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Narratology 2.3: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative

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Email

This tutorial offers a toolbox of basic narratological concepts, approaches, and models, and shows how to put it to work in the analysis of fiction.

Changelog

Version 2.3: Bookmarked all graphics. Two 'multi-part mind maps' to complement WHO narrates WHAT HOW ([Fig.2](#)): WHO perceives WHAT from WHICH POV ([Fig.7](#)) and WHO characterizes WHOM HOW in WHAT CONTEXT ([Fig.15](#)). Some test questions in [7.5](#) (Characterization).

Version 2.2: More pointers to recent research, some new graphics (conceptual blending in *Room at the Top*, [3.2.26.2](#), Lanser's homodiegesis scale, [3.3.3](#), discourse time vs story time in Joyce's "A Painful Case", [5.2.2](#)), three additional case studies (multiple focalization in *The Solid Mandala* ([9.2](#)), Siegfried's last tale ([9.3](#)), and conversational story-telling in Wilder's *The Apartment* ([9.4](#)). The PDF now comes with a bookmark panel listing the document's main sections.

Tip: use Shift-Ctrl clicks to open links in a separate browser tab.

Contents

[1. Getting started](#)

[2. The narratological framework](#)

[2.1 Background and basics](#)

[2.2. Narrative genres](#)

[2.3. Narrative communication](#)

[2.4. Narrative levels](#)

[3. Narration, focalization, and narrative situations](#)

[3.1. Narration](#)

[3.2. Focalization \(point of view\)](#)

[3.3. Narrative situation](#)

[4. Action, story analysis, tellability](#)

[5. Tense, time, and narrative modes](#)

[5.1. Narrative tenses](#)

[5.2. Time analysis](#)

[5.3. Narrative modes](#)

[6. Setting and fictional space](#)

[7. Characters and characterization](#)

[8. Discourses: quoting speech, thought, and writing](#)

[9. Case studies](#)

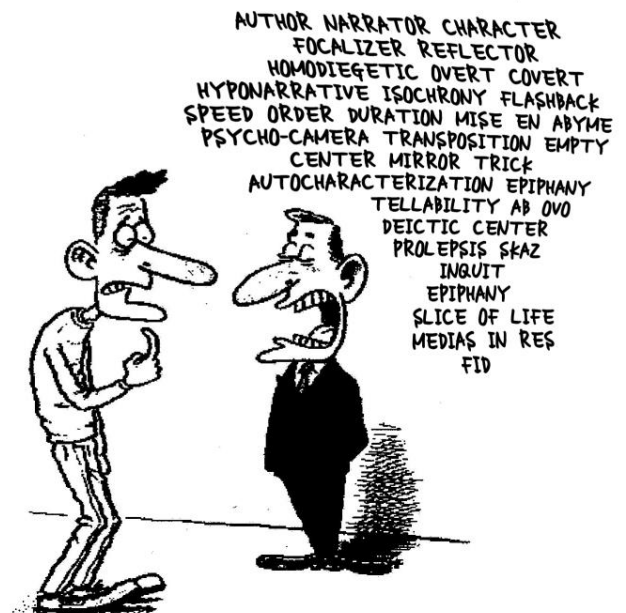
[9.1. Homodiegetic dialogue in Alan Sillitoe's "The Fishing Boat Picture"](#)

[9.2. Heterodiegetic multiple focalization in Patrick White's *The Solid Mandala*](#)

[9.3. Immersion with a vengeance: Siegfried's last tale](#)

[9.4. Conversational storytelling in Billy Wilder's *The Apartment*](#)

[References](#)



1. Getting started

This chapter builds a toolbox of basic narratological concepts and shows how to put it to work in the analysis of fiction. The definitions are based on a number of classical introductions – specifically, Genette (1980 [1972]; 1988 [1983], key terms: voice, homo- and heterodiegetic, focalization); Chatman (1978, key terms: overttness, coverttness), Lanser (1981; key terms: voice, human limitation, omniscience); Stanzel (1982/1984, key terms: narrative situation, authorial, figural, reflector), Bal (1985, key term: focalizer), Fludernik (1996, key term: natural narratology).

1.1. Normally, the literature department of a bookshop is subdivided into sections that reflect the traditional genres – Poetry, Drama, and Fiction. The texts that one finds in the Fiction department are novels and short stories (short stories are usually published in an anthology or a collection). In order to facilitate comparison, all passages quoted in the following are taken from the first chapters of novels. Thus, as a side effect, this section will also be a survey of **incipits** (beginnings). Hey, that's one technical term out of the way already.

