

Peter Nagourney

Wayne State University

**Structural Anomalies as Biographical Clues:
Inferring Authorial Belief in Mimetic Fiction**

Biographical questions never disappear entirely in the reading and analysis of literature. Yet if we adopt the convenient division of literary inquiries into the possible interrelationships between a work and its appropriate history, reality, readers, and writer, ¹ we observe that it is quite possible, as well as quite popular, to study relations between a work and its history (antecedents, contemporaries, and influences), between a work and contemporary reality (social, political, economic, etcetera), between a work and its readers (contemporary and current), as well as other combinations of relations, all without dealing specifically with questions concerning the writer of the work.

In fact, for reasons that are ideological, methodological, and philosophical, a number of influential schools of literary criticism since the 1940's have found it desirable, in effect, to exclude the author from their analysis of literary works. In most cases the exclusion has been considered temporary, for the sake of clarity and focus in specific analyses, but the consequence upon their study of literature has been to make reference to the author of particular mimetic works possible only in restricted contexts and at specific times,

The New Critics established ground rules in several highly influential texts, especially Brooks and Warren's *Understanding Poetry* and Wimsatt and Beardsley's "The Intentional Fallacy."² For them, the precision possible with the critic's analysis displaced any unreliable information deriving from statements of the author's intention. Literary biography remained relevant as an adjunct of history, but its findings were more or less incidental to the proper analysis of a literary text.

The Chicago Critics excised the author in a more subtle fashion. For the convenience of their analysis the real author was replaced with an "implied" author, considered to be whatever controlling intelligence was necessary to make the artistic choices resulting in the finished text. This treatment of the creator, as whatever must have been necessary to create the finished text, parallels their treatment of the reader as a similarly idealized and simplified intelligence able to respond appropriately to the finished text. For their purposes--understanding the "working power," "artistic end," or "effect" of a text--this displacement of the real author was a helpful convenience. The real author still was allowed to exist, as an historical personage incorporating the "implied" author necessary for the creation of the single text being analyzed, but the interests of the Chicago Critics rarely required reference from or return to this biographical entity.

A fundamental assumption for both these critical schools was that since the critic has complete access to the text only, the scope of inquiry should appropriately be confined to the text. The author as creator was an imperfectly known and incompletely understood factor. Since the origin of inquiry was a literary one, deriving from interest in and curiosity about the finished text, any question not directly leading to further understanding of the finished text was nonliterary; hence questions about the author's creative acts or intentions could be excluded from consideration as not furthering understanding of the actual text.

Both New Critics and Chicago Critics tended to assume the critic's infallibility, either by positing a preferred method of analysis for the critic or by inventing an ideal reader to perform the critic's functions, at the same time as they dismissed the historical author as being an unreliable source for insight into the text.

A recent manifestation of this prejudice against the author appears in reader-oriented criticism exemplified in works by Jacques Derrida, Wolfgang Iser, Norman Holland, J. Hillis Miller, Stanley Fish, and their associates. Aware of the arbitrariness of excluding the author as an unreliable guide to understanding as long as the equally subjective reader/critic is considered objective, these contemporary critics have gone to the extreme of indulging the reader as the sole guide for meaning in a text. Unlike the Chicago Critics, who did this with the understanding that the reader in question was a "perfect" reader, one totally attentive to every subtlety in even the most difficult text, these latest critics welcome the reader as a complex historical personage complete with prejudices, blind spots, and distracting habits whose reading of a text will inevitably be highly idiosyncratic and unique, and which reading may, and perhaps must, be independent from and incompatible with any other reader's version of the text. In this approach, not only is the author, as creator of the text, considered irrelevant, but the text itself loses importance to the primacy of the reader's response.

The exclusion of authors from the consideration of these critics can be seen as a limitation of their approaches, and, in certain circumstances, as an embarrassment for the critics. No reader is ideal, and no text is created by an "implied" author, just as no work exists outside the complexities and confusions of its historical context. The real reader, for whom, in any case, the real critic performs his or her analysis, inevitably wonders about the real author. If particular studies concentrate upon nonbiographical questions, readers frequently turn to literary biographies, which thrive as both scholarly and popular genre, to supplement their primary and secondary readings. Increasingly sophisticated understanding of psychoanalytic theory and methodology has led some psychologically-oriented critics to justify approaching literary texts as decipherable statements of the thoughts and feelings of their authors. Furthermore, all questions about the nature of the creative act, a popular topic of psycho-literary inquiry, can be seen as biographical queries in their most generalized form.

Interest in the author may be considered an appropriate focus for study or a distracting curiosity in the reader, but biographical questions must inevitably arise because of the nature of created work, the nature of reader response to created work, and cultural assumptions about the creative acts responsible for the work. The works we are considering (mimetic fictions) involve

human beings interacting in value-controlled ways. Readers of these works will respond in affective, emotional, and judgmental as well as imaginative ways. And readers will assume that the creators of the ideas and beliefs presented in the works must to some extent be responsible for the notions expressed. The dimensions of this responsibility, and how it can be determined, involve questions of great difficulty but extreme importance in any study of literature. To what extent do the ideas and beliefs presented in a text express the beliefs of the author? Earlier attempts to make these inferences, slighting the difficulties this question involves, gave rise to the argument of "The Intentional Fallacy."³ But even heeding the cautions of this argument, there still should be room for pursuing the connections between an author and a text, and attempting to discover ways of making responsible inferences from a text to its author.

It could be argued that readers choosing to read more than one work by a single author have already, automatically, made some kind of inference about the nature and character of the author responsible for the works. It remains to be seen how systematically these inferences can be examined, and how responsibly connections between text and author can be analyzed,

The remainder of this discussion investigates an approach to making one kind of biographical inference, in mimetic fiction, from work to artist. The inference concerns belief, and the approach attempts to describe the conditions within which a reader can be most justified in making inferences from text to author. This discussion is based upon the work of the Chicago Critics, ⁵ but, as I hope to demonstrate, it carries the investigation of this question further than previous approaches.

I

A critical approach which focuses upon the text, such as that of the Chicago school, would seem to be most sympathetic to biographical questions, because of its constant concern with a work as the consequence of specifically artistic choices directed toward particular ends. This approach, as established by R.S. Crane in "The Concept of Plot and the Plot of Tom Jones,"⁶ "views a work of art as a dynamic whole which affects our emotions in a certain way through the functioning together of its elements in subordination to a determinate poetic form."⁷ By adopting this point of view, Crane is able to isolate and discuss the structure of a work and its "power," which produces the effect upon the reader.

