INTRODUCTION
James Patrick Donleavy (b1926-) is an Irish-American novelist. He has also written some short stories, and non-fictional pieces as well as dramatised a few of his novels. His career as a novelist begins with The Ginger Man, which he had difficulties in publishing. Though he had finished writing it in 1952, it was unacceptable to the publishing industry in both England and America. However, in 1955, the Olympia Press of Paris brought it out in its notorious Traveller's Companion Series, Olympia's pornographic library. Donleavy regarded this as damaging to his literary reputation, and later arranged for publication of expurgated editions in England and America.¹ In an interview Donleavy said, "I realised that the only way you could ever tackle the world was to write something that no one could hold off, a book that would go every where into every one's hands. And I decided then to write a novel which would shake the world".² This is on the writing of The Ginger Man, the first and the most famous as well as the most successful work of Donleavy, who has to his credit ten more novels, some plays which are adaptations of his novels, and a volume of short-stories called Meet My Maker the Mad Molecule. His preoccupation with the themes and locales as well
as the vicissitudes of his life as man and author has occasioned also some non-fictional works.

Since the publication of The Ginger Man, Donleavy has drawn the attention of the press and the critical establishment. There is a sharp division in the opinion of the critics and reviewers, regarding The Ginger Man and its author J. P. Donleavy. In spite of the potential for literary damage, publication by the Olympia Press had the generally salutary effect of establishing the unexpurgated edition of The Ginger Man as an underground classic before complete editions became available in England in 1963 and in America in 1965. The bawdy aspects of the novel did not suit the literary taste of the 1950's. Kenneth Allsop, remarks;

[The Ginger Man] is an extraordinary picture of a demonic personality, drawn with huge, sloshing but cunningly deliberate brush strokes. The wild ginger man,... is on the nihilistic lunatic fringe.... Although his nationality is different, his social attitude is very similar to Osborne's Jimmy Porter's... Despite its battering-ram force and virtuoso writing The Ginger Man is less a genuine cry of dissentience than a bit of swank a contribution, you suspect to a cult.  

3
Though Vivian Mercier considered this work as an 'Irish comic master piece', she remarked that it contained portions that are "obscene and/or blasphemous". Richard Sullivan felt that "disgust, indignation and boredom - are the most likely responses to be anticipated from the readers of....this nasty, rather pompous novel".

Many critics also consider Donleavy as one-book-author, because *The Ginger Man* established several characteristics which became fixtures in his later novels; so that the subsequent works are seen as weak imitations of *The Ginger Man* with repetitious subject matter and arbitrary endings. Others, however, view some of these novels as more thorough explorations of the human condition with which Donleavy was so obsessively concerned.

Charles G. Masinton, may be taken as representing the standard view. In his book *J. P. Donleavy, The style of His sadness and Humour* (1975), Masinton likened Donleavy to several other post-world War II American novelists, including Joseph Heller and Thomas Pynchon, in his "desire to project a private vision of experience rather than depict the manners of a certain social group or render in accurate detail the surfaces of the public world, as the other realists do". For Masinton, Donleavy "approaches fiction primarily as an expressive art and not as a means of faithfully recording his
observations of the common every day world". But in a subsequent review Masinton remarks:

If the first novel is buoyed up by an intensity of emotion and a matchless sense of discovery that make it consistently living and explosively funny, the works that follow show signs of flagging energy and reveal an unfortunate habit of repeating its successful formulas.

Donleavy is a conscious artist. Although he admits that his motivation for writing "was simply money and fame", he also says, "I know I had to write a book that would be the best work in the world". This feverish desire to write and incidentally get money and recognition was probably the motivation behind the writing of The Ginger Man. It made Sebastian Dangerfield, the protagonist of The Ginger Man and the most successful creation of Donleavy, the archetypal Donleavy hero. Hence, both the author and his protagonist were established as heroes with some identical qualities. While some critics debated whether Donleavy belonged to Britain's Angry Young Men, America's Black Humorists or France's Existentialists, others recognised that Dangerfield existed almost totally outside any system of ideas.
Along with the freshness of Sebastian Dangerfield, the most critically acclaimed aspect of *The Ginger Man* was its style. Donleavy's style relies on rapidly moving, nearly staccato sentence fragments, which capture brilliantly the chaotic and fragmentary aspects of Dangerfield's world. Donleavy creates a schizophrenic effect by shifting from a third person description of his character's actions to a first person stream-of-consciousness rendering of his thoughts. One of the most pervasive qualities that distinguishes Donleavy's comic vision in *The Ginger Man* is a melancholic tone which underlies the surface humour, frequently finding expression in the hero's pre-occupation with the finality of death.