The foregoing decision to focus on fictional narratives is motivated by purely practical reasons. Many theorists prefer to kick off by discussing more elementary forms, especially real-world 'natural' narratives such as anecdotes, gossip, jokes etc, and then work their way up to fiction. Here, acknowledging the natural foundation of all narratives, we will jump right into fiction. Novels are an extremely rich and varied medium: everything you can find in other forms of narratives you find in the novel; and most of what you find in the novel you can find in other narrative forms.

1.2. First, we need to define narrative itself. We do this by asking: What are the main ingredients of a narrative? What must a narrative have for it to count as narrative? For a simple answer let us observe that (i) all narratives have a story, and (ii) all stories are populated by characters. Stories can be told in the modes of spoken or written text, film, picture, performance, or combinations thereof. In verbally told stories, such as we are dealing with here, we also have a story-teller, a narrator. This Getting Started section will mainly focus on narrators and characters. Let me repeat our first simple definitions in the bullet format that will be used widely in this script:

- **narrative:** anything that tells or presents a story.
- **story:** a sequence of events involving characters.
- **narrator:** the teller of the narrative; the person who articulates ("speaks") the narrative text.

1.3. Let's go to the bookshelf, get out a few novels, open them on page 1, and see what we can do to get an analytical grip on them. Note that in a real-life face-to-face story-telling situation (conversational/natural narrative), the narrator is a flesh-and-blood person, somebody who sees us and whom we can see and hear. But what do we know of a textual narrator when all we have is lines of print? Can such a narrator have a voice, and if so, how can it become manifest in a text? Consider our first excerpt, from the beginning of J.D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* (first published 1951).

Chapter One

If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it. In the first place, that stuff bores me, and in the second place, my parents would have about two haemorrhages apiece if I told anything pretty personal about them. They are *nice* and all – I'm not saying that – but they are also touchy as hell. Besides, I'm not going to tell you my whole goddamn autobiography or anything. I'll just tell you about this madman stuff that happened to me around last Christmas before I got pretty run-down and had to come out here and take it easy.

Even though we cannot actually see or hear the narrator, the text contains a number of elements that project the narrator's voice. It is not very hard to read it out loud and give it an appropriate intonation, perhaps making it sound like the voice of a teenage boy. If you are familiar with the text you will know that the narrator, Holden Caulfield, is actually seventeen. Much the same happens when you read an email from a friend and her voice projects from some typical expressions – so that you can practically "hear her speak". A reader can hear a textual voice with his or her 'mind's ear', just as s/he will be

able to see the story's action with his or her mind's eye. We will say that all novels **project a narrative voice**, some more distinct, some less, some to a greater, some to a lesser degree. Because a text can project a narrative voice we will also refer to the text as a **narrative discourse**. One of the narratological key texts is Genette (1980 [1972]), a study entitled *Narrative Discourse*; another is Chatman (1978), *Story and Discourse*. So, we are evidently on the right track. We focus our attention on a novel's narrative voice by asking *Who speaks the narrative discourse?* Obviously, the more information we have on a narrator, the more concrete will be our sense of the quality and distinctiveness of his or her voice.

1.4. Which textual elements in particular project a narrative voice? Here is an (incomplete) list of the kinds of 'voice markers' that one might look out for:

- **Content matter:** obviously, there are naturally and culturally appropriate voices for sad and happy, comic and tragic subjects (though precise type of intonation never follows automatically). It is clear, however, that the phrasing "my parents would have about *two haemorrhages apiece* if I told anything pretty personal about them" (in the passage qtd above) uses a characteristically vocal rhetoric of exaggeration.
- **Subjective expressions:** expressions that indicate the narrator's education, his/her beliefs, convictions, interests, values, emotions, political and ideological orientation, attitude towards people, events, and things. In Salinger's text, we do not only get an idea about the narrator's age and background, his discourse is full of value judgments, terms of endearment, disparagement, and expletives. In the passage quoted he calls his parents "*nice* and all" (the word "nice" is rendered as *italicized emphasis*); he does not want to write a "goddamn autobiography", he alludes to "all that crap" and the "madman stuff" that happened to him, and so on.
- **Pragmatic signals:** expressions that signal the narrator's awareness of an audience and the degree of his/her orientation towards it. Verbal storytelling, like speaking in general, takes place in a communicative setting comprising a speaker and an audience (or, a bit more generally, in order to account for written communication as well, an **addresser** and an **addressee**).