The structure of a novel, or what Crane calls the "matter or content of the plot,"⁸ is "the particular temporal synthesis effected by the writer of the elements of action, character, and thought that constitute the matter of his invention."⁹ This structure is describable and is found to depend upon the particular combination of parts, each contributing its own influence to the overall structure. It also follows that the contribution of any individual part can be described and measured, since the importance of a part can be determined by reference to the totality. But, Crane continues, such a synthesis is "endowed necessarily, because it imitates in words a sequence of human activities, with a power to affect our opinions and emotions in a certain way,"¹⁰ This power, which Crane considers the "form" of the plot, is also describable and is found to be related to the total effect produced by individual parts of the work. Once again, the

effect of any individual part may be evaluated in terms of its contribution to the total power of the novel, the quality of it which will "move our feelings powerfully and pleurably in a certain definite way."¹¹

Hence both the structure of a novel and the power of the structure to affect a reader may be discussed, since the factors producing a novel's uniqueness may be identified and the ways in which they work together may be described. This description will take the form of some generalized statement of "plot," which Crane defines as "the final end which everything in the work, if that is to be felt as a whole, must be made, directly or indirectly, to serve."¹² This statement is one to which all individual factors in a novel can be related and in terms of which all may be evaluated. Therefore it is in terms of Crane's notion of plot, as the artistic end to which can be referred all decisions an author had to make in writing a novel, that the relative importance of any individual item may be evaluated,

Crane's approach is designed mainly "to exhibit the degree of efficiency with which the parts of a work or section thereof contribute to the maximum achievement of its effect."¹³ His procedure is first to state a principle of form that can account for the unique power of a novel upon the reader; then, taking the form of the plot as a starting point, he inquires:

how far and in which way its peculiar power is maximized by the writer's invention and development of episodes, his step-by-step rendering of the characters of his people, his use and elaboration of thought, his handling of diction and imagery, and his decisions as to the order, method, scale, and point of view of his representation, ¹⁴

While all elements in a successful novel contribute to the artistic end of the novel, not all contributions are of equal importance. In all novels there are some elements which must appear in precisely the manner they do or the novel would not be successful. Any alteration of these details would result in a different, less satisfactory novel. The interconnecting events in *Tom Jones*, the character of Parson Adams in *Joseph Andrews*, and the ironic tone of *Jonathan Wild* are all obvious instances in Henry Fielding's novels. At the same time there will be elements which might be altered without changing the novel's effect or requiring other compensatory changes, or whose functions in the novel might be taken by other elements. In this category may be included the names or actions of minor characters, the exact wording of many conversations, and the particular order in which many minor incidents occur to the main characters. Also, there are elements in most novels that are only incidentally connected with the major concerns of the work and could be altered or removed without seriously affecting the reader's enjoyment or being missed in any essential way. The precise occupations attributed to the passengers of the stagecoach which came to Joseph Andrews' aid, the scene with the gypsies in *Tom Jones*, and many interjected comments and discussions by the various narrators could all be placed here. Although the presence of these elements, as part of the total work, must influence the reader's response to the entire novel, this response would not be significantly altered were these details absent.

All aspects of a novel can be considered in these terms, and any single element can be evaluated according to its contribution in the novel. In a well-constructed and well-written work most

parts will be found to have necessary functions; and the others, since their presence, though not so intimately related to the success of the novel, is not awkward or in any way wrong, may be considered to be suitable for this particular novel. Those elements which appear to be flaws, by detracting from and clashing with all other elements and whose presence or function cannot be satisfactorily explained, will be called inappropriate. These distinctions can be applied not only to the "facts" of the novel (the specific text, including names, descriptions, actions, conversations, and commentary, and the manner in which they are organized and presented), but also to the reactions, evaluations, and judgments of the reader at every particular point.

To be more precise: any element of a novel can be regarded as necessary if it is part of "the particular temporal synthesis... of the elements of action, character, and thought ... endowed necessarily with a power to affect our opinions and emotions in a certain way"¹⁵ (which Crane has defined as the plot of a novel), or if it in any way contributes to the unique power of that novel. To speak of elements in a novel which cannot be altered without also altering the effect or requiring compensatory changes is but another way of describing necessary contributions to a novel's unique power. It follows that a reader's response to this necessary element has a corresponding necessary relationship in his response to the entire novel. The more detailed the statement of plot and the more clearly stated the concept of an artistic end to which all authorial decisions may be related, the more inclusive will be the category of necessary parts in a novel. By keeping the essential effects of a novel in mind, perspective on relative importance may be maintained. Obviously, the concept of necessity extends beyond considerations of event, character, and thought to include other elements of narrative and rhetorical importance, such as the establishment of expectations and values for the reader.

Anything which cannot be included in such a category must be deemed appropriate for a novel, unless obviously irrelevant and unsuitable, in which case, as already noted, they must be regarded as faults in the work. Considered separately, the appropriate elements support the necessary elements in the novel, yet they themselves may be replaced by other elements serving the same functions, made to serve different functions, or be eliminated without affecting the necessary elements of the plot. For a character, the variables might be name, personality quirks, descriptive characteristics, conversation, thoughts, and actions; for an event, participants, location and background, outcome, manner of presentation, and the temporal location in the novel's events may be varied; for the narrative elements, questions of emphasis, pace, manner of representation, style, tone, detail, and digressions may be involved. (These lists are intended to be suggestive rather than exhaustive.)

Included in the category of elements which, in these terms, are only appropriate to a novel are elements that may constitute both a novel's greatness and its weakness.¹⁶ In a great novel all its elements seem to be necessary as they are integrated into a single imaginative conception, although this is not a sufficient condition for greatness. Yet in even the greatest works there are

elements which, though they can never be predicted from anything else in the work, do distinguish it all the more because of their presence. The brilliant wit found in the narrative of *Jonathan Wild* when Fireblood "in a few minutes ravished this fair creature, or at least would have ravished her, if she had not, by a timely compliance, prevented him" (III,iii) is not necessary for the book's success, and might have been omitted, but it in fact contributes substantially to our enjoyment. On the other hand, there are other minor elements in the same work that fail to provide any enjoyment for the reader because they neither relate to the necessary parts of the work nor contain sufficient intrinsic interest to make the reader grateful for their presence.

It must be emphasized that whatever idea of "author" appears in this analysis is not the conventional biographical idea of the author. This analysis, in order to understand most clearly the artistic nature of a literary work, approaches it not from the point of view of the author, but from that of the reader. In speaking of a novel's artistic end, and its necessary and appropriate aspects, we have divorced the real author from the work and instead spoken of that controlling intelligence which must have been responsible for inventing and ordering the parts of what we now read as a successful fiction. The work, as we perceive it and as it affects us, can be analyzed and understood as the consequence of numerous artistic choices, both conscious and unconscious, which had to be made to produce the completed work; if we speak of the "author" that controlling intelligence which has made these choices, we have, for the sake of our analysis, identified the author. In a similar fashion Jean-Paul Sartre speaks of "the pure synthetic activity which creates *Madame Bovary*...."17

The historical author may have been a single individual who wrote effortlessly and without calculation; or the author may have been a collection of individuals collaborating to produce a single work. Yet, since we perceive only the complete work that is successful only because wise choices were made at some time by someone, it is most convenient to speak of the "author" as the single, postulated intelligence which can be held responsible for all choices made in the work.