To most critics the subsequent novels of Donleavy seem variously interesting but variously inferior approaches to the theme of his first novel. This theme, Donleavy says, is Donleavy himself inasmuch as all his works draw on his "dreams and inner desires...is all a kind of emotional autobiography." Notwithstanding the fact that none of these later novels individually rivals his masterpiece, several of these later works deserve wider attention on their own merit than they have had from the reading public and critical establishment alike.

The publication of his second novel, *A Singular Man* in 1963, is a turning point in Donleavy's career as a novelist, so far as public reception of his work is concerned. Hailed after his first book as a
young novelist of great promise, he was after his second book 'a novelist already in decline'. George Smith, the title figure of *A Singular Man* devotes his existence to the construction of a mausoleum. For him, life is more burden than adventure. He contemplates how pleasant it might be to "go to the mausoleum while still alive and live in it". Smith is more often the passive victim of forces over which he has no control than an active rebel like his predecessor Sebastian Dangerfield. It seems that George Smith is the kind of figure Sebastian Dangerfield might have become had he realised his dreams of success and conformity. Also he can be seen as the representative of the plight of modern urban man in America. Smith is the creator of his own legend by the mystery in which he cloaks himself. He seems to assume that only in death when he lies in his mausoleum will there be any certainty that in fact he existed. Donleavy employs many of the same stylistic devices - shifting point of view, fragmentary sentences, flights of lyricism and aphoristic little poems to end the chapters - that he had made familiar in *The Ginger Man*. It is the redundancy of style along with a suspicion that the obscurity of Donleavy's first two novels might mask an absence of meaning that led to serious reservations in the reception of *A Singular Man*.

Donleavy followed *A Singular Man* with the collection of stories and sketches entitled *Meet My Maker The Mad Molecule*. (1964)
Critics thought that a worse book following a bad one could only confirm the critical judgement that Donleavy's talent was in decline. It contributed strongly to the beginning of Donleavy's reputation as a cult writer, a stigma that continued to damage his reputation in established literary and academic circles.

*The Saddest Summer of Samuel S* (1966) departs in several respects from the examples of his first two novels, although Donleavy does continue here the characteristic stylistic devices of earlier novels. Rather than the picaresque structure of earlier novels, it is entirely set in Vienna, which provides a restraint against the antic motion that is characteristic of most of Donleavy's work. Unlike his predecessors, Samuel S has retired from the pursuit of sex to become a celibate, and unlike them, he wants more than anything else to get married and have children. He is despair, because after five years in the hands of the psychiatrist he is no nearer to escaping from his isolation than when he started. Samuel S is the victim of life that can not be changed. His summer is barren, "a meaningless life-in-death". His sadness is the expression of his hopeless despair.

*The Beastly Beatitudes of Balthazar B.* (1968) resembles the Victorian novel as biography which traces the adventures of a young French nobleman, early orphaned, from childhood to middle age, and explores along the way themes of change and loss when the young
man's innocence and hope give way to the bitter lessons of experience. The early experience of loss and pain becomes a paradigm of Balthazar's life, as again and again he learns that life is change and change is loss. The death of his father brings an end to the idyllic world of his childhood. At twelve, he is seduced by the beautiful governess Bella, with whom he falls in love, but who is sent away when it was discovered by his mother. In his youth he meets and loves Elizabeth only to have her reject him to spare him experiencing the agony of her slow death. His marriage with a frigid woman breaks and he loses his child. The novel ends on a final note of loss as Balthazar crosses the English Channel to bury his mother. The melodramatic atmosphere of the novel is regularly relieved by Donleavy's irrepressible spirit of comic absurdity and penchant for bawdy adventures.