1.5. In the Salinger passage, the narrator frequently addresses an addressee using the second person pronoun *you*. Although this is exactly what we expect in ordinary conversational storytelling, if you look (and listen) closely, you will notice that Holden treats his addressee more as an imagined entity than as somebody who is bodily present. For instance, he is careful to say "*if you really want to hear about it [...] you'll probably want to know*". This rather sounds as if he is addressing somebody whom he does not know very closely. Nor does the addressee actually say anything. At this point, we cannot tell whether Holden has a particular addressee in mind, or whether he addresses a more general, perhaps merely hypothetical audience. "You" could be either singular or plural. Some critics assume that Holden's addressee is a psychiatrist, and "here", the place where Holden can "take it easy" after all that "madman stuff", might well refer to a mental hospital. Frankly, I have forgotten whether the question is ever resolved in the novel. What is important at this point is that it can make a difference in principle whether the narrative is uttered as a private or a public communication, to a present or an absent audience.

1.6. Oddly enough, there is one specific audience that neither Holden Caulfield nor any other narrator in fiction can ever be concretely aware of, and that is us, the audience of real readers. We are reading Salinger's novel, not Holden's; as a matter of fact, Holden isn't writing a novel at all, he is telling a tale of personal experience (also called *PEN* for 'personal experience narrative'). The novel's text projects a narrative voice, but the text's narrator is temporally, spatially, and *ontologically* distant from us. Ontologically distant means he belongs to a different world, a fictional world. Fictional means invented, imaginary, not real. The narrator, his/her addressee, the characters in the story – all are fictional beings. Put slightly differently, Holden Caulfield is a 'paper being' (Barthes) invented by Salinger, the novel's author. And again, Salinger's novel is a novel *about* somebody telling a story of personal experience, while Holden's story *is* the story of that personal experience.

Just as it is a good idea not to confuse a narrator (Holden, a fictional being) with the author (Salinger, the real person who actually wrote the novel and earned lots of money on it), we must not confuse a fictional addressee (the text's "you") with ourselves, the real readers. Holden cannot possibly address

us because he does not know we exist. Conversely, we cannot talk to Holden (unless we do it in our imagination) because we know he does *not* exist. By contrast, the relationship between us and real-life authors is real enough. We can write them a letter; we can ask them to sign our copy (supposing they are still alive). Even when they are dead, readers who appreciate their work will talk about them and ensure their lasting reputation. There are no such points of contact with Holden. The closest analogy to a real-life scenario is when we read a message which was not intended for our eyes, or when we overhear a conversation whose participants are unaware of the fact that we are (illicitly) listening in. Thus, in a sense, novels offer us a socially acceptable way of eavesdropping.

1.7. What we have just established is the standard structure of fictional narrative communication. Participants and levels are usually shown in a 'Chinese boxes' model. Basically, communicative contact is possible between (1) author and reader on the level of nonfictional communication, (2) narrator and audience or addressee(s) on the level of fictional communication or 'mediation', and (3) characters on the level of action. The first level is an 'extratextual level'; levels two and three are 'intratextual'.

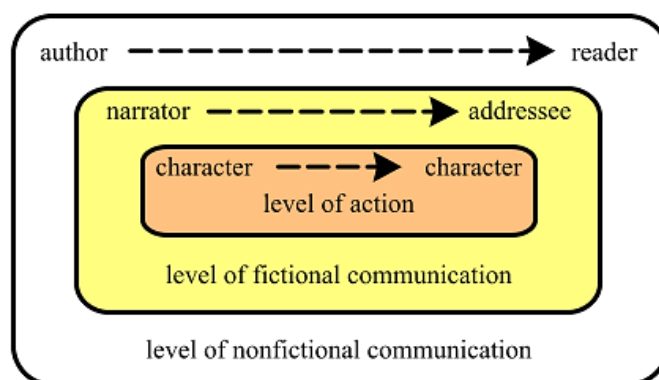


Fig. 1. Levels of narrative communication.

1.8. The beginning of Salinger's novel projects quite a distinctive narrative voice. Other novels project other kinds of voices, and sometimes it is quite difficult to pinpoint their exact quality. What, for instance, do you make of the following incipit to James Gould Cozzens's *A Cure of Flesh* (first published 1933)?

ONE

THE snowstorm, which began at dawn on Tuesday, February 17th, and did not stop when darkness came, extended all over New England. It covered the state of Connecticut with more than a foot of snow. As early as noon, Tuesday, United States Highway No. 6W, passing through New Winton, had become practically impassable. Wednesday morning the snow-ploughs were out. Thursday was warmer. The thin coat of snow left by the big scrapers melted off. Thursday night the wind went around west while the surface dried. Friday, under clear, intensely cold skies, US6W's three lane concrete was clear again from Long Island Sound to the Massachusetts line.

