing from the previous pure text analysis and thus to amplify the humour structure by understanding such humour and its significance/serious meaning as rooted in a particular time and space of cultural reality.

First, my previous text analysis studied intellectual characters as a type of comic hero, and I have given examples from three largely different historical and social contexts. When we examine the portrayal of these characters, we find many common features: their intellectual quest often goes against reality, their romantic but unrealistic temperament tends to obstruct their real pursuit for woman and true love, their passion for the parade of learning and lofty talk ironically exposes their ineptness in practical life ... all these features contribute to their images and are the subject of mockery in these works. If we step out of the texts to search for cultural resources, we can discover and come to understand that the education system has been an important part of many societies and their cultures, and this system has inevitably produced some people who are well-adapted to the education system, but not to the rest of the world. It is interesting to realise that this phenomenon has been shared so largely and for so long time across so many (different) cultures[6].

For the present extended discussion of the three humorous works, 'culture' means in particular the context in which art works are created and received by publics/readers. The question we address here is the extent to which an analytic 'reconstruction' of the cultures would provide some clues about what and how a real reader might in fact receive the texts in question. Cultural reconstruction is, in the case of *Candide* for example, to comprehend its meanings for the author and his contemporaries, and to see how it is related to the preoccupations and the attitudes in the 18th century historical time of the West. The novel appeals to the problem of divine justice, of reconciling the existence of evil and suffering with the goodness and omnipotence of God, which was a problem becoming particularly acute in Western Europe about

the beginning of the 18th century; it aims at the school of optimism among the Enlightenment philosophies that contends that rational thought can curtail the evils perpetrated by human beings ... Then we can imagine *Candide* could seem much funnier (and scarier) in a time when these cultural phenomena were still very much alive. An acquaintance with this historical background in which Voltaire was very much involved can also help the real reader to understand how *Candide* reflects Voltaire's lifelong aversion to Christian regimes of power and the arrogance of nobility, and how it criticises certain philosophical ideas of the Enlightenment so as to demonstrate that it was far from a monolithic movement. In the case of *B.M.F.* as another example, Adam's predicaments derive in large measure from the fact that Catholics (indeed, serious Christians) were/are a minority in modern Britain, and it is difficult for them to deal with the fact that most of the population simply do not accept their ideas about contraception, or indeed about the role of a command-oriented morality in general. The readers who know well this context will certainly find it easy to locate the humour related to this reality and feel a certain freedom from such religious restraint as expressed by such humour, but perhaps those who feel caught in the same trap laugh more.

For western (real) readers, it is perhaps very difficult to seize all the humour and its real significance expressed in *F.B.*. Meanwhile, it is not easy for any Chinese to seize all the humour and its implications either. Now we know that its author Qian Zhongshu is an exceptionally erudite scholar. In this novel, his wide knowledge has enabled him to make abundant references to both Chinese and Western literature, philosophy, logic, customs, laws, educational systems, languages, politics or even feminism. Only it could take another PhD thesis to address all these problems. Now, I will show just one example from *F.B.* to display how cultural references can enrich our understanding of the humour in question.

Upon his return from his study abroad, Hong-jian was invited to make a speech on western influence on Chinese culture in a university. What is particularly comic in this speech is Fang's cynical boast about the 'positive' influence from the West and some of his audience's reaction:

"In the last several hundred years of overseas communication, there are only two items from the West which have been lasting in Chinese society as a whole. One is opium, and the other is syphilis. These are what Ming dynasty assimilated of western civilisation."

Most of the audience laughed, a small number gasped in astonishment, and a few of the teachers scowled. The recording-secretary's face flushed crimson, and her pen stopped, as if by hearing Fang Hong-jian's last remark her virgin ears had lost their chastity in front of the audience. ... "Syphilis transmits idiocy, insanity, and deformity by heredity, but it is also said that it is capable of stimulating genius! ... "

(Qian Zhongshu, 1979: 38-39)

If we change the cultural context to today's China, this speech would sound much less provocative and therefore much less funny. However, this novel was written during the thirties of the last century. To understand fully the humour here, a real reader in his reading process should at least be acquainted with these cultural references: it was a time when patriotism became a prevailing value for the Chinese people because China was under the threat of Japanese invasion, and because various parts of China had long been colonised by several western countries; opium had been an effective measure that certain western countries had used to weaken the Chinese defensive power during their invasion; it was a time when 'sex' was a social taboo, and woman's 'virginity' and fidelity after marriage was considered of vital importance in China ...

According to Fontanille, "cynicism" is based on certain cultural values. Each culture, and different historical periods of a culture, may have different considerations as to what is "laughable" and what is not ("the sensitive"). Usually, or in the case of non-humour, these two categories of cultural values are not supposed to be placed together. However, the strategy of "cynicism" or even mockery in general is just to establish a certain relationship between these two categories of values so that they coincide and match together. In this case, each "sensitive" value of the culture aimed at will become "laughable" material as an anti-culture provocation. To use Fontanille's ideas, "opium", "syphilis" and its implied reference to "sex" and "woman's virginity" belong to the category of the "sensitive" ("le sensible") in that period of Chinese culture. Because these sensitive points are treated lightly and with cynical humour (here we notice such humour skills as "comic exaggeration", "hasty conclusion", etc.), they become "laughable" subjects in Hong-jian's speech. Therefore this speech is a strong provocation with *cynical humour with regard to the cultural values* which are the cultural background of this work.