In The Onion Eaters (1971) the surreal plot deals with Clayton Claw Cleaver Clementine, a young man who inherits both the three testicles, characteristic of his male line, and Charnal Castle, the Irish family manor; and finds his domain invaded by a host of improbable guests who turn the castle into a mad house of absurd comic fantasy. They contribute to the general insanity which at the end of the novel leaves Charnel Castle in ruins and Clementine alone, broken, and uncertain of his future. It was meant to be a Kafkaesque allegory
of modern life. The work is received as "unimpressive" despite some enthusiasm by Donleavy's admirers.

Though not up to Donleavy's best, *A Fairy Tale of New York* (1973) may be the most personal of Donleavy's works since *The Ginger Man*. The setting of New York is much more graphically presented than Donleavy's gloss on the city in his essay "An Expatriate Looks at America". Cornelius Christian, the hero, is closer to his author than any other Donleavy character. The novel focuses on the brutality and spiritual emptiness of New York city. The oppressive atmosphere of the city has made the protagonist feel powerless and depressed. He sees emigration as his only way to liberation but he lacks the funds to move out.

In *The Destinies of Darcy Dancer, Gentleman* (1977), Donleavy returns to the familiar terrain of Ireland. It resurrects the literary form of the picaresque to be used in an oddly anachronistic novel, in which a contemporary story is told in a manner closely resembling that of eighteenth century Tom Jones. Though Donleavy continues the shifting point of view, fragmentary sentence and flights of lyricism that are the hall marks of his style, he combines them with the episodic adventures of the rogue hero. Darcy Dancer living in modern Europe inhabits a world of country estates, fox hunting, family retainers and leisured wealth. Donleavy uses a number of stock
characters from comic novels of the eighteenth century. This novel was a new departure for Donleavy and develops a new theme. Darcy learns that just as "poison lurked in the beauteous soft tissue of yellow meadow flowers, so did pain and sorrow lie before all one's footstep". Though he repeatedly encounters the pain and sorrow the world offers, Darcy never finds any "knowing, loving hand" to guide him. As the novel closes, Donleavy develops an image of Darcy as the hunted, but momentarily safe figure, for sooner or later time would run out for Darcy to meet the destiny that finally waits him.

In terms of narrative style, Schultz (1979) is Donleavy's most conventional work, as it minimises the use of those stylistic devices characteristic of his earlier novels. The work is somewhat tasteless, excessively obscene in its language, and relies far too much on slapstick bedroom scenes for comic effects. It tells the story of the antics of a Jewish-American theatrical producer, Sigmund Franz Schultz, who is attempting to stage a tasteless farce in London's West End. On his way to producing his play, Schultz, in and out of countless beds, gets blackmailed into marriage with a "frigid bitch" with a "gross mother", spends a weekend doing all the wrong things at an English county estate, wrecks a society-wedding and diplomatic reception, and so on, but all to little purpose beyond the implicit humour in some of the scenes. "Life is at best a Jewish Joke", Schultz

11
believes. He remains the sole survivor at the end of the novel, but it makes a poor case for such survival.

*Leila* (1983), a sequel to *The Destinies of Darcy Dancer, Gentleman*, continues the misadventures of Dancer and his confrontations with creditors, freeloading house guests and odd neighbours. The title character Leila, one of Darcy's servants, is his ideal but unattainable woman. The focus of sentiment is on the girl, Dancer's guiding light, but a remote and insubstantial character. This is a book, which in spirit belonged to Donleavy's earlier phase, characterised as it is by the alliterative title and evocative Irish settings. Throughout this sequel, there is an unmistakable impression of straining for effect, by its lyrical style of writing. Like *The Destinies of Darcy Dancer, Gentleman*, this novel ends on a deliberately unresolved note. And there is an impression that the author could go on spinning this material out almost indefinitely.