It is self-evident that the "author" we speak of as responsible for the artistic choices that add up to *Tom Jones*, for example, can be located within the historical personage Henry Fielding, since unquestionably Henry Fielding wrote the manuscript of *Tom Jones*, But our "author" is limited to the choices and creations necessary for this work, only; whereas the historical Henry Fielding subsumes this single publication as only a small part of his published writing, and exists, moreover, in much greater scope and depth than can be allowed merely to the controlling intelligence of a work of fiction. Fielding the dramatist, Fielding the husband and father, Fielding the lawyer and magistrate, Fielding the humanist: the complexities of all these facets of the historical Fielding are necessarily excluded from our notion of the author of *Tom Jones*, because they are in no way relevant or necessary to our understanding of the novel when it is seen, in Crane's terms, as a "dynamic whole which affects our emotions in a certain way through the functioning together of its elements in subordination to a determinate poetic form."18

It was for convenience in analysis that we excluded from consideration any notion of a work's author which might reveal information about the personal ideas and beliefs of the historical personage responsible for the novels we read today. After having excluded the beliefs and prejudices of the historical author when analyzing the artistic choices which had to be made and the artistic demands which had to be met in producing this work, how can we now make inferences about the historical author based upon our understanding of the completed work? Stated generally, the question is whether we can make any inferences about an author's beliefs by studying his artistic creations; or, as Sheldon Sacks more accurately phrased it, can we ever know "what must this novelist have believed to have evaluated characters, acts, and thoughts in such a manner in such a work?" 19

Sacks's study, in *Fiction and the Shape of Belief*, is the only systematic treatment of this crucial problem in literary analysis. From his examination of the means an author uses to convey particular value judgments Sacks concludes that it is possible to infer a novelist's beliefs. His argument, however, seems to rest upon a basic confusion best illustrated by passages that appear in his book on facing pages. In the first he states why we can make inferences about authorial belief from a novel:

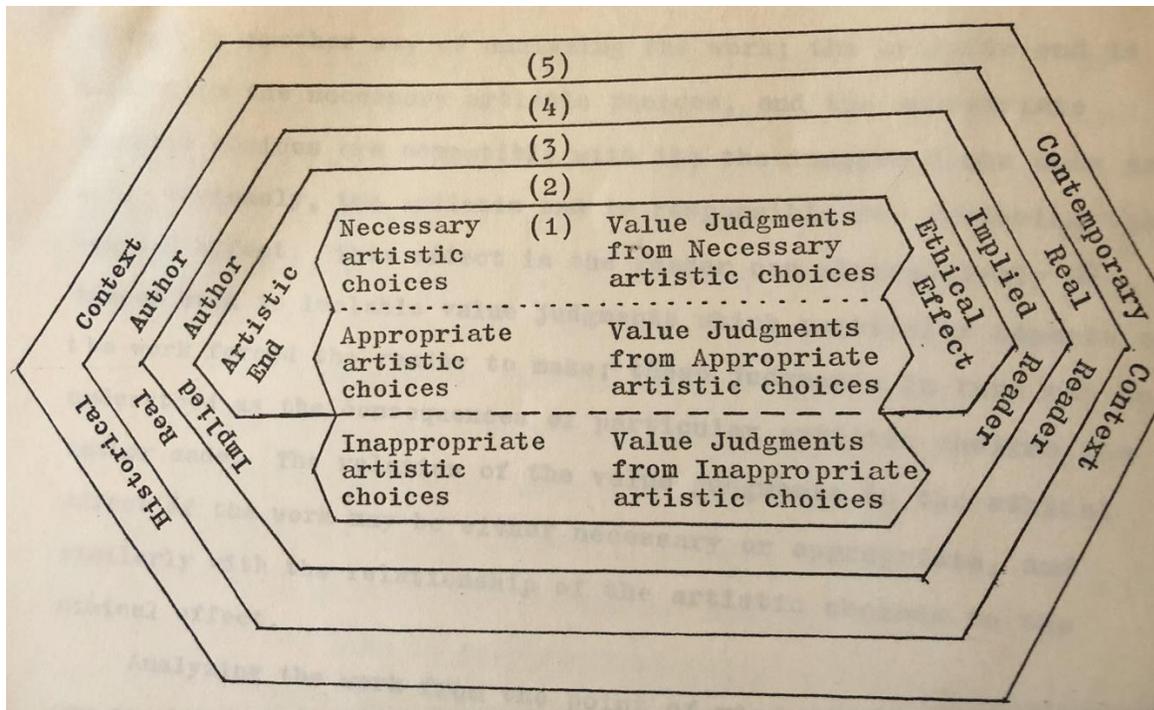
Fielding made scarcely a single artistic choice that did not further modify the ethical effect of *Tom Jones* and, in making each choice, his ethical commitments, intuitive or conscious, not merely were but had to be revealed. The demands for such a commitment are, in fact, so ubiquitous that, if a novelist wished to assume a public face and to hide unpopular opinions, he would find it more difficult to do so in a novel than in a letter, a diary, or a philosophical treatise. 20

Sacks's position here seems clear and emphatic, yet on the facing page he argues a position completely contradictory:

Thought of great importance, these choices ['artistic choices the writer has made'] have so tenuous a relation to the writer's ethical beliefs that inferences from them must inevitably be invalid. 21

Part of the problem Sacks and his readers must face derives from the difficulty of seeing and understanding relationships existing between several separate but parallel terminologies which approach the same issue in slightly different ways. A clearer statement of the dilemma that Sacks has tried to solve can be made if we examine the accompanying diagram.

understanding relationships existing between several separate but parallel terminologies which approach the same issue in slightly different ways. A clearer statement of the dilemma that Sacks has tried to solve can be made if we examine the accompanying diagram.



Levels of Reference, in hierarchy of increasing inclusivity:

- (1) Dimension of actual text, differentiated into structural elements according to inevitability of their contributions; refers both to author's choices responsible for presence of individual elements, and reader's reactions based upon ethical responses to these elements.
- (2) Dimension of implied (ideal) working power of text, as determined by interaction of contributing structural elements; refers to both implied unity of creation and implied unity for reader.
- (3) Dimension of hypothesized encoder and decoder of the text.
- (4) Dimension of specific biographical and historical reality relevant for the creation and reading of the text.
- (5) Dimension of contextual reality, within which text was once created and is repeatedly read.

The chart introduces the concepts basic to Sacks's discussion, represents the relationships among them, and establishes the larger context of this approach as well. The right side represents ways in which the work may be discussed from the point of view of the reader; the left side considers the work from the author's point of view. Within the framework of the text, the ethical effect of the work as a successful artistic unity is the most general concept, and represents the reader's reaction to the necessary and appropriate aspects of the fiction. The concept of artistic end previously defined is another way of analyzing the work; the artistic end is based upon the necessary artistic choices, and the appropriate artistic choices are compatible with it; the inappropriate ones are not. Obviously, the artistic end is responsible for producing the ethical effect. This effect in the reader can alternatively be traced back to isolable value judgments which particular aspects of the work forced the reader to make; these judgments in turn can be understood as the consequences of particular artistic choices the author made. The

relation of the value judgments to the ethical effect of the work may be either necessary or appropriate, and similarly with the relationship of the artistic choices to the ethical effect.