Contrast this narrative discourse to the narrative discourse that we heard in Salinger's text. The Salinger passage gave us plenty of information about the pragmatic parameters of the narrative situation: there was an addressee (a "you") who was spoken to, and we had rich indications of the narrator's language and emotional constitution. None of this is to be found in the present passage. Knowing the rest of the novel, I can tell you that we will *never* learn the narrator's name, **he**¹ will never use the first-person pronoun (that is, will never refer to himself), and he will never directly speak to his addressee. Yet we can recognize well enough that this is a narrator who begins his narrative with an exposition of the setting of the story. To do that he picks out a series of points both in time and space, spanning a timeframe of Tuesday to Friday, ie four days, and spacewise touching on

¹ Lanser's rule (3.1.3.) will be observed throughout – if the narrator is nameless, I will use a pronoun that is appropriate for the real-life author. Cozzens is a male author; hence I refer to the covert narrator in the passage as "he".

New England, Long Island Sound and the Massachusetts line, all in a matter of seven lines. But radical as the summary is, we can easily connect the spatial and temporal dots to get a good initial picture. Note, by the way, the camera-like 'shots' that pick out graphic detail such as the snowstorm, the three-lane highway, and the snow ploughs. Later in this script we will assume that the narrator has eyes (and a virtual camera) in addition to a voice. Indeed, the film-like incipit may offer a clue to the narrator's voice – think of an actual film using a narrator's voiceover, and consider what this voice might sound like.

It is difficult to imagine somebody speaking or writing without using any style at all (we will come to such a case, however). In ordinary circumstances, one is required to speak 'co-operatively' (as pragmaticists put it), that is to say, one selects expressions that are suitable to the purpose in hand, and suitable expressions rely on assumptions about possible hearers and readers, their informative needs, intellectual capabilities, interests, etc. Normally, we do that intuitively and habitually, or at any rate ought to. Approaching the matter from this angle, one can see that Cozzens's narrator presents a sequence of concise statements which very adequately serve a reader's needs. Reading the passage out loud we'd probably give it a *neutral* and *matter-of-fact* voice. A matter-of-fact voice is definitely more than no voice. At the same time, compared to Holden's voice, this narrator's voice is more neutral, less emotional, slightly less distinctive.

1.9. Having established the foregoing difference in distinctiveness, the audibility of a narrative voice is best understood as being a matter of degrees. Following Chatman (1978), narrative theorists often use the oppositional terms **overt** and **covert** to characterize a narrative voice, adding whichever qualification or gradation is needed. Narrators can be more or less overt and more or less covert. Both Holden Caulfield and Cozzens' anonymous narrator are overt narrators, but Holden is the more overt (or, if you want, less covert) one of the two.

Fully or near covert narrators, now, must have a largely indistinctive or indeterminable voice. Although we have yet to meet fully covert narration as a phenomenon, let us briefly speculate on how it might come about at all. Think of covertness as the opposite of overtness. Then, by simply inverting our definition of overtness, we can say that a covert narrator must be an inconspicuous and indistinctive narrator – a narrator who fades into the background, one who camouflages him- or herself, who goes into hiding some other way. What hiding strategies are there? Obviously, one can try not to draw attention to oneself – hence a narrator who wishes to stay covert will avoid talking about him- or herself, will also avoid a loud or striking voice, and will also avoid any of the pragmatic or expressivity markers mentioned in [1.4](#). One can also hide behind *somebody* – keep this in mind; it will get us somewhere.

1.10. So far we have been talking about a narrator's *voice* as projecting from textual expressions signaling emotion, subjectivity, pragmatics, rhetoric, purpose etc. Let us now turn to the question of the narrator's *relationship* to, or involvement in, his or her story. There are two basic options: (i) the narrator tells a story about himself or herself (a **first-person narrative**, also called **story of personal experience**), or (ii) the narrator tells a story about other people (a **third-person narrative**). Very frequently, however, in modern narratological analysis you will note that these terms are substituted by two terms invented by Genette (1980 [1972]), namely, **homodiegetic narrative** (= roughly, first-person narrative) and **heterodiegetic narrative** (= third-person narrative). If it helps, *diegetic* means 'pertaining to narrating'; *homo* means 'of the same nature', and *hetero* means 'of a different nature'. The detailed definitions are as follows:

- In a **homodiegetic narrative** the (homodiegetic) narrator tells a story of personal experience. In other words, he or she is also one of story's acting characters. A homodiegetic narrator therefore splits up into a **narrating-I** (telling the story on the level of fictional communication) and an **experiencing-I** (on the level of action).
- In a **heterodiegetic narrative**, the story is told by a (heterodiegetic) narrator who is *not* present as a character in the story. A heterodiegetic narrator can have a narrating-I (using the first person on the level of fictional communication) but s/he cannot have an experiencing-I.