*Are you Listening Rabbi Löw* (1987) is the sequel to *Schultz*. Here Schultz has written a play 'Kiss It, Don't Hold It, It's Too Hot', which becomes a hit in London's West End. At this success he is chased and hounded by the characters around him, and the real charlatan in him emerges. His bawdy, wickedly funny progress through the stronger echelons of English society is gently watched by the imagined figure of Rabbi Löw, the ancestral shade who acts as
Schultz's conscience. And the conversation between them takes us inside Schultz and away from the pageant of grotesqueries of London, providing glimpses of Schultz's childhood experience, as well as his adult misgivings. The novel gives the impression that Schultz has moved ultimately toward a state of apparent repose.

Donleavy's latest *That Darcy, That Dancer, That Gentleman* (1990) continues the story of Darcy. The foxhunt, which runs throughout this book, provides Dancer with the metaphors of mortality. The earlier impression that Donleavy could go on 'spinning his materials almost indefinitely' comes true in so far as Darcy appears in this book again after *The Destinies of Darcy Dancer, Gentleman* and *Leila*. The subject matter seems not to exhaust itself, at least for Donleavy.

It is too early to pronounce a final judgement on Donleavy's works as a whole. But this brief review of his novels makes it clear that the uniqueness of Donleavy's expressiveness, the complex style of his narration, calls for serious study to understand and evaluate his achievement as a novelist. Charles G. Masinton is right when he observes that Donleavy "approaches fiction primarily as an expressive art and not as a means of faithfully recording his observations of the common everyday world ". The freshness and originality of Donleavy lies in his art of story-telling and he employs a
complex narrative discourse which defies simplistic traditional analysis. It is, therefore, appropriate that the insights of recent narratological theorists may be used for studying the complexities of Donleavy's narrative discourse.

The present project, therefore, seeks to analyse Donleavy's narrative discourse in the novels and aims to establish the characteristic features of his art as a storyteller. Whether the devices employed by the novelist to structure and present the story-world succeed, and if so to what extent, will be the object of this study. It is believed that such an approach through narratology will result in an insightful study of Donleavy's fiction, clarify the nature of his achievement as a novelist and clear the critical confusion surrounding his works.

II

The interest in theories of narrative that is evident in recent literary criticism is part of a broader movement, a 'paradigm change' in the humanities and social sciences, which is usually termed as 'structuralism'. Before structuralists and literary theorists turned to narratives, however, folklorists and anthropologists had examined those with considerable analytical sophistication. The pioneering Russian narratologist, Vladimir Propp, studied the overarching
structure of the Russian fairy tale. Propp's example gave an impetus to the later scholars for extensive and intensive studies of narrative as a literary art. As a result, a poetics of narrative has developed theorising on the systematic and recurrent aspects of stories and story-telling. Narratology is, thus, a theory of narrative. The term "narratology" is a translation of the French term "narratologie" introduced by Tzvetan Todorov in Grammaire du Decameron (1969).

Narrative poetics has divided its subject of study into two major domains of inquiry. The early twentieth century Russian Formalists distinguished fabula from sjuzhet, roughly equivalent to the more recent French terms histoire and discourse. These terms are equivalent to the widely adopted English labels of story and discourse. The term fabula/histoire/story means a basic description of the events of a story in their natural chronological order, with an accompanying and equally skeletal inventory of roles of the characters in that story. In a story outline all the events and characters are presented synoptically, with the minimum of attention to complexities of sequences. On the other hand, the sjuzhet or discourse of a narrative is that version of the core story actually realised in a literary creation. Both the process and the product, the realising and the realised, are referred to by the terms. These terms also denote all the techniques that authors bring to bear in their varying manners of presentation of the basic story.
Todorov's examination of Boccaccio's tales focused on the narrated, and his goal was to develop a grammar to account for it. In a similar vein, Barthes' influential "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative" is devoted to story rather than to discourse structure. Todorov and Barthes did not explicitly eliminate the study of narrating but their examination focused on the narrated. In concentrating on the story rather than the discourse, they were following the path taken earlier by Claude Levi-Strauss and Vladimir Propp.