Analyzing the work from the point of view of the artist, we can see how to account for the ethical effect by considering the necessary artistic choices the author had to make, while observing how the appropriate artistic choices may produce the same effect. All this is fairly clear, and depends upon merely correlating several different analytical approaches to a fiction's working power. It is at this point that the author must be introduced, and it is here that our difficulties begin. In the chart the author is presented as both the postulated controlling intelligence who is clearly responsible for all the artistic choices we can analyze (the implied author), and as the (real) historical author, the person with ideas, beliefs, and prejudices which extend far beyond that concept necessary to explain one particular work of fiction. Our analysis has made it possible for us to attribute to the first concept, of the ideal author, both necessary and appropriate artistic choices, that produce in the reader a definable ethical effect by means of particular value judgments, all of which may be related to an isolable artistic end. There is no difficulty so far; and previous discussion has suggested the limitations of this analysis.

The critical question now, the question which Sacks has tried to deal with, is whether (and how) we can attribute to the real author any artistic choices that we can see must have been made in creating this work. If it is possible to argue that the historical author always made necessary artistic choices because of personal ethical beliefs and ideas, therefore becoming responsible for such ideas expressed in the fiction, then our analysis of the value judgments we must make in properly responding to the work will reveal the personal beliefs and ideas of the historical author. The analysis of these value judgments is difficult and subtle, but can be performed, as Sacks has shown. If it is possible to make the same claims for appropriate artistic choices, then another method can be developed for relating the beliefs we infer from appropriate value judgments to the historical author. We know the value judgments we make in reading a work; we can describe the ethical effect they produce, the artistic end to which they are responsible, and the artistic choices that had to be made to produce these judgments. We want to know the personal beliefs of the author to whom we attribute the work and who must be in some way responsible for everything we find within it.

Just how the author is responsible for his work is a very large and complex problem. If, for example, one were analyzing a translation, it surely would be a mistake to hold the translator responsible for the ideas and actions expressed in the completed text. Beyond matters of style and phrase the prejudices of the author, here seen as translator, cannot be identified or discussed. A less obvious example is the problem of attributing authorial beliefs to the creator of a satire. Here the initial choice of satirical target may be illuminating; but information about the target which the satire reveals will not aid our understanding of the author; only from the author's treatment of the target might we accurately infer any personal stand. Consider analyzing the beliefs of an author who chooses to work within an obviously stereotyped genre, where certain conventions are automatically implied by choice of genre while others are similarly excluded. Here, if we are certain that our identification of genre is correct, we will be forced to exclude any information we might infer from choices which the initial choice of genre might

explain; and, as in our first example of the translator, we will have to limit our analysis to the author's subtle variations upon the given material. The choice of a fashionable genre will itself provide little information about an author, although, as Wayne Booth has pointed out, 22 the invention of a genre by an author is significant and revealing.

In analyzing a work of fiction we are asking whether the artistic end itself implies an ethical position for its author, or whether this concept may be ethically neutral. If the artistic end is ethically neutral, with all artistic choices being made solely in terms of an abstract aesthetic conception of the work's ideal perfection, the artistic end would itself be an artistic choice in the author's mind. Benedetto Croce, in his *Aesthetic*, expresses this position, although with a different approach: "The theme or content [of a work of art] cannot ... be practically or morally charged with epithets of praise or blame." 23 The argument which supports this conclusion is that, "we cannot will or not will our aesthetic vision: we can however will or not will to externalize it..." 24 If therefore the author is merely the vessel for his muse. then personal beliefs as the author works to perfect an artistic creation exist in a very different realm from his beliefs as person of flesh and blood. Geoffrey Scott states this point eloquently:

To dip the quill in ink is a magical gesture: it sets free in each of us a new and sometimes a forbidding sprite, the epistolary self. The personality disengaged by the pen is something apart and often ironically diverse from that other personality of act and speech. 25

When Sacks considers this general problem he identifies it as "the first of my critical ghosts," 26 a spirit who is a persistent, even though hypothetical, critic pointing out that since Sacks "had agreed that all the elements of novels -- including what (he) termed 'value judgments -- were dictated by and organized to achieve an artistic end, such judgments may have only the most tenuous relation to authorial beliefs" 27 After much struggle Sacks is convinced that he has exorcised this ghost, and presents the following argument:

Whether or not he has a moral purpose, a novelist selects both what he represents and how he represents it; the tremendous multiplicity of characters, actions, and thoughts which he may choose to represent, and the great variety of devices of disclosure from which he may select to control what we feel about them without prejudicing the artistic end of his work, rules out for all practical purposes the possibility that any particular local value judgment will be exclusively dictated by the artistic end of the work, though all such judgments must help to accomplish that end. The artistic end of his work exerts no pressure on a writer to make insincere judgments. 28

Although this analysis is important in many ways (to be considered later), I suspect that Sacks is still haunted, or at least should be. In the first place, he has not shown how the "attempts to control" which are "implicit in devices of disclosure" are necessarily related to the author's beliefs, although it is clear that this is assumed. 29 In the second place, although Sacks may argue that "the artistic end of his work exerts no pressure on a writer to make insincere judgments," he does not show that it necessarily exerts pressure for sincere judgments; and it is only from sincere judgments 30 that Sacks would wish to make inferences. The major difficulty

with Sacks's conclusion, though, is a simple arithmetical one: if no particular local value judgment is exclusively dictated by the artistic end, there seems to be nothing preventing the exclusion, one at a time, of all local value judgments from these dictates. If this can be the case, and his conclusion does not exclude this possibility, it cannot make sense to say that "all such judgments must help to accomplish this end." Sacks would have the whole greater than its parts, and many negatives adding to make a positive.

Sacks does indeed wish to have it both ways, here as well as in a later discussion which is responsible for the contradictory passages already quoted. In discussing whether inferences may be made "directly from the 'whole plot' or the 'whole work' to its author's ethical beliefs, notions, and prejudices,"³¹ Sacks implies that we may make inferences from particular value judgments, but we may not make such inferences from the author's artistic choices. The complete passage is as follows:

It is obvious that particular value judgments are only parts of works, but they are those parts which reflect judgments the writer has actually made, and we have established it as highly improbable that any particular judgment is made necessary by the artistic end which, of course, it must help accomplish. If we make inferences directly from descriptively true statements about relationships of larger units in the work, we do succeed in absolving ourselves from the responsibility for trying to convert local aesthetic signals into minor ethical statements before making far-reaching conclusions about a writer's ethical beliefs, but, in absolving ourselves from this responsibility, we make our inferences not from evaluations, which are themselves closely akin to ethical judgments, but from artistic choices the writer has made. Though of great importance, these choices have so tenuous a relation to the writer's ethical beliefs that inferences from them must inevitably be invalid.³²

My difficulty in accepting this logic is that each value judgment can be attributed to a particular artistic choice; so if inferences about an author's ethical beliefs taken from artistic choices "must inevitably be invalid," then the same should be true for inferences taken from the value judgments concerning which the artistic choices have been made and for which the artistic choices are responsible. The argument has not convinced me that inferences about the historical author may be made from individual value judgments expressed in a work, from artistic choices necessary to create these value judgments, or from any sense of the whole, such as a statement of artistic end. Valuable as Sacks's analysis is for revealing how judgments are conveyed in a work, it cannot help us make inferences about the ethical beliefs of a novel's author.