In other words (please verify), a homodiegetic narrative *must have* an experiencing-I, whereas a heterodiegetic narrative *must not have* an experiencing-I.

1.11. On the 'pronoun problem' in narrative texts – if you really want to hear about it, as Holden would say, and if you do not feel free to jump forward to the next. Okay then, the unfortunate fact is, pronouns can be deceptive. Usually, Genette's two types correlate with a text's use of first-person and third-person pronouns – *I, me, mine, we, us, our*, etc, as opposed to *he, she, him, her, they, their*, etc. In fact, it is tempting to say that:

- a text is homodiegetic if among its story-related action sentences there are *some* that contain first-person pronouns (*I did this; I saw this; this was what happened to me*) indicating a narrator's experiencing-I;
- a text is heterodiegetic if *all* of its story-related action sentences are third-person sentences (*She did this, this was what happened to him*).

However, as you notice, all now hinges on "some" and "all" in these definitions, and on a proper understanding of the term 'action sentence'. Action sentences present events involving one or more characters. For instance, "He jumped from the bridge" (= willful action), and "She fell from the bridge" (= involuntary action), and "I said, 'Hello'" (= speech act) are action sentences. By contrast, "Here comes the sad part of our story", and "It was a dark and stormy night" (ie, a comment and a description, respectively) are *not* action sentences.

A novel is a type of text that makes use of many kinds of sentences, and not all of them are action sentences – for instance, descriptions, quotations, comments, etc, are not. Indeed, as we have seen, many novels begin with an exposition-oriented prologue (a 'block exposition'), introducing characters and setting, often via descriptive statements. While such prologues tell us a lot about the quality of the narrative voice (cp the Salinger and the Cozzens passages above), they do not necessarily tell us whether the narrative is going to be homodiegetic or heterodiegetic. It is only when the story itself gets going, employing proper action sentences as defined above, that we get into a position to judge whether the narrator is present or absent as an acting character (ie, has or hasn't an experiencing-I). Actually, sometimes we have to wait quite a while until we get the full picture of the narrator's relationship to his or her story. In most novels, however, granting some exceptions, a narrator's relation to the story will become reasonably clear very quickly.

1.12. We have, of course, already discussed a homodiegetic passage, namely Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*. If you recall, this is a story about "what *happened to me*", which already is a neat formula definition of first-person storytelling. For another straightforward case, let us consider the beginning of Margaret Drabble's *The Millstone* (published 1965).

My career has always been marked by a strange mixture of confidence and cowardice: almost, one might say, made by it. Take for instance, the first time I tried spending a night with a man in a hotel. I was nineteen at the time, an age appropriate for such adventures, and needless to say I was not married. I am still not married, a fact of some significance, but more of that later. The name of the boy, if I remember rightly, was Hamish. I do remember rightly. I really must try not to be deprecating. Confidence, not cowardice, is the part of myself which I admire, after all.

Hamish and I had just come down from Cambridge at the end of the Christmas term: we had conceived our plan well in advance.

For analysis, I will simply repeat the text, inserting some analytical annotations:

My career [*aha, this looks like a story of personal experience, perhaps an autobiography*] has always been marked by a strange mixture of confidence and cowardice: almost, one might say, made by it [*evidently a topic sentence presumably spoken in the tone of reflective comment*]. Take for instance [=You take ... *the narrator acknowledges an addressee and provides the first illustration to the foregoing generalization*], the first time I tried spending a night with a man [*the narrator is likely to be female, so this is probably a female voice*] in a hotel. I was nineteen at the time [*this is the age of the experiencing-I, the present narrating-I is clearly older, presumably wiser, more advanced on her "career"*], an age appropriate for such adventures, and needless to say I was not married. I am still not married [*further self-characterization of the narrating-I*], a fact of some significance [*narrator giving a pointer to what's going to be "significant"*], but more of that later. The name of the boy, if I remember rightly [*note, narrator's main activity is remembering*], was Hamish. I do remember rightly [*self-conscious correction*]. I really must try not to be deprecating [*evaluation and allusion*]

to tone of voice]. Confidence, not cowardice, is the part of myself which I admire, after all. Hamish and I had just come down from Cambridge at the end of the Christmas term: we had conceived our plan well in advance ... [*this is still background action and therefore presented in the past perfect but the narrator will soon shift into ordinary past-tense action presentation*].

