

Lucky's

a novel

and an accompanying exegesis

Changing Voices: A Study of Narration and Arrangement

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as part of the collaborative doctoral degree and/or fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

This thesis consists of a novel and a dissertation. The novel, “Lucky’s”, spans a period of 60 years. “Lucky’s” ties together subjects including immigration, the restaurant business, gameshows, classical scholarship, and journalism. Set in Sydney, “Lucky’s” is a novel about what some people do with failure and disappointment. One of two focal characters is Lucky Mallios, whose story begins in 1945, when he is a cook at a US base. People say he looks like Benny Goodman, which stings a little, because Lucky is a failed musician. On furlough, as a remedy for his frustration, he pretends to be Goodman on a USO tour. During this fraud he encounters another scam artist, Ian Asquith, who offers Lucky a large sum of money without strings, or so it seems. With this gift Lucky begins a restaurant franchise. The novel moves to 2002. Asquith’s daughter, Emily, faces her own disappointments: her marriage ends and she loses her newspaper job. But Emily’s luck changes when a friend (with an ulterior motive) commissions her to write for *The New Yorker* about the tragic history of Lucky’s empire. Now broke, Lucky is determined to revive his franchise in Sydney, and to keep a terrible secret from Emily.

The theoretical component uses the conceptual framework of narratology to examine the functions of various narrators and variable focalisation within multi-narrator novels. Of primary interest is the relation between narrators in Jennifer Egan’s *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, and David Foster Wallace’s *Infinite Jest*. Both are centrifugal novels—texts in which narrators and forms of narration proliferate throughout the narrative. Once this inquiry specifies the narrators and narrating positions in these novels, the question remains as to which agency we ascribe the connections between chapters and the overall arrangement of plot. David Hayman and later scholars of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* offer an answer: “the arranger” is a source of intervention in that novel. This thesis argues for an extension of Hayman’s concept: in centrifugal novels, the arranger is the binding agent between the various narrators. The narrator tells the chapter; the arranger tells the centrifugal novel. Using the analytical tools developed in the theoretical component, my thesis also examines the variable focalisation in “Lucky’s”.