II

A different strategy, and some further distinctions, can lead us closer to a solution, We might ask how it is indeed possible for an author to include ethical beliefs in a work of fiction, assuming that he or she wishes to do so. A simple example will be helpful here. Let us assume that our author believed that the advertising industry was dishonest and corrupt. The origin of this conviction is, for our present purposes, irrelevant; we are positing only a

resolve to convey this strong belief in literary form. The author might, of course, have written a satire or an apologue; yet in neither of these cases would there be any great difficulty in inferring the author's belief, since these are genres existing mainly for the communication of belief and whose success must be measured by the effectiveness of this communication. Assuming, then, that our author has written a novel, the choices are to invent a story whose events illustrate this belief, to have one or more of the characters in the novel state the belief, to create a narrator who can detect this belief in the minds of characters, to have the narrator express this belief, or to create a fictional situation requiring a particular response which involves the reader's making value judgments duplicating and thereby conveying our author's prejudice against advertisers; or, of course, some combination of the foregoing.

As Sacks has successfully shown, there can be great variation and subtlety in the means by which a value judgment can be conveyed in a novel; but these examples represent, in general, the different possibilities, and as such each should be carefully examined. Any of the above alternatives, when considered in terms of the entire work, may be seen to have either a necessary or an appropriate relation to the effect of the work seen as a whole. Thus, any of the above possibilities might be considered an artistic choice (leading to a particular value judgment) which either does or does not contribute to the ethical effect of the work. Considered individually, the presence of each possibility, which we have said allows our author to include a criticism of advertisers, may be seen as inadequate evidence from which to infer authorial belief, because each alternative, no matter how convincingly presented, may be undermined in the overall effect by the other aspects of the novel. Thus a story line that reveals the triumph of dishonest and corrupt advertisers may include overwhelming evidence, in the form of narrative commentary, that such is not really the case: a comic treatment would be the simplest example. Conversation or narrative commentary emphasizing one point may be contradicted by the story's outcome, or accounted for as statements of an unreliable narrator. Situations seemingly tempting the reader's negative response to advertising industry personalities may function, in the course of work, only to create misleading apprehensions or suspense, as is often the case in mystery novels.

We can thus see that an author's mere inclusion of what may be an ethical belief at one or more points in a novel does not exclude the possibility of this position being undermined and perhaps subsumed by a contrary belief. An author might make these same choices of inclusion in order to convey to his readers an opposite belief, that is, that advertisers are honest and responsible. This contention could be demonstrated with arguments identical to those just presented: plot, statement, and event each conveying the dishonesty of advertisers may all serve merely as foils for contrary notion presented more persuasively.

Hence we may conclude that a bare statement of belief, in whatever form, would not necessarily be an effective means for an author to persuade readers of a particular belief. Of course this statement of belief may not be undermined or contradicted by other elements, in which case it would seem to be significant evidence. But the appearance of only a single statement of belief cannot be regarded as conclusive evidence, and therefore such a statement is not necessarily relevant merely because it is present.

The discussion has hitherto considered only single ways in which an author might incorporate a deep-felt ethical belief in a novel. The question still remains, what if an author uses more ways than one to convey a unified belief: what if all choices help reflect consistent ethical viewpoint? What if individual statements are not undermined in the overall effect? Here, within a story line based upon instances of the dishonesty of advertisers, the reader confronts statements by "good" characters attacking corruption in the industry, statements by "bad" characters defending such corruption, further attacks by a trustworthy narrator, and dramatized incidents all of which lead the reader to an unavoidable conclusion about the dishonesty and ruthlessness of the advertising industry. Would not this be an effective way for our outraged author to communicate this belief? Or, stated more in terms of our interests, if we confronted such a work could we not then infer that this particular ethical belief can clearly be attributed to our historical author? The evidence for this attribution seems overwhelming, yet the following argument may still be made.

If we are confronted with such a work, a work that may be described in more general terms as one whose artistic end itself asserts a particular ethical belief in which the reader will share, cannot the conception of such a work, with such an integrated ethical effect, be accounted for as a single artistic, not ethical, choice by the author? Might not our author pose an artistic problem whose solution will involve the expression of a consistent ethical position against advertisers? Although a consistent viewpoint may derive from sincerity by an author, its source may also be his or her conscious impersonation of an unfelt or temporarily adopted position. The impersonation of character and imaginative identification with differing viewpoints are characteristics of the fiction writer; the question here raised is, must the impersonation end with character projection or may it not go on to create a fictional ethical effect for the entire work. The distrust of poets in Plato's *Republic* (I,III) is only the first expression of a fairly consistent tradition in which creative writers have been denounced as paid hacks and apologists for religious, political, and literary positions, or merely as Grub Street opportunists. The eighteenth century contains many such examples, with the confusion surrounding Defoe's *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* and the success of his *Journal of a Plague Year* revealing how effective such impersonation may be. These considerations support the argument against accepting even such seemingly irrefutable evidence as a consistently expressed and maintained ethical position within a work of fiction.

This point is discussed briefly in E.D. Hirsch's *Validity in Interpretation*. The distinction made here between author as selecting intelligence and historical personage is stated by Hirsch as follows:

The speaking subject is not, however, identical with the subjectivity of the author as an actual historical person; it corresponds, rather, to a very limited and special aspect of the author's total subjectivity; it is, so to speak, that "part" of the author which specifies or determines verbal meaning. 33

The conclusion he reaches is essentially the same as ours: "an author may adopt a stance which differs from his deepest attitudes in the same way that an interpreter must almost always adopt a stance different from his own," 34

Where then does this leave our inquiry? We have shown that a novelist who wishes to communicate an ethical belief might incorporate direct and indirect statements of this position within novel; or the novelist might conceive of the work in such a way that every aspect contributes to an assertion of the position. Yet our inquiry has revealed that the same work might have been written by another novelist whose personal beliefs did not include such position; hence we are not at liberty automatically to attribute to an author even those ethical beliefs which his or her work seems chiefly designed to promote. If, as we have been doing, we limit our discussion to necessary aspects of a work, considering only the elements that are a part of "the particular temporal synthesis of the elements of actions, character, and thought endowed

necessarily with a power to affect our opinions and emotions in a certain way," 35 we can proceed no further in our analysis. Necessary artistic choices and the reader's value judgments deriving from them do not inevitably derive from the author's personal belief. It now remains to be seen whether study of the remaining elements in a work, the appropriate and inappropriate or flawed elements, may yield a satisfactory basis for inferring authorial belief from artistic creation.