1.13. According to Genette, Drabble's novel is a homodiegetic narrative on the strength of the single 'relation' criterion that the narrator is present as a character in her story. In order to assess the *typical implications* of such a scenario, and put them to work in an interpretation, we will also make use of Stanzel's theory of **typical narrative situations**. For this line of inquiry, it is important to remind oneself, first of all, that a homodiegetic narrator always tells a story of personal experience, whereas a heterodiegetic narrator tells a story about other people's experiences. According to Stanzel, Drabble's text is a typical first-person narrative (in the context of narrative situations, we will prefer this term over homodiegetic narrative) because the narrator tells an autobiographical story about a set of past experiences – experiences that evidently shaped and changed her life and made her into what she is today. Like other typical first-person narrators, she is subject to **ordinary human limitations** (Lanser): she is restricted to a personal and subjective point of view; she has no direct access to (or authority on) events she did not witness in person; she can't be in two places at the same time (this is sometimes called the *law against bilocation*), and she has no way of knowing for certain what went on in the minds of other characters (in philosophy, this restriction is called the "Other Minds" problem). It is obvious that a narrator's handling of these limitations, and a text's relative closeness to, or distance from, such typicality conditions ('default conditions') can tell us a lot about the 'slant' or attitude of the narrative voice as well as the motives for telling the story.

1.14. Let us now turn to an example of heterodiegetic narration and consider the beginning of George Eliot's *Adam Bede* (first published 1859). This time, I am directly adding various annotations.

CHAPTER I THE WORKSHOP

With a single drop of ink for a mirror, the Egyptian sorcerer undertakes to reveal to any chance comer far-reaching visions of the past. This is what I undertake to do for you, reader. [*Self-reference of an overt narrator, and acknowledgment of a reader-addressee, also a 'metanarrative comment', ie a reflection on the nature of storytelling itself.*] With this drop of ink at the end of my pen I will show you the roomy workshop of Mr. Jonathan Burge, carpenter and builder in the village of Hayslope, as it appeared on the eighteenth of June, in the year of our Lord 1799. [*Deliberate, addressee-conscious exposition of time and place of action (already alluded to in chapter subheading).*]

The afternoon sun was warm on the five workmen there, busy upon doors and window-frames and wainscoting. A scent of pine-wood from a tent-like pile of planks outside the open door mingled itself with the scent of the elder-bushes which were spreading their summer snow close to the open window opposite [...]. [A] rough grey shepherd-dog [...] was lying with his nose between his forepaws, occasionally wrinkling his brows to cast a glance at the tallest of the five workmen, who was carving a shield in the centre of a wooden mantelpiece. It was to this workman that the strong baritone belonged which was heard above the sound of plane and hammer [...].

Conceivably, you may be puzzled why this has been classified as a heterodiegetic text. After all, aren't there *three* first-person pronouns (two "I"s, one "my") in the first paragraph? True enough, but nothing follows from it because *any* narrator can refer to him- or herself using the first-person pronoun. Looking at first-person pronouns and overlooking the context in which they occur is just like walking into a trap – the notorious "first-person pronoun trap". Re-check the definitions above to ensure that the only thing that is relevant for determining whether a text is homodiegetic or heterodiegetic is the *relation* of the narrator to his or her story – if they are present in the action, they are homodiegetic, if they are absent from it they are heterodiegetic. The first paragraph of Eliot's novel gives us the background setting of the story, uttered by a highly overt narrator. In this respect the three first-person pronouns are relevant, but they project a narratorial identity and a vocal quality, but not a relation. We are listening to a narrating-I, an overt narrator, but whether this is going to be a story of personal experience or not is still an open question. At the same time one can already sense that the exposition is presented by someone who is above and beyond all the people and things in the story. This is not really a remembering voice as in the Drabble excerpt. Apparently the narrator knows all the facts, yet nobody is going to ask her how she came by her knowledge. When the story gets

going in the second paragraph, all characters in it – so far, at any rate – are third-person characters. Any first-person *identifying an acting or speaking character in the action itself* would be significant indeed because it would signal an experiencing-I. But nothing like that happens. As a matter of fact, we'd all be a bit surprised, I suppose, if the second paragraph began with the words "The afternoon sun was warm on the five workmen there, *and I was one of them*".