The point being made in this section is that the *overall comic effects* of these humorous works are to some extent linked to the cultural background that underpins each of the stories. As

in a certain cultural context, when certain ideas, whether religious, philosophical or just popular, are taken much more seriously, or when a certain social class or person(s) still occupy a ruling position, to involve these ideas or persons as target of mockery in literary representation will be a greater provocation than in another cultural context. As a result, such literary works should be understood to have involved more striking humour incongruity against their special cultural backgrounds, though the general humour effects also necessitate many other comic writing skills. To use Bridges' formulation, such humour incongruity expresses in reality and to some degree the clash between the particular cultural confinement and some individual will for civic freedom, though, in the case of cynical humour for instance, it is also sometimes rather destructive. The real reader who is familiar with this cultural context will then easily recognise such humour and understand its serious meaning related to these cultural circumstances.

3. *Character*

A major task of the previous textual analyses is to illustrate how the portrait of each intellectual character unfolds from the narrative structure of humour. This investigation is carried out with an innovative attempt to discuss 'humorous narrative' and 'character' together. Though there have been some literary critical discussions of actual comic texts - Molière (Palmer, 1994), Voltaire (Attardo, 1994), Oscar Wilde (Attardo, 2001), etc., these discussions seldom refer to any narrative models, and rarely ever refer to the 'actantial model' of character.

Among other narrative models, the 'actantial model' adopted has been an important tool for 'character' analysis in narratology. However, this model is used in my discussion only as a starting point, which demonstrates mainly the contradictory features of these intellectual characters. The previous character analysis has on the one hand exposed certain limits of this model; on the other hand, the previous experiment has also developed the narrative view of 'character' in the account of the humour structure regarding the portrayal of those comic characters. Next, the idea of 'character' will be reconsidered through two major points, which can be understood as the further perspectives that we can draw from the previous study. The new challenge is to liberate 'character' from strict narrative models and think through what 'character' is in non-actantial analysis as compared with its (limited) role in actantial analysis.

The following discussion will turn around two themes: the '**humorous dimension**' and the '**human dimension**' with regard to the characters previously studied. In a sense, the 'humorous

dimension' of those intellectual characters has been a major domain explored in our textual analyses. This section, stated in brief, mainly serves to revise the merits of our preceding investigation so as to envisage some new orientation in future research on 'humour' and 'character' in some literary works. On the contrary, the 'human dimension' has been a domain largely ignored in our previous narrative study of humorous characters. Thus this facet of those characters is to be discussed at greater length.

3.1. The Humorous Dimension Beyond the Actantial Analysis

In the previous character analysis, the contradictory features of those intellectual characters drawn from the 'actantial model' only make up the preliminary components of the general paradox structure of humour in question. Many other complimentary analytical methods have been indispensable to recount the complexity of these characters and the humour in the presentation of these characters. This limited application of the "actantial model" has some basic reasons. *First*, in Greimas and Propp's 'actantial model', character is reduced to a 'function', and his 'action' is the central force for the development of the story which is supposed to lead to certain 'transformations' of the character. As Culler summarises, the limitation of the actantial model is meant only to find out what a character does, and for this purpose we should just "try to fit him into one of a limited number of slots." (Culler, 1975: 235). Nevertheless, it is almost the contrary case in the humorous works I have chosen for analysis. As concluded, those intellectual characters are most strikingly incapable of any effective action; except *Candide*, the other two novels do not suggest a real transformation of the major character as the last message, which is very likely an important characteristic of "modern" fiction with such "modern" characters" (see "conclusion" in *B.M.F.* analysis). *Second*, the 'actantial model' is efficient in exposing the story frame, or in Chatman's word, the 'what' of a narration. But it ignores almost totally the 'how' of a narration. As Chatman explains: "a 'story' cannot occur independently of its 'discourse'. Nor can the story-discourse composite occur independently of some actualisation or embodiment in a medium..." (Chatman, 1990: 117). "There is indeed an obvious difference between dramatic representation and epic or novelist representation. But there's no great difference between the structure of 'what'" (Chatman 1990: 110). The example Chatman cited is Victor Hugo's novel *Notre-Dame de Paris*, which has been made into a fiction movie where tragic romance

dominates, and then later made into a Walt Disney animated movie where humour dominates for the amusement of children. Of course the present thesis is discussing only the narrative in written form, not movies. As my previous textual analyses have shown, the contradictory elements in the story world are in fact the initial incongruity which could be made into a tragic story. Despite certain comic elements, like fantastic atmosphere building or numerous humorous remarks made by the characters themselves, the story-world alone is not enough for the construction of the general humour structure in those works. An example is that the discourse world of the narrator often plays an important role in the actualisation of the text's humorous irony. This discourse world not only assists in the formation of numerous humour registers but is also responsible for the frequent switching to the comic climax in the texts. As a matter of fact, the analysis of these humorous texts is typical in showing how the actantial model has ignored some important narrative aspects which are imperative for the account of humour in these works. To a certain extent, my narrative approach to those humorous texts has broken through the confinement of the 'actantial model' and succeeded in demonstrating how certain (potentially) tragic materials can be used for the humorous portrayal of character.

What has been experimented is still a limited method, at least in the sense that we have tried to analyse only one type of humorous character. Meanwhile, this experiment also indicates that the narrative approach to comic characters can go much further than the 'actantial' perspective can take us.

3. 2. The Human Dimension Beyond the Actantial Analysis

As narratology based on structuralism loses its dominant influence, more extra-textual elements have attracted fresh attention in narrative study. A conclusion Chatman (1978) seems to make by the end of his account of 'character' is: on the one hand "characters do not have 'lives'"; on the other hand, 'character' can also recall something "familiar to us in life", and "even fantastic narratives require inferences, guesses, and expectations according to one's sense of what *normal* persons are like." (Chatman, 1978: 138). More recently, Lye indicates that "characters in a work of fiction are generally designed to open up or explore certain aspects of human experience. Characters often depict particular traits of human nature; they may represent only one or two traits - a greedy old man who has forgotten how to care about others, for instance, or they may

represent very complex conflicts, values and emotions." (Lye, 1996, 1997). As a starting point towards the discussion of the **human dimension** of 'character', which is very much reduced in narratology, we can draw on the above arguments that the idea of 'character' also has a *referential function* (referring to a real object in the real world) besides a *fictional function* (representing what is not in the real world).