If we choose to pursue the more psychoanalytic approach that is suggested by the passage quoted from Croce's *Aesthetic*, we will still find ourselves dealing with the same questions. In this analysis a careful distinction is made between conscious and unconscious aspects of the author's mind. Croce, we recall, wrote, "We cannot will or not will our aesthetic vision [although] we can . . . will or not will to externalize it." 36 Previously he had written about the "practical innocence of art" 37 and "the impossibility of choice of content," 38 and from these and similar remarks it is apparent that he considered the conception of a work of art to come from the artist's unconscious, or "inspiration." 39 Thus Croce can write, "The true artist, in fact, finds himself big with his theme, he knows not how; he feels the moment of birth drawing near, but he cannot will it or not will it." 40 The author's muse, then, resides in his unconscious, and its conceptions are not to be equated with the author's personal affairs. "It is erroneous," Croce wrote, "when the attempt is made to deduce what a man has done and willed from what he has seen and expressed." 41

Our notion of controlling intelligence, to which we assigned responsibility for the conception and execution of the work, implies choices which are conscious; unconscious elements are not considered. We saw the difficulties of inferring the real author's beliefs from analyzing these conscious choices. Given the conception of the work, which we said might itself be a choice made for artistic reasons, we saw that no belief of any sort was needed to execute the conception to produce the finished work we analyzed. And although the choice might not be made for artistic reasons, we saw that without certainty this possibility cannot be final or conclusive. Although the real author might have held particular beliefs, they were not called into question in our analysis, and this analysis was our only access to the real author's consciousness.

On the other hand, we cannot speak of belief in the unconscious: belief implies consciousness, for it presupposes understanding, reason, evaluation, selection, and exclusion - all acts of the conscious mind. Therefore, since we cannot deduce belief from our analysis of the small part of an author's consciousness accessible to us through the artistic end, and since the author's unconscious, even if we hold it to be responsible for the original conception of the work's artistic end, is by definition irrelevant to the notion of belief, we are left to consider those parts of the real author's consciousness which were not part of the work's controlling intelligence. Our notion of the author as controlling intelligence extended no further than the artistic end; so any elements we can find in the work not directly contributing to the artistic end may be traced to these other parts of the author's consciousness. These other elements have previously been defined and discussed as appropriate and inappropriate elements. Hence we again are left with the question: will appropriate and inappropriate elements reveal the real author's ethical beliefs, or can these ethical beliefs be accounted for by other aspects of the author - aspects which do not involve his conscious ethical beliefs?

Could we be certain that our author sincerely intended to express particular ethical belief in a given work, and that he or she wrote all aspects of this work with this aim in mind, then those elements of the work we isolate as appropriate or inappropriate to the achieved success of the work (as compatible or incompatible with the artistic end) will contain expressions of our author's belief, and we will be able to infer belief from the evidence these elements offer. Our caution about making inferences from the realized artistic end of a work, or from the necessary elements that produce this end, and which, in our reasoning, might have been altered from the author's original intention to help realize the artistic unity of the work, does not extend to the appropriate and inappropriate elements. The appropriate parts may support the work's artistic end; but since they do not help define it, and if omitted would not change it, their choice remains relatively free from the limiting demands of artistic unity. The inappropriate parts do not contribute to the work's artistic end; hence they could not have been altered from the author's original intention for the sake of realizing this end. Therefore, along with the appropriate elements, they will remain as direct and unmodified expressions of our author's intention to express an ethical belief. Unfortunately, however, we rarely can be certain about authors' intentions, and we never should be dependent upon their promises: biographical information and direct authorial statement of the kind our purposes require are available infrequently, and, when they are, usually cannot be regarded as reliable. Authors' opinions about their own work have often proved the least reliable and least informative kind of commentary; such evidence can never be final. 42

Since we cannot rely on an author's statements of intention and belief, and must make our inference from the work only, we are left to inquire whether there is some way in which authorial belief must inevitably find expression in fiction whether or not the author consciously organized the work towards these ends. Sacks asked the question as follows: "What must the author of this novel have believed to have evaluated as he did such characters, acts, and thoughts in such a work?"⁴³ In selecting aspects which we find to have an appropriate relation to a work, author will have had free choice only within limits. Those episodes, conversations, and details that are appropriate will have to fit in with and reinforce the effect of

the necessary aspects, so although we have noted that they may be altered without fundamentally changing the work, there will be a limited area in which alterations may be made. The range of possibilities for this area will be based upon all the necessary elements of the work. If, therefore, our author who is exposing corruption in advertisers held particular and emphatic beliefs about the concentration of advertising industry power on Madison Avenue in New York City, and wished to incorporate them into a novel, this position could be integrated most easily and effectively in a work that deals with New York since the 1950's. In a novel about Texas or California, references to Madison Avenue would be harder to justify and might become inappropriate to the work's focus. Thus choices, we see, are available, but only after initial limits are defined.

We might then ask why our author has selected one appropriate detail rather than another that might have served the identical function, and whether this choice of inclusion can be said to express in any way our author's belief in what is selected. Do we, in speaking of an author's belief, mean a momentary conviction in the author which exists long enough to motivate a single choice? Or is belief a generalized and formulated notion which has affected and will continue to affect our author's ideas, actions, and choices as a personally meaningful concept? The first kind of belief may be influenced by accidental and external circumstances; the second notion presumably exists independently as a critical and permanent aspect of the author's thinking: there is continuity over time. If we accept our first statement of belief, then all elements in a work are meaningful, at least in indicating what must have been important temporarily while the choice of inclusion was being made: here, expression is assertion. Previously, however, we spoke of belief as presupposing understanding, reason, evaluation, selection, and exclusion to distinguish this process from unconscious motivations. Although a momentary conviction and a temporary belief may be produced, our quest for meaningful aspects of an author's thought requires a consideration of belief as a more stable and consistent notion in the conscious mind, meaningful not merely for the moment required by a single artistic choice, but significant then and during a sizable portion of the life of the author as well.

It must be admitted that one cannot arbitrarily determine what actions or period of time will indicate that a belief is significant for an author: more than a moment, less than a lifetime - the answer will be somewhere in between. But the effort must be made, because we are interested in the author not only as a controlling intelligence, but also as a complex individual,

Yet we should also observe that belief, considered as a general and continuing predisposition for an ethical position, may be said to exist only when expressed in individual choices, all of which contribute to our sense of the whole; from this point of view belief is composed of successive expressions of momentary conviction. Thus, our sense of belief as a continuing predilection becomes apparent only in retrospect as we observe many instances of similar choices. This means that all appropriate or inappropriate elements may express at least a momentary conviction of the author. But, if we wish to speak of belief as a meaningful and motivating element of an author's thought, we must seek to discover repetitions and patterns of assertion in the work that will reveal the continuity we are seeking in our author's consciousness.