1.15. Remember, a heterodiegetic narrator is somebody who is not, and never was, a character in the world of the story. The fact that a heterodiegetic narrator has a position outside the world of the story makes it easy for us to accept what we would never accept in real life – that somebody should have unlimited knowledge and authority. Heterodiegetic narrators typically assume the power of omniscience – knowing everything – as if this were the most natural thing in the world. When inclined to speak overtly, heterodiegetic narrators can speak directly to their addressees, and they can liberally comment on action, characters, and storytelling itself (as happens in the Eliot excerpt above). *Homodiegetic* narrators can do that too, of course, but owing to their human limitations, especially their lack of omniscience, their limited knowledge, and their always selective memory, style and content tend to be quite different. In practice, following Stanzel, we will call a heterodiegetic narrative with a highly overt narrator (as in Eliot's text) an **authorial narrative situation**, or just plain **authorial narration**. Of course, an authorial narrator's comprehensive and authoritative world-view is particularly suited to reveal the moral strengths and weaknesses of the characters. Typical authorial texts are the 19C novels of 'social realism' by authors such as George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens, and Thomas Hardy.

1.16. As pointed out above, Genette's categorical distinctions (homo- and heterodiegetic), which are based on a clear-cut 'relation' condition (narrator present or absent in the story), can be fruitfully complemented by considering the typicality conditions, expectations, and implications that come with Stanzel's narrative situations (first-person and authorial narration, so far). Things get a bit more complicated now because Stanzel's model allows yet another typical narrative situation. Because it is a difficult type, and comes with traps of its own, I will approach it with due caution. But you can probably guess what is coming.

Recall that in the preceding paragraph *authorial* narration was tied to a heterodiegetic and overt, ie, distinctively voiced narrator. We are now going to refocus our attention on the question of overtness and covertness. All set? Brace yourself, then, and consider this beginning of Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (first published 1943).

CHAPTER ONE

He lay flat on the brown, pine-needled floor of the forest, his chin on his folded arms, and high overhead the wind blew in the tops of the pine trees. The mountainside sloped gently where he lay; but below it was steep and he could see the dark of the oiled road winding through the pass. There was a stream alongside the road and far down the pass he saw a mill beside the stream and the falling water of the dam, white in the summer sunlight.

"Is that the mill?" he asked.

"Yes."²

1.17. In the Hemingway passage, the narrator's voice is much harder to determine than in all of the excerpts quoted so far, including the Cozzens passage. There are three reasons for this:

1. We do not get any of the expressivity markers that normally project a distinctive voice – no first-person self-reference, no value judgments, no italicized emphasis, no indications of a moral agenda, point of interest or purpose, nothing of the sort.

² On a subsequent reading of this script, you might consider the following experiment: suppose the last sentence were "*Yes,*" *I said*. What would be the consequences (a) with respect to narrative type according to Genette and (b) with respect to narrative situation according to Stanzel? Answer: (a) the text would change from heterodiegetic to homodiegetic because of the appearance of an experiencing-I, (b) the text would change from figural narrative situation to a first-person narrative situation. However, in both cases it would be difficult to process it as a coherent incipit.

2. The narrator is not a co-operative storyteller. He does not acknowledge any actual or hypothetical addressee(s); quite the contrary, he conspicuously flouts the maxim of addressee-oriented (reader-friendly) exposition normally expected at the beginning of a novel. After all, setting and characters have to be introduced somehow. Thus far into the text, however, we don't know where we are, we don't know who the characters are, how many there are, or what they are doing there. And, incidentally, if you think they are talking in English (as you are bound to do, what choice have you got?) you are dead wrong. The only thing one knows at this point is that the scene opens in some exterior natural setting, a hilly terrain, evidently; it is daytime, and there are at least two characters talking to each other.
3. The main point, however, is that the narrator seems to withdraw or hide behind the main character whom we encounter even in the first word of the text. Minutely, from moment to moment, the text seems to follow this character's perceptual processes – the things he sees, feels, and hears (note how cleverly this is suggested by terms such as the "pine-needled floor", the "gently sloping" ground, the wind blowing "overhead"). It won't take long and the text will also render this character's thoughts, plans, and memories, in short, the whole subjective landscape of his consciousness. Then we will also – but always incidentally, as it were – learn more about the story's background – that it is set in the Spanish civil war, that the two characters are engaged in reconnoitering enemy territory, etc. Note how easy it would have been for a co-operative narrator to indicate that the characters are communicating in Spanish – a simple "Sí" instead of a "Yes" would have been an excellent pointer, for instance. But no, he does not do it. And yet you can be dead certain that Hemingway knows exactly what he is doing by using such a narrator. Certainly no critic would be silly enough to say this is a bad story incipit. In fact, it was not until the twentieth century that novelists realized the potential of the figural narrative situation.