Now a technical question is how to approach the human dimension of 'character' in literary representation. In this pursuit, an interesting reference entitled "character literature" is found on a website: for 'character' study, questions that can be asked are "what you think about the character: his problems; what does the story say about people in general; in what ways does it remind you of people you have known or experiences you've had?" ("character literature", 2003) This guideline not only confirms the human dimension of 'character', but also gives suggestions as to what we can actually do with this notion when we study it. The general idea is to explore *how 'character' is read as a human being, and how it can arouse human response*. The point here is no longer about character and humour, it is rather an extended view of 'character' beyond its narrative function as shown in the actantial model, even in its modified form, since character always also refers us to our own knowledge of what people are like in the real world. This referential capacity then exceeds semiotic or narrative models used as the basis of the previous character analysis.

Another concrete suggestion can be inspired by the definition given by the *Oxford Encyclopedic English Dictionary* (1991): 'character' in the first place is "the collective qualities or characteristics ... that *distinguish* a person or thing" (emphasis added); and then 'character' can be "a person in a novel, play, etc." We find in this definition an essential point most useful for our purpose: it is the feature or those features that distinguish this 'person' from others which make him unique, and it is this uniqueness or individualisation that is most interesting for our exploration of the human dimension of 'character'. As far as our character analysis is concerned, an extended discussion can explore to what extent we can recognise them as real individuals, and not just as narrative functions or as actants caught in the play of paradox or in logic mechanisms, etc. With all these theoretical ideas collected, our exploration of the human dimension of 'character' can be among other things conceived as the pursuit of the **individualisation** of 'character'.

An etymological explanation of 'character' is given as a literary study guidance: "Late Latin, fem. subst., literally meaning 'person', plural: *personae*, or sometimes when assimilated in modern languages, *personas*". Originally "used to describe the masks worn by actors in Classical Greek drama, hence the term *dramatis personae*", 'character' is then "adopted by literary commentators to designate the character or 'mask' that an author assumes in a literary work as part of her or his artistic technique" (Grassin, 2003). This authorship may have double significance: "The idea of a mask or appearance that is *both distinct from* and *identical with* the individual who assumes it is intrinsic to the term *persona*." (Brooks, 2003). Therefore, to explore the human dimension of 'character', we can first associate 'character' with the true identity of each of the real authors. This study is relatively the direct connection between the fictional persona and its creator. This point has been explored in so far we have drawn the conclusion that an acquaintance with the real authors can enrich our understanding of those comic characters in question. An important discovery made in our quest into the real author's identity, for example, is that the portrayal of the intellectual characters analysed also expresses a certain self-irony just because the real authors are also intellectuals themselves (cf. Part III. 1 above).

On the other hand, "the idea of a persona as the author's second self" also means "where masks were considered independent beings who possessed the person who assumed them. Literary masks or personae in this sense are part of a larger assumption in literary criticism and in aesthetics in general, an assumption originating in Romanticism, that artists discover a more fully integrated vision than that which exists in reality. As with the later Romantic Yeats, who saw masks as a way out of a merely subjective vision and into a more communicable world view, a persona as both real author and fictional character implies the presence of a universal and imaginative sense of the world." (Brooks, 2003). So, to study this "mask", or "the author's second self", we also need to question "the distinction between his own actual identity and the persona of his novel" which "reifies the fictional universe not only of his writing, but of the imagination itself" (Brooks, 2003). Therefore, the human dimension of 'character' also implies a real transcendence of the real author's actual identity which is the product of the author's imaginative power. To relate this point to our study of those intellectual characters in question, we should in the meantime keep in mind that Candide is not equal to Voltaire, Adam is not equal to David Lodge, and Hong-jian is not equal to Qian Zhong-shu, although these characters in the fictional world do share numerous features and experiences with the human entities who are their creators.

In this pursuit, we can follow Brooks' indications about "persona" which "stems from the use of 'person' as "a representative or outward appearance of an individual". For Brooks, 'character' as literary creation is not only "embodied, invested or impersonated in or by", it is also "in the character of, as the representative of, or as personally representing." (Brooks, 2003). Here Brooks' brief explanation of 'character is offered as a study guide, and he seems to be exploring the multiple dimensions of character.

Now, above all, what is in fact 'human' in reality? Besides all the answers that science has brought us about the common qualities that amount to the definition of 'human kind', we should not forget that each human being is also different and unique. Yet the idea of individual human being is also slippery: each human being is in fact complicated. In real life, each one of us may have many qualities or characteristics that can be either consistent or contradictory. Of course, we should not go to the other extremity so as to take 'characters' as real human beings. As Chatman says "But that in no way says that characters are 'alive' - they are only lifelike." (Chatman, 1978: 138). Then in literary representation, an additional question is then how to approach these 'qualities' or 'characteristics' capable of defining the individualisation in 'character'? Chatman is aware of this complexity: the "collective qualities and characteristics" of a character, or in Chatman's word the "totality" of a character's traits "is a theoretical construct, a limit never to be reached, a horizon toward which we travel, hopefully with increasing intellectual and emotional maturity" Chatman, 1978: 120-121). Accordingly, a real grasp of the individualisation of character' is in a sense only an ideal, which can however motivate us to approach 'him' or 'her' as a 'character'.

Based on numerous theoretical accounts, Chatman (1978) has drawn our attention to the "distinction between 'trait' and 'habit'" for the grasp of the individual quality(ies) of a 'character': we are required to "recognise certain habits as symptomatic of a trait: if a character is constantly washing his hands, mopping already clean floors, picking motes of dust off his furniture, the audience is obliged to read out a trait like 'compulsive'." (Chatman, 1978: 122). Next, we will try to reconsider the three intellectual characters, in this manner but in brief, for a real grasp of the human reference of 'character' can also be very complicated and become a limitless pursuit.