Because the range from which appropriate choices may be made is limited by the artistic end of a work, it is not certain that an author always will be able to make selections expressing personal belief. To return to our example, could a personal belief about New York's Madison Avenue be made appropriate in a novel about romance in rural America? Scenes of dishonesty and corruption could be shown, and local advertising could be heavily featured, but this emphasis would not deal with Madison Avenue directly; in any case these focused episodes would reinforce the artistic end of the novel, whereas we have previously noted that we cannot, with certainty, infer personal belief from the artistic end. Our author may find opportunities to express a belief within appropriate choices, giving personal opinions to principal characters; yet the possibilities of the appropriate may not include the relevant areas of personal belief. All we can note here is whether a particular belief is always stressed whenever the possibilities of appropriate expression allow for it.

If we find sufficient examples of this disposition, we may wish to consider it evidence of a recurring thought-pattern in the author and we may want to identify this pattern with a continuously held and personally meaningful inclination of belief. The point at which examples of momentary conviction become "sufficient examples" indicating expressions of authorial belief obviously is a matter for the most sensitive judgment. The task, however, should not be insurmountable, especially when we consider that most perceptive readers automatically make this kind of judgment as they read, and, in fact, must have made such judgments before they can ever pronounce their opinions about the author of a work. Patterns of idea recurring far more often than accident would allow, and seemingly emphasized in the work for no reasons other than to call attention to themselves, often can be identified. When this happens we should be able, through our analysis of these patterns in the appropriate aspects of a novel, to infer authorial belief. These inferences will not be possible in every work; but in some the range of the appropriate may allow for inclusion and emphasis of personal belief. When an author has a limited area from which to choose particular details, it may be difficult to recognize patterns in the selections; yet if patterns do appear in such circumstances they should be significant.

When an author has a broad range from which to choose, as in selecting inappropriate details, any patterns that appear will be significant and revealing; here all choices would express temporary belief, so recurrence of such manifestations would suggest continuity of belief over time — one of our conditions in defining personal belief. Inclusion of the inappropriate in an otherwise coherent work will always indicate artistic weakness; but how it reveals authorial belief is more relevant to our study here.

The "mistakes" in a novel are mistakes from the ideal reader's viewpoint only: inappropriate elements will add nothing to the major effect of the work, and usually detract from this effect by calling attention to themselves as being misconceived and misplaced. From the author's viewpoint, though, they are not mistakes: had they been recognized as such when written, they would not have been left in the work. The author must have had some reason for each inclusion; that some of the selections are inappropriate in terms of the novel's working power means that non-artistic factors were responsible.

To say automatically that the non-artistic factors involved were all expressions of personal belief would probably be incorrect. In moments of carelessness or during lapses in self-criticism an artist may confidently include elements that have no justifiable relation to the rest of the work, often merely transposing one of the completely accidental incidents which has occurred in the environment. Chance conversations with strangers, vignettes taken from the media, random thought at breakfast time all may appear in a work without revealing anything significant about the author's state of mind. If, however, the inappropriate items in a work repeatedly evoke a consistent point of view or imply coherent patterns of belief, then there is strong reason to believe that non-accidental factors were operating in the author's mind. When an author continually weakens the artistic unity he or she should be strengthening in order to express a viewpoint, we feel confident that the biographical self is making itself known in fiction. These conscious choices, however inappropriate for the work and the reader, are most necessary for the author, with the satisfaction of expressing personal conviction replacing artistic certainty as justification for inclusion. Examples are numerous; but two of the most obvious are the frequent interpolated narratives in Dickens' *Pickwick Papers* and the descriptions and discussions of migrant farm laborers interjected into Aldous Huxley's *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan*.

The analysis of belief which Sacks has made suggests this conclusion, although I believe that his analysis requires a small modification that the above should have provided, He is, first of all, keenly aware of the category I have called appropriate, as may be seen in his analysis of one of the digressive episodes in *Tom Jones*, that in which Tom meets Broadbrim the Quaker:

If the episode were omitted, the whole novel would be the loser for its omission, but no expectations raised in previous episodes would be unresolved and no future episode would seem unmotivated because of its exclusion, Furthermore, while there is nothing in his comic scheme of things to prevent Fielding, had he wished, from making Broadbrim cross Tom's path again, there are no expectations raised that he may do so; as a result, his participation in Tom's affairs seems complete when the inn is lost sight of; we do not expect to come across the Quaker again. 44

Secondly, Sacks is sensitive to the temporary nature of belief expressed by particular elements in a novel; in speaking of the category of characters he calls "walking concepts," he points out that they "are as likely to embody partially formulated notions, prejudices, and tentative dislikes as they are to embody the result of even semisystematic thought. 45 Finally, the conclusions reached above could be implied from the statement by Sacks quoted above, on pages 19-20, with these basic qualifications: that no inappropriate "local value judgment will be exclusively dictated by the artistic end of the work," that because they are inappropriate no such judgments will help to accomplish that end, and that not only is there no pressure in these elements for insincere judgments, but there definitely can be indications of sincere judgments and hence a most valuable clue to expressions of authorial belief in artistic creation. The conclusions Sacks has drawn from his analysis remain uncertain for me. But I believe that by adding to his analysis the further distinction among necessary, appropriate, and inappropriate elements in a novel, measured in terms of the work's artistic end, it is possible to infer an author's personal beliefs from his fictional productions: not, as Sacks would have it, by inference from necessary value

judgments and eventually from the whole plot, 46 but rather from the merely appropriate and the definitely inappropriate parts of the work. 47

III

If my argument is valid, there are several rather surprising conclusions that naturally follow from it, besides the possibilities for biographical extrapolation from fiction. The first, and most depressing for a historian to consider, is that to understand the beliefs of a particular historical period thoroughly, nothing would be more helpful than to read all the minor work of the worst writers of the time. The less talented an author, the less successfully all the parts of the creation will have been integrated into a working artistic whole; thus the greater percentage of the work will consist of merely appropriate or even inappropriate and extraneous elements, many of them frequently revealing personal beliefs, however limited and boring these may be. This point was realized in Fielding's time by his cousin Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who wrote:

Perhaps you will say I should not take my ideas of the manners of the times from such trifling authors; but it is more truly to be found among them, than from any historian; as they write merely to get money, they always fall into the notions that are most acceptable to the present taste. 48

The second conclusion, which, if true, may be even more disturbing for the historian, is that if there could be a perfectly realized work of art, it would reveal no information at all about the personal beliefs of its author. Rather, he or she would then exist only as synthesizer and transmitter of cultural and literary tradition for the society. Perhaps the persistence of metaphors and descriptions of authors as divine or inspired and possessed by their muse is a reflection of such a suspicion or expression of such a hope.