How does the passage work? Clearly, it is both heterodiegetic (narrator not present as a character in the story) and covert (indistinctive, inconspicuous, neutral narrator's voice). In addition, one of the story's characters – the central character, in fact – acts as a 'central consciousness' (as Henry James fittingly put it). The reading experience created by such a text is quite remarkable. (1) Because the narrator is so covert, the text conveys a sense of 'directness' and 'immediacy' – which is quite logical, if one reflects on the meanings of 'direct' and 'immediate' (ie, without intercession of a middleman). (2) Because the text is so strictly aligned with one central character's spatio-temporal co-ordinates of perception, the reader is *drawn* into the story and invited to co-experience what it is like to be a participant – this particular participant – in the unfolding events.

1.18. Here are the technical terms that further describe the phenomena discussed above. The technique of presenting something from the point of view of a story-internal character is called **internal focalization**. The character through whose eyes the action is presented is called an **internal focalizer** (some theorists prefer the term **reflector**, see [3.2](#) for more detailed definitions). A focalizer is somebody who focuses his/her attention and perception on something. Note that the Hemingway passage has two occurrences of the verb *see*, and more seeing and other perception is implied by various other expressions and constructions ('perception indicators'). Even though there are two characters in the action, the subject of the various acts of perception is only one of the two. Finally, the reader's imaginative adoption of a reflector's point of view is usually called 'immersion' or (a bit quaintly) 'transposition to the phantasm' (Bühler 1990 [1934]).

Just as we asked *Who speaks?* in order to identify a text's narrative voice, we can now use the question *Who sees?* as a shorthand formula to alert us to the possible presence of an internal focalizer or reflector, the 'prism' (as some narratologists say) through which we witness the story's events. And, again following Stanzel, we will call the specific configuration of a heterodiegetic-covert narrative plus a prominent internal focalization a **figural narrative**. The Hemingway passage quoted above is a figural passage, and the narrative situation underlying it is a **figural narrative situation**. The Cozzens passage quoted in [1.8](#) is not a figural passage because there is no reflector figure and no internal focalization in it. If you need a mnemonic, link reflector *figure* to *figural* narration. No reflector figure, no figural narration. For good measure, here is the more general definition:

- **figural narrative** A narrative which presents the story's events as seen through the eyes of (or: from the point of view of) a third-person internal focalizer. The narrator of a figural narrative is a covert heterodiegetic narrator presenting an internal focalizer's consciousness, especially his/her perceptions and thoughts. Because the narrator's discourse will preferably

mimic the focalizer's perceptions and conceptualizations the narrator's own voice quality will remain largely indistinct. One of the main effects of internal focalization is to attract attention to the mind of the reflector-character and away from the narrator and the process of narratorial mediation.

The full extent of figural techniques was first explored in the novels and short stories of 20C authors such as Henry James, Franz Kafka, Dorothy Richardson, Katherine Mansfield, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and many others. Subduing the 19C overt narrator's intrusive presence, these authors opened the door to an unmediated access to a character's mind, and through this prism or filter, to the story's events. Logically enough, the most radical reduction of narrative voice comes when the text presents nothing but a direct quotation of a reflector's thoughts – as in the form of an 'interior monologue' (8.9). Incidentally, the filmic device of the 'POV shot' (= point-of-view shot) is the direct equivalent of the technique of internal focalization described here. (Jump to [F4.2.4](#) for a graphic illustration.)

1.19. To recapitulate: in addition to Genette's two basic types of narratives (homodiegetic and heterodiegetic) our toolbox now also stocks Stanzel's three typical narrative situations: first-person, authorial (heterodiegetic-overt) and figural (heterodiegetic-covert plus internal focalization).

You will be relieved to learn that most prose narratives establish their narrative situation quickly, sometimes (as we have seen) in the very first sentence, and then stick to it throughout the whole text. Be forewarned, however, that there are (i) texts that switch narrative situation from one chapter to the next (eg, Joyce, *Ulysses*; Dickens, *Bleak House*), (ii) texts that switch narrative situations