We can first make a distinction between Candide and the other two characters, Adam and Hong-jian, using E. M. Forster's ideas about "flat" and "round" characters (cf. Forster, 1955), which is re-adopted by Chatman and other theorists.

How much can **Candide** be a literary embodiment of an individual human being? Candide as the main character is announced by the very title to have only one quality: he is "candide" or "naïve". Throughout the whole novel, this feature is also repeated and confirmed time and again both as a "habit" and a "trait": whatever Pangloss says, he "listened attentively, and with implicit belief" ("écoutait attentivement, et croyait innocemment"; Voltaire, 1947: 20); or when he has undergone numerous miseries and experienced the cruelty of war, a small piece of food offered to him can easily bring back the belief in optimism taught by Pangloss (see <u>*Candide*</u> analysis, Axis II. 1. 2.); and all of Candide's habitual behaviour in turn confirms the "trait" as announced by the title and clearly stated in the very beginning of the novel: Candide 'combined sound judgement with unaffected simplicity" ("avait le jugement assez droit, avec l'esprit le plus simple"; Voltaire, 1947: 20). So his simplicity or naïvety is the only trait which can remind us of what a human being is capable of possessing in his personality. In the meantime, this very simplicity is also the very limitation of this character's human dimension. *Candide then belongs to the category of 'flat character'*: "a flat character is endowed with a single trait - or very few", and this kind of character is highly predictable" (Chatman, 1978: 132).

Largely different from Candide, *Adam and Hon-jian belong to what Chatman calls 'round characters'*: "Round characters, on the contrary, possess a variety of traits, some of them conflicting or even contradictory". This kind of character is comparatively distinctive for their *human dimension*: "Round characters, on the other hand may inspire a stronger sense of intimacy, ... We remember them as real people. They seem strangely familiar. Like real-life friends and enemies it is hard to describe what they are really like." (Chatman, 1978: 132). **Adam**, for instance, seems to have the habit of working hard in the British Museum, as his wife says: "he's going to work, as he always does"; but this day he will idle outside the library instead of working (as he does often perhaps), and his PhD thesis hardly advances. Adam is usually a rigid religious practitioner, but on this day of his life, he also allows himself to wear his wife's panties to go out and to be seduced by a young girl, even though some other incidents have been the cause. Besides serving the purpose of developing story themes, description of such anecdotes can also remind us of what a real human being is like: he/she is very often inexplicable, illogical, but just 'alive', or rather 'lifelike' in this literary representation. In addition, these anecdotes also amount to the portrayal of the 'eccentricity' that makes up this individual as distinct from any other human being.

Similarly, **Hong-jian** also has his peculiar habits: in general he likes to be surrounded by women and to flirt with them, whether he has true feelings for them or not. Meanwhile, he can be very disdainful about women in his mind: "He remembered a famous saying from *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*,[7] 'A wife is like a suit of clothes,' and of course clothes also meant the same as wife. He now had himself a new fur coat. The loss of a wife or two wasn't about to worry him." (Qian Zhong-shu, 1979: 47). However, when Miss Tang, the girl he genuinely loves, declares that she cannot love him, "Hong-jian's mind and body went numb as though as electric current had passed through him. ... The last remark (of Miss Tang) made everything hopelessly clear to him, and he raised his head, his eyes brimming with tears like a big child who has been spanked and scolded - a face in which the tears have been swallowed into the heart." (Qian Zhong-shu, 1979: 104). After having left Miss Tang, he "was standing with his back to the road outside the bamboo fence of the house diagonally opposite. Like whips of water, wind-blown lines of rain from all directions lashed at his unresponsive body." (Qian Zhong-shu, 1979: 104). In contrast to his usual cynical attitude, such detailed description about Hong-jian's chagrin and frustration well reminds us of the very vulnerability of human beings and can arouse our sympathy for this human-like 'character'. In addition, these anecdotes also amount to the portrayal of this specific character, simultaneously abominable, laughable and pathetic. If Adam, with all his particular traits can provoke both our detached laughter and sympathetic understanding of his problems as a real dilemma that humans can run into, more compassion may be invoked while we 'read' this character due to the increasing description of the tragic events happening to him and his resultant interior sufferings.

Feelings are an important part of human faculty. Miall and Kuiken in their study of "readers' feelings and literary response" made an account of narrative response by focusing on "how readers' feelings and emotions shape their personal perspectives". Among other things, they point out that (real readers') feelings are "directly implicated" in the "focalisation of the feeling experience of a character(s)". In this case, "readers are responding to an aspect of narrative content, in particular, the feeling experiences of a character." (Miall and Kuiken, 2001: 292). Through some empirical study, they notice that "the more the narrative invites the reader to experience the internal thoughts or feelings of the main character, the greater the amount of processing required of the reader" (Miall and Kuiken, 2001: 295). Though different real readers' response may vary, "for readers who identified with the main character in particular, the

perspective measure should show a positive correlation with reading speed" (Miall and Kuiken, 2001: 295), i.e., the reader's reading speed will slow down and (s)he will get involved emotionally. In other words, focalisation of a character's interior feelings in the narrative can strongly appeal to the real reader's empathy with this character.

The second important difference between a 'round' and a 'flat' character formulated by Forster is then the different "transparency" of their **psychological profile**, interpreted by Jouve as "épaisseur psychologique" (Jouve, 1992: 169), which is largely due to the fact that the former is more complicated and the latter is simple and highly predictable. While "flat" characters are portrayed with little or no psychological revelation, "round" characters are portrayed, though to different degrees, with a revelation of the character's interior world. When Jouve points out that "flat" characters are just "paper figures" ("des êtres de papier", Jouve, 1992: 170), he is certainly implying that "round" characters are more human like.

Based on the previous identification that Candide is largely a 'flat' character while Adam and Hong-jian are 'round' characters, we can go further to distinguish the psychological profile between the two characters Adam and Hong-jian.

Jouve in his book *L'effet-pesonnage dans le roman* (1992) carefully works out a series of formulations to explain how different characters exert impact on the 'addressee' of different novels, either on the implied reader or on the real reader, though these two terms are not directly adopted in Jouve's theoretical system. Among other things, in the category of characters exposed with a psychological profile ("les personnages livrés"), Jouve further makes a distinction between "distant characters" ("personnages distanciés") and "proximate characters" ("personnages proximisés"); both are characterised by the transparency of the characters' interior world. The former kind can be normally identified by the dominant presence of a narrator, who in a typical case *comments on* the story and brings about the transparency of the character's interior life by adopting a detached and ironic attitude (cf. Jouve, 1992: 178). We have in fact surveyed numerous occasions of this kind in our previous discussion of the ironic play between the narrator's discourse world and the story world where the character is located, in both *B.M.F.* and *F.B.*, analysis. It is important to point out here that, at least in these two humorous works, such 'detached' and 'ironic' presentation of the character's interior world usually accompanies and assists in humour production. In plain words, the character in question appears to be funnier or just funny when his interior world is presented by an ironic narrator. As far as the two characters

Adam and Hong-jian are concerned, certain categories of characters formulated by Jouve tend to be too clear-cut, for the techniques for the portrayal of a character in a literary work can be indeed variant and manifold. As a matter of fact, both Adam and Hong-jian are by intervals presented either as "distant" or "proximate" characters. In the latter case, we can notice that the narration becomes less humorous and the character may appear less, even much less funny.

Now it becomes more interesting to look into certain occasions in these two works when Adam or Hong-jian is presented as a *proximate character*, i.e., his interior life is revealed as it is, with an illusion of live immediacy ("ceux dont l'intériorité nous est révélée telle quelle, dans une illusion d'immédiateté." Jouve, 1992: 178).

Still in terms of the human dimension, we can now question what effect this 'proximity' of character can produce. Jouve's additional distinction between "inferiorised characters" ("personnages inférioriés") and "equalised characters" ("personnages équalisés") within the category of "proximate characters" can help us to know better these two characters by examining the kind of human feelings each of them is capable of provoking. According to Jouve, the "inferiorised" character is more "transparent" to the (implied) reader than to himself, whereas the (implied) reader is in an equal position with the "equalised" character about what is in store for him. In both cases, the (real) reader will get involved emotionally during the actual reading process[8], but in a different way depending on whether it is an "inferiorised character" or an "equalised character". To be more precise, what an "inferiorised character" provokes is "sympathy" while an "equalised character" provokes "empathy" (Jouve, 1992: 179-181). While we try to distinguish the two characters Adam and Hong-jian with Jouve's formulations, it is however risky to consider any one of them as exclusively one type of character. What is proposed here is a more careful scrutiny so as to grasp each character's major tendency. In this sense, we may say that *Adam is mostly an 'equalised character', while Hong-jian more tends to be an 'inferiorised character'*, especially towards the end of the novel when the story tells us that his life events are more than ever catastrophic and his fate is more than ever beyond his control[9].

In the following, the last passage describing the main character is taken from each novel. A comparison can help us to distinguish these two characters according to Jouve's formulations as the last tone set by the novel:

Adam as an 'equalised character':

He paused at the gate and looked up at the window of their bedroom. The light was on, so she wasn't asleep yet. Was that a star he could see above the roof ...? The fog was clearing then. And, yes - he flexed his leg - he had lost his limp. It was absurd to let this pregnancy thing get on top of you. If she was, they might as well make the best of it, and if she wasn't ...

His elation subsided subsided as he suddenly thought of something.

Supposing ...supposing, since he had last spoken to her ... supposing ...

It was absurd, but he actually hoped her period hadn't started.

(Lodge, 1981: 152)

This passage is revealing to us in intimacy the mental activity of the character in question, which can remind us of what can really go though a real human being's mind: his hesitation, his doubt, his hope ... As a result, we can understand Adam as we can understand ourselves - we can feel an 'empathy' towards this character. The use of third person reference in this case, according to Jouve, creates a peculiar experience of "interior communion" between the reader and 'another person' which is a special power of literature (cf. Jouve, 1992: 181)[10].

Hong-jian as an ' inferiorised character':

... He thought, *Oh, no. I just can't get sick. Tomorrow I'll have to see the manager, and then once it's all settled, I'll have to get together the money for the travelling expenses. I may be able to spend the Chinese New Year in Chungking.* Hope again rose in his heart, like damp firewood which won't catch fire but has begun to smoke, and it seemed everything would work out. Before he knew it, dark earth and hazy sky merged and wrapped tight.

(Qian Zhong-shu, 1979: 361)

Like the precedent quotation, this passage also contains a revelation of the main character's interior world. We notice the shift from the character's mental activity presented in the first

person to the narrator's commentary in domination. Preceded by the character's 'interior monologue'[11] which is devoid of the narrator's voice, the narrator's interpretation presides over the story presentation in the latter half of this passage. Unlike the ironic attitude adopted in the first part of the novel, it is the sympathetic tone that dominates the narrator's discourse now. In this case, according to Jouve, the character is more transparent to the reader than to himself. In other words, as we read this passage (in the context of the whole novel, of course), we tend to understand better than the character himself about his tragic fate. As a result, this "excess of knowledge" grants us a certain "authority" over the character which leads us to cast an affectionate, almost a paternal look at the character[12] - we cannot but feel 'sympathy' with Hong-jian, this human-like character.

Compared to Candide, it is the *individualisation* with *psychological dimension* in the human dimension of these two characters that interests us and attracts us to approach them and to perceive them somewhat as part of ourselves, despite our occasional and even concurrent detached laughter. Meanwhile, it is the impact that a real author's imaginative power produces on us: each character "reifies the fictional universe not only of the real author's writing, but of the imagination itself". It is also due to the extended human dimension or the "more fully integrated vision than that which exists in reality" (Brooks, 2003) that any real author can hopefully arouse any real reader' response to his/her character.

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In about half a century of literary study, narratology has helped us to approach and demystify the inner structure of various narrative forms in literary representation. In this pursuit, the analysis of humorous works has been a new challenge. With the previous (humorous) textual analyses and an extended discussion of the merits and limitation of the narrative approach adopted, this experiment proposes in addition that narrativity should perhaps now be redefined and should search for new access into humour and humorous works created by human beings. Narrative models, for instance, rather than trying to formulate the rules of particular systems of convention and affirm their existence only, can now move beyond formal narratology into the

realms of pragmatics and reception theory. Humour study can be associated with literary study; understanding literary works can also lead to understanding human kind in general.

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* Gentlemen,

You say, in the March issue of your journal,* that some sort of little novel called *Optimism* or *Candide* is attributed to a man known as Monsieur de V . . . I do not know what Monsieur V . . . you mean; but I can tell you that this book was written by my brother, Monsieur Demad, presently a Captain in the Brunswick regiment; and in the matter of the pretended kingdom of the Jesuits in Paraguay, which you call a wretched fable, I tell you in the face of all Europe that nothing is more certain. I served on one of the Spanish vessels sent to Buenos Aires in 1756 to restore reason to the nearby settlement of Saint Sacrement; I spent three months at Assumption; the Jesuits have to my knowledge twenty-nine provinces, which they call "Reductions," and they are absolute masters there, by virtue of eight crowns a head for each father of a family, which they pay to the Governor of Buenos Aires--and yet they only pay for a third of their districts. They will not allow any Spaniard to remain more than three days in their Reductions. They have never wanted their subjects to learn Spanish. They alone teach the Paraguayans the use of firearms; they alone lead them in the field. The Jesuit Thomas Verle, a native of Bavaria, was killed in the attack on the village of Saint Sacrement while mounting to the attack at the head of his Paraguayans in 1737--and not at all in 1735 as the Jesuit Charlevoix has reported; this author is as insipid as he is ignorant. Everyone knows how they waged war on Don Antequera, and defied the orders of the Council in Madrid.

They are so powerful that in 1743 they obtained from Philip the Fifth a confirmation of their authority which no one has been able to shake. I know very well, gentlemen, that they have no such title as King, and therefore you may say it is a wretched fable to talk of the Kingdom of Paraguay. But even though the Dey of Algiers is not a King, he is none the less master of that country. I should not advise

my brother the Captain to travel to Paraguay without being sure that he is stronger than the local authorities.

For the rest, gentlemen, I have the honour to inform you that my brother the Captain, who is the best-loved man in his regiment, is an excellent Christian; he amused himself by composing the novel *Candide* in his winter quarters, having chiefly in mind to convert the Socinians. These heretics are not satisfied with openly denying God necessarily made our world the best of all possible ones, and that everything is well. This idea is manifestly contrary to the doctrine of original sin. These innovators forget that the serpent, who was the subtlest beast of the field, tempted the woman created from Adam's rib; that Adam ate the forbidden fruit; that God cursed the land He had formerly blessed: *Cursed is the ground for thy sake: in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.* Can they be ignorant that all the church fathers without a single exception found the Christian religion on this curse pronounced by God himself, the effects of which we feel every day? The Socinians pretend to exalt providence, and they do not see that we are guilty, tormented beings, who must confess our faults and accept our punishment. Let these heretics take care not to show themselves near my brother the Captain; he'll let them know if everything is well.

I am, gentlemen, your very humble, very obedient servant,

Demad

At Zastron, April first, 1759

P.S. My brother the Captain is the intimate friend of Mr. Ralph, well-known Professor in the Academy of Frankfort-on-Oder, who was of great help to him in writing this profound work of philosophy, and my brother was so modest as actually to call it a mere translation from an original by Mr. Ralph. Such modesty is rare among authors.

*N.B. [Note by the *Journal encyclopédique*] This letter was lost in the post for a long time; as soon as it reached us, we began trying--unsuccessfully--to discover the existence of Monsieur Demad, Captain of the Brunswick Regiment.

The English translation of this letter is taken from the Norton Critical edition of *Candide*, Voltaire, *Candide or Optimism,* a new Translation, Background, Criticism, translated and edited by Robert M. Adams (New York: W. W. Norton & Company "A Norton Critical Edition," 1966), p. 175-6.

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[1] The 'consciousness' defying this narratology may have started with the kind of notice made by Lyotard that "knowledge" ("savoir"), including "narrative knowledge", "is not the same as science", and "in general cannot be reduced to science, nor even to learning (connaissance)" (Jean-François Lyotard, 2000: 157).

[2] Fludernik' "natural narratology" starts with a special reading of the term *natural*, which he feeds from three areas of research: natural narrative, the linguistics of naturalness, Culler's naturalisation. A 'natural' view of narrative is also linked to a wider philosophical debate about nature and culture (see, 2. 'Cultural References' below').

[3] In opposition to this term, Barthes introduces a new, emergent concept of textuality, appropriately named "the writerly", where "the goal of literary work is to make the reader a producer of the text" (Barthes, 1974: 4).

[4] Cf. note 2 about Barthes' definition of the "writerly text".

[5] In so far as humour involves symbolic aggression and has a serious meaning, the scope for nonchalance is reduced sometimes, as in the case of satiric humour in *Candide*.

[6] In fact, China and Europe were relatively unusual in developing formal education systems in the pre-industrial world. But I am not suggesting that this phenomena more or less shared by these cultures is universal.

[7] One of the four most famous Chinese classic novels, written by Luo Guan-zhong in the early fourteenth century.

[8] 1) Cf. "Les personnges *proximisés* sollicite le *lisant* et revèlent de l'effet-personne" in the actual reading process (Jouve, 1992: 178). For Jouve, when the reader becomes "lisant", he/she enters a special state during the reading process and becomes "the victim of a certain illusion created by a novel": "Nous avons défini le *lisant* comme la part du lecteur victime de l'illusion romanesque." (Jouve, 1992:85).

2) Jouve does not employ the two terms 'implied reader' and 'real reader' in his theoretical account. However, these two terms are distinguished according to their original context in my discussion.

[9] Cf. Aristotle's argument that in comedy the characters are inferior to the audience, whereas in tragedy they are superior. There are many websites with summaries of this argument, see e.g. http://www.gpwu.ac.jp/~kitano/papers/comic.pdf;, also see a discussion in Genette's *Theorie des genres* (1986), Paris: Editions du Seuil.

[10] Cf. "En revanche, dans un récit à la troisième personne , la relation au personnage *égalisé*, ... entraîne le lecteur dans cette expérience inouïe et propre à la littérature d'une 'communion' intérieure avec une personne tierce." (Jouve, 1992: 181).

[11] Cf. Chatman's definition: "The critical features are: (1) the character's self-reference, if any, is first person. (2) The current discourse-moment is the same as the story-moment; hence any predicate referring to the current moment will be in the present tense. ... (3) The language - idiom, diction, word- and syntactic-choice - are identifiably those of the character, whether or not a narrator elsewhere intervenes. (4) Allusion to anything in the character's experience are made with no more explanation than would be needed in his own thinking, that is, (5) There is no presumptive audience other than the thinker himself, no deference to the ignorance or expository needs of a narratee." (Chatman, 1978: 182-183).

[12] Cf. The inferiorised character "est souvent plus transparent au lecteur qu'il ne l'est à lui-même. Cet excédent de sens autorise un regard affectueux, presque paternel sur le personnage." (Jouve, 1992: 180).

CONCLUSION

This thesis has mainly explored the *paradox structure of humour* in three humorous texts of my choice. The narrative structure of humour also unfolds the *portrait of a certain kind of intellectual character* with their special features. Humour production and the communication of *serious meaning* then co-exist and depend on each other in these texts: while humour incongruity results in ironic salience, the intellectual hero is revealed to be the victim of moderate mockery through the irony. In a sense, this study is an attempt to analyse humorous texts without much consideration of their extra-textual or communicative elements. Meanwhile, the 'real author' of this thesis is well aware how different the linguistic and cultural contexts wherein the three texts analysed were composed, and therefore how difficult it could be to communicate these works to a 'real reader', even if he/she possesses wide knowledge about their different backgrounds. Yet the very awareness of the rarity of this approach also suggests the worth of this effort: it is an exceptional attempt to combine *narrative theory* and *traditional humour theory* for the analysis of *characters* in *complex humorous texts* (a study of the four elements united together would be indeed a breakthrough); it is also an innovative unification of western and eastern humorous works to search for something close, if not completely common, in the narrative form created by humans in general. Part of the significance of the humour study undertaken in fact reveals how models of humour are universal in so far as they are based in the assumption that there is some mental process involved which is shared by all humans: an example is the perception of incongruity, even if what is recognised as incongruous varies enormously from culture to culture.

In the analysis of these humorous texts, a focus of study is the 'intellectual characters', who are considered as one type of comic hero sharing numerous common features. One thing in common of in these texts is that these characters are portrayed with ironic humour. In other words, the humorous and mocking presentation of these characters' stories does not really amount to a negative portrayal of these characters in spite of a certain weakness in their personality. In the meantime, the three humorous texts also have great differences, and these characters are presented in different textual contexts and different humour contexts in particular. *Candide*, for example, is much more brutal in its aggression towards its target. As has been concluded, it is

mainly ironic humour that aims at the comic hero and his naivety; but it is mainly satirical humour that aims at the optimistic doctrine in question and the worldly evils exposed that contradict this philosophy. In the text *B.M.F.*, on the other hand, the general effect of humour is comparatively good-tempered, mild and un-aggressive. Apart from the moderate irony aimed at the intellectual hero, there is no target for severe criticism. As concluded, the authority of Catholicism, for example, which is an important cause of the main character's sufferings, remains unshaken throughout the whole work. *F.B.*, compared with the other two texts, is more tragic in so far as the presentation of the intellectual hero's unfortunate adventure(s) ends in a serious tone. The major source of humour in this text is language skills which are given full play in both the character's speeches and in the narrator's discourse. Though humorous mockery launched in this text exposes many defects of intellectuals in general and many vices of the hostile world the main character is facing, the portrayal of this character also consists of much sympathy.

As a result of the previous humorous text analysis, we can draw out some key points as a theoretical conclusion:

1) humour production in these texts involves some *incongruity*; such incongruity may exist within one narrative level, as typified by the contradictory features in the character's personality, or it may exist in the 'play' among different narrative levels, as typified by the irony from the narrator's discourse about the character;

2) humour incongruity entails certain *neutralising factors*, including various humorous logic mechanisms so that the pathetic story material is rendered non-serious occasionally or eventually or both;

3) in this case, the narrative structure of humour is largely a *structure of paradox*: the incongruous elements / (general and sub-)humour registers are in a certain balance and co-operate in the creation of humour;

4) the exploration of the narrative structure of humour can also assist in the search for the *serious meaning* in these humorous texts. The location of 'high inappropriateness' often triggers off both the 'comic climax' and an 'ironic salience': the intellectual heroes are often revealed to be the victims of irony but never the real target for severe mockery and harsh criticism;

5) as a result, the portraits of these intellectual heroes are full of comic features, but the exposure of their defects and weakness does not really amount to the portrayal of them as

negative characters.

The analysis of humour in humorous narratives of book-length is still not a well-established technique. Considering the specific aspects of the humorous works analysed and the analytic methods adopted, we can construe the most significant innovations of the previous experiment as follows:

1) Narrative theory can, to certain degree, be adopted to approach certain problems in conventional humour study. In this case, the **'spatial formula'** of the humour structure addresses with some efficiency the *multi-determinant nature* of humour in the (relatively complex) humorous works chosen for discussion, which has always been a great puzzle in 'longer' humorous text study. Unlike the 'linear' analytical method of humour proposed by some other humour theorist (cf. Chapter 3. 4., Part I), my 'spatial formula' seeks to explain, for example, the occasional comic effects by laying stress on the co-existence and the co-operation of multiple narrative elements in the general context as hyper-determined by the implied author, including the ironic play between the narrator's discourse and the story world. The 'spatial formula' of humour also seeks to better illustrate the construction of the 'serious meaning' (see point 3 below) in the portrayal of the intellectual character (see point 2 below).

The experiments performed by Raskin (1985) and Attardo (1994) in the linguistic study of humour is largely limited to 'joke' study. In this thesis, their experiment is developed in a humorous text study applicable to novels of a certain length: some narrative elements are chosen and considered as the major components of the humour structure in the three humorous texts for analysis. Although in Attardo's attempt at 'longer' humorous text analysis, he does realise that "it is precisely the multiple determination (or hyper-determination) of the humorous effect that makes the text interesting", he is however weak in locating and illustrating this "multiple determination" beyond isolated jokes (Attardo 1994: 267; Attardo, 2001: 100-101). What is performed in this thesis is an actualisation of some of their hypotheses. In such attempts, Attardo's idea about the "hyper-determined humour" is further explored in terms of the implied author's design and its actualisation in different narrative levels in the humorous text. 'Register humour' theory has also been refined with reference to the cases when the simultaneous activities of more than one active source or of different contexts are present.

2) *Comic heroes* as 'characters' in conventional literary study can, to some extent, be interpreted in terms of narrative theory. We should be aware that the analysis of **comic characters in humorous texts of book length by using the linguistic theory of humour** has been scarcely attempted in narrative study. In associating these items for investigation, the previous analysis of the intellectual characters has started with the employment of various narrative models, as typified by the 'actantial' model. However, the analysis of the comic heroes in question has also gone far beyond the confines of these narrative models: efforts have been made to display how, for instance, the non-action of the intellectual characters helps to establish the humorous dimension of these characters in the textual context (cf. Part III, 3.1.). The demonstration of the ironic play of different narrative levels also explains how the ironic meaning regarding these characters is constructed in the humour structure of the text. As a result, the portrayal of the intellectual heroes not only represents a humour production process, it also comprises the composition of the 'serious meaning' in these texts.

3) Most theories of jokes or comedy only endeavour to explain how they are funny, but very seldom search for the **'serious meaning'** of humour. This thesis has sought to illustrate how humour production goes with the construction of the serious meaning of humour and the relationship of these two processes: in the three humorous texts analysed, the occurrence of a (or manifold) sharp *humorous incongruity* usually engenders a (or concurrent) *comic climax(es)*, which simultaneously triggers off *ironic salience*; this ironic salience then leads to the revelation the *victim of the (moderate) ironic humour* which may or may be accompanied with the revelation of *the real target of (violent) satirical humour* depending on different textual contexts. This attainment can go beyond the particular humorous cases analysed to show how, in general, humour/comedy may be linked with other narratological devices and how the funniness and the other narrative materials are constantly inter-related in a humorous narrative. This is a major move forward in the analysis of comedy, which is obtained precisely through the analysis of humour using narratology.

4) Through the analysis of three humorous texts taken from different linguistic and cultural origins, this thesis has arrived at a formulation of humour at least common to these three works, for the account of some aspects of human intelligence. An important discovery is that the paradox structure of humour is an important mechanism of humour shared by many peoples and embodied in their humorous literary works. This suggests a relationship between universal and

culture-specific forms of communication. By this research work, comparative literature study is to a certain extent enriched through the analysis of humorous texts from a linguistic point of view. As a result, this thesis in addition proposes the following **premises in terms of comparative study:** 1) that literature is one of the basic vehicles (if not the essential means) for the transmission and understanding of human nature; 2) that the comparative study of literature is sometimes an open-minded and integrated approach to many aspects of humankind as well as his literary creation; 3) that at a time when the strengthening of international relations is of paramount importance, the comparative approach to literature gives an excellent opportunity for scholars and perhaps for people in general to understand the differences between nations and cultures and, at the same time, to grasp the essential unity of humankind.

In this thesis, the extra-textual elements are placed near the end of our discussion in order to offer an opening for the analysis of humorous works in general. Special attention has been paid to the subjects like the actual communication process including the real reader's response, cultural references which are of special importance in the understanding of humour, and some extra dimensions of 'character' beyond narrative models. With these further perspectives, humour study should become more human and wholesome, apart from gaining scientific value.

The research undertaken in this thesis shows that humour study can incorporate many branches of study. An acquaintance with the different forms of the human expression of humour, including humorous narratives originating from different literary and cultural backgrounds, can help us to understand humankind as a whole, with their differences and uniformity. Human intelligence, though full of paradox, still keeps on progressing, and the study of this intelligence as well. In this pursuit, let us hope that the peoples of the world will approach each other even further, with the help of more sense of humour perhaps.

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