The final conclusion, which offers grounds for speculation far beyond this discussion, is that no individual can disassemble or become free of personal limitations save through the production of a "perfect" work of art -- again, if there is such a thing. Perhaps, therefore, we should all join William Butler Yeats and ask to be gathered "into the artifice of eternity."

Of more immediate relevance within the context of this discussion is the potential information available to the reader and critic from careful analysis of what I have termed "appropriate" and "inappropriate" elements in a mimetic fiction. Not only do these terms introduce distinctions allowing more precise understanding of the contribution of individual parts within a work, but, as I have attempted to show, study of them allows as rigorous as possible an attribution of meaning to the parts of a work which don't fit the critic's best analysis, parts which have always created a problem for formalist critics. Norman Friedman, for instance, in considering the "intercalary chapters" in *Tom Jones*, *Moby-Dick*, and *War and Peace* concludes they "might be difficult to account for strictly in terms of the respective plots of these books," and finally decides, rather vaguely, that "what we have ... is more authorial wit, brilliance, and restlessness than can be confined within any given form." 49

I hope that raising the question of internal consistency in a mimetic work in the way I have done demonstrates greater potentials of formalist analysis than have been realized previously. When didactic concerns impose themselves upon a mimetic work their presence can be located, the concerns can be identified, and their importance in the work can be evaluated. If authorial belief does appear as structural anomaly, as I suggest, then literary critics can justifiably make biographical inferences from mimetic fiction, and casual readers can understand why they have always done so.

NOTES

1. Norman Friedman, *Form and Meaning in Fiction* (Athens, 1975), p.14.
2. Cleanth Brooks, Jr. and Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Poetry* (New York, 1938); W.K. Wimsatt and M.C. Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," *Sewanee Review* 54 (1946): 468-88.
3. *Ibid.*
4. My interest, formalist in the Chicago sense, parallels the psychological approach to these issues by the Geneva school.
5. Specifically, R.S. Crane, Wayne C. Booth, Sheldon Sacks, and Norman Friedman, who provides a convenient summary of and justification for their approach in *Form and Meaning in Fiction*.
6. R.S. Crane, "The Concept of Plot and the Plot of Tom Jones," *Critics and Criticism* (Chicago, 1952), pp. 616-647.
7. *Ibid.*, p.645.
8. *Ibid.*, p.622.
9. *Ibid.*, p.620.
10. *Ibid.*, p.621.
11. *Ibid.*, p.622.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, p.645.
14. *Ibid.*, p.623.
15. *Ibid.*, pp.620-621.
16. Crane alludes to this point on p.645, and in n.19.
17. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Flaubert and Madame Bovary: Outline of a New Method," *Madame Bovary, Backgrounds and Sources, Essays in Criticism*, ed. Paul de Man (New York, 1965), p.140.
18. Crane, "Tom Jones," p.645.
19. Sheldon Sacks, *Fiction and the Shape of Belief* (Berkeley, 1964), p.68.
20. *Ibid.*, p.254.
21. *Ibid.*, p.255.
22. The comment was made in a letter discussing an earlier version of this essay.
23. Benedetto Croce, *Aesthetic* (New York, 1962), p.51.
24. *Ibid.*, p.111.
25. Geoffrey Scott, *The Portrait of Zélide* (New York, 1959), p.152.
26. Sacks, *Fiction*, p.233.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*, p.250.
29. *Ibid.*, p.249.

30. Just before this Sacks has written: "Given a sincere moral intention on the part of an author,..." *Ibid.*, pp.249-250.
31. *Ibid.*, p.253.
32. *Ibid.*, p.255.
33. E.D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, 1967), pp.242-43.
34. *Ibid.*, p.243.
35. Crane, "Tom Jones," pp.620-621.
36. Croce, p.III.
37. *Ibid.*, p.51, marginal gloss.
38. *Ibid.*, p.52.
39. *Ibid.*, p.51.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*, p.53.
42. One thinks of Spenser's letter to Sir Walter Raleigh prefacing *The Faery Queene*, "expounding his whole intention in the course of this worke..." Although Spenser wrote, "I haue thought good as well for auoyding of gealous opinions and misconstructions, as also for your better light in reading thereof .. to discover vnto you the general intention and meaning," critics have been arguing about this meaning ever since. *The Works of Edmund Spenser*, ed. Edwin Greenlaw et al. (Baltimore, 1932), I, 167-70. Also see Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy."
43. Sacks, *Fiction*, p.232.
44. *Ibid.*, p.228.
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid.*, pp.252-262.
47. This kind of conclusion is occasionally suggested or assumed in the approach to discussions of literature and art organized for entirely different purposes. I include here two examples to be found in separate discussions of artists. The first is by Rudolf Zeitler, quoted by Mario Praz:

"I think on the contrary that one can discover in Hugo van der Goes's paintings certain signs by which we can conclude that he was psychically unbalanced. Not only that he was excited, for excitement transpires also from the paintings of El Greco, for instance, who, however, expresses himself uniformly throughout a whole picture, each one of his pictures holds together. But in van der Goes there are details which threaten to break up the unity. When a painter, who comes from the school of Rogier van der Weyden and has been taught to be precise in every detail, represents a single element such as hands many times with excessive precision and evidence and with exaggerated gestures (especially in the *Death of the Virgin* at Bruges), and when he applies himself with too much intensity to the study of physiognomies (e.g., the shepherds' faces in the Portinari triptych), I feel authorized to suppose that an extra-artistic disturbing factor lurks beneath."

Mario Praz, *The Neurotic in Literature*, Australian Humanities Research Council Occasional Paper No.9 (Cambridge, 1965), pp.1-2.

The second passage occurs in a discussion of "A Psychotic Sculptor of the Eighteenth Century" (Pranz Xaver Messerschmiat) by Earnest Kris:

"Among the considerable number of reflections which an observation of this kind is likely to stimulate, there is one that seems particularly worth pursuing: May we not assume that private or "secret" meanings are attached to all or many elements of the artist's work, and particularly to the formal elements for which he shows preference in one way or another? Favorable circumstances provide us in the case of Messerschmidt, psychotic individual, with data which throw some light on this problem, We are enabled, at least in a crude and approximate fashion, to distinguish those elements in the treatment of his medium which are determined by his individual psychological predispositions (in this case by his delusion) from others which are generally intelligible without recourse to such an individual frame of reference and could therefore be generally effective. Individual and "private" meanings of this kind are obviously an integral part also of the structure of the works of normal artists. In the ideal case these meanings cannot be separated from the whole of the structure; presumably all details and traits are socially meaningful. It seems reasonable to assume that the manner in which "the private meanings" are integrated into the structure of the artistic product is of decisive importance for the nature (and perhaps the "value") of the artistic creation. The capacity of the artist for using derivatives of unconscious processes in a socially and historically adequate way may well constitute a significant factor in his endowment."

Earnest Kris, *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art* (New York, 1962), p.148.

48. The Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, quoted by Q.D. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public* (London, 1932), p.82.

49. Friedman, *Form and Meaning in Fiction*, p.III.