Many narratologists besides Todorov and Barthes were inspired by Propp in trying to account for the specificity of narrative by focusing on the narrated. A.J. Greimas refined Propp's model and arrived at what he called an "actantial" model. According to Greimas, narrative is a signifying whole because it can be grasped in terms of the structure of relations between the 'actants' or the roles of subject/object, sender/receiver and helper/opponent, which constitute the universals of narrative.

Although much of the early work on narratology centred on the narrated and characterised narratives in terms of it, some narratologists considered narrative to be essentially a mode of verbal presentation - the recounting of events by a narrator as opposed to
enacting them on a stage. They defined their task as the study of narrative discourse rather than the study of the story. They argued that focusing on the structure of the narrated resulted in a failure to account for the many ways in which the same set of events could be recounted. They profited from the extensive work on literary narration, particularly from studies of distance and point of view that critics and scholars before them had done. Gerard Genette is perhaps the most eminent representative of this narratological approach.

In literary studies, discourse has been viewed as the more interesting area of narrative poetics than story which is regarded as the pre-artistic elements of basic event and character patterns of the narrative. Defining narrative by its mode of presentation and insisting on the role of the narrator, instead of defining it by the object of narration, leads to a neglect of, what are called 'narratorless' stories. In addition, this approach disregards the fact that the story, too, makes a narrative whatever it is. Without a story, there can be no narrative. It is worth stressing that such marginalising and downgrading of those 'pre-artistic' - but profoundly cultural and ideological - story elements has naturally become controversial in narrative theories.

However, it is the area of narrative discourse that narratologists have explored most thoroughly. Gerard Genette,
Tzvetan Todorov, Mieke Bal, Seymour Chatman, Dorrit Cohn, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan and others have described the kinds of order a narrative text can follow, the variety of speed it can adopt, the types of focalization and detailing of events it can feature, the relations that can obtain between the number of times an event happens and the number of times it is recounted, the basic modes of depicting characters' thoughts and utterances, and the possible links between narrators, acts of narration, narratees and events narrated.

It is sometimes argued that narratological models are reductive and fail to capture many important aspects of narrative texts. Such models are also too static to characterise the elements that drive a narrative forward to its end, or the dynamics that dictate its shape. It is true that concern for the basic story elements and the order of their functions tend to be static. The so-called grammars of narrative have frequently concentrated on isolating minimal story units rather than on capturing the dynamism of story configurations.

The possibility of a coherent narratology has also been put to question by later theorists. The double logic, in terms of which every narrative presumably operates, consists of two organising principles. The first principle emphasises the logical priority of story over discourse, the second makes the story the product of discourse. Each principle is however, said to function in exclusion of the other. This
means that narratology will always be deficient; neither principle by itself can lead to a satisfactory account of narrative, and the two principles can not be properly synthesised.

Some others argue that narratology neglects the context in which the narratives occur, the factor that determines their shape, or the pragmatic factor that governs them. This criticism is not unjustified. The allegiance of narratology to strategies imported from structural and transformational linguistics, the concern for capturing the specificity of narrative, the difficulty of incorporating contextual factors in a systematic description, and the scientific ambitions of the discipline in its desire to characterise universals of narrative, resulted in the narratologist’s reluctance to make pragmatics of narrative part of their domain of inquiry.

However, in spite of the shortcomings, narratology can help to account for the distinctiveness of any given narrative, to analyse the structure of the text, to support certain interpretative conclusion. Significantly, it has helped to put into question the very nature of the canon by showing that many noncanonical narratives are just as sophisticated as canonical ones.

The concerns of narrative theory have gone beyond the field of literary criticism. Whether literature, especially the narrative fiction, is
within the grasp of a systematic theory, is a question, which extends the scope of the inquiry beyond the strictly literary into the intellectual and social factors of the culture that produce it. Eventually, the study of narrative discourse has become an inter-disciplinary issue. This fact has helped to refine the instruments with which narrative texts can be analysed and the recalcitrance of individual narrative works can be tackled.

The theory of narrative discourse offers many insights into the study of a narrative text, through an analysis of the narrative elements and their structure. But those aspects of the narrative that provide dynamism to the narrative text are usually overlooked. Further, the author’s choice and disposition of the formal elements to give a design to the narrative or simply the author’s act of narrating which seeks to achieve a certain kind of impact on the reader, is lost sight of. For instance, any choice regarding the use of certain narrative elements like ‘person’, ‘perspective’; ‘mode’ or for that matter, ‘point of view’, ‘focalisation’ and the like is a rhetorical choice on the part of the author with regard to the story he is going to tell. The author makes his choices from among the strategies, materials and methods available to him. He chooses those, which, he thinks, are most suitable to that particular instance of narration. The choices characterise his art and are related to his vision as expressed in the work. Hence, any analysis of a narrative fiction cannot do away with
the functional relevance of the total set of techniques resorted to by
the author.

The theoretical model adopted in this work for the study of
narrative discourse in the novels of Donleavy, draws heavily on the
formalist-structualist theory of narratology. Borrowing Stanzel’s
terminology, this work proposes to study Donleavy’s novel in terms of
its constitutive ‘narrative situations’. Each narrative situation,
according to Stanzel, is characterised by three basic elements of
person, perspective and mode. Of the three elements, ‘person’ and
‘mode’ are taken here to present the distinctive features of a
narrative, since, the element of ‘perspective’ does not work
separately form the other two. The question of narration is addressed from
two different angles, the agency of narration and the mode of
narration. The agency of narration takes into account the individual
concept of ‘narrator’, with all its varieties and degrees of presence.

While the debate is still on as to whether the presence of a narrator
in a narrative text is essential or not, the present project favours the
view that there can not be a narrative without a narrator. Regarding
the kinds of narrator, the two major possibilities are: whether the
narrator belongs to the story-world or exists outside it. The nature of
the narrator and his spatio-temporal relation with the story world in
the texts of Donleavy will be analysed in one chapter. Whether it is a
first-person narrator or a third-person narrator or a combination of both are to be studied in the data from the texts.

The other element 'mode' answers the question 'how' the narrative statements are presented. Generally, it is accepted in narrative theory that the narrative statements may be presented directly or be mediated by someone. The distinction between these two forms are named as: 'showing' and 'telling', 'scenic presentation' and 'reportorial narration', or 'mimesis' and 'diegesis'. The frequency and distribution of these modes in the novels of Donleavy will be studied in another chapter in order to discover the characteristic feature of his narrative discourse.

Stenzel however, does not take into consideration another basic element in the narrative situation, the goal of narration, since it is more implicit than explicit in most narratives. But, the narrative situation being one of communication, the receiver of narration is as much basic to it as the sender (narrator) and his mode of narration. Hence, a complete characterisation of the narrative situation requires an analysis of the goal of narration and this is provided in one of the chapters of the present study.

The model of analysis followed here considers that narrative texts exist on two levels: micro-narration and macro-narration. The
micro-narration refers to the individual narrative situations in Stanzel's sense and they are studied in terms of narrative agency, narrative mode and goal of narration. The other level, macro-narration, takes into consideration the choice and combination of such micro-narrative situations with their narrating instances, modes and goal by the author to give a particular design and unity to the narrative discourse of the novel as a totality. This global macro-narration level is studied in one of the chapters of the work.

Through such a study of the micro-and macro-narration levels of Donleavy's narrative discourse, the distinctive features of his art of story-telling have been sought to be specified and the findings with their implications are presented in the final chapter of the work.
NOTES


2 J. P. Donleavy, 'The Art of Fiction LIII,' Paris Review, 63 (Fall, 1975) 125.


4 Vivian Mercier, Nation, May 24, 1958.


7 Masinton, 1975, 71.


9 Donleavy, 'The Art of Fiction', 126.

10 J. P. Donleavy, Interview by Charles Monaghan", Portrait of a Man Reading" Book World (Chicago Tribune) 15th Dec.1968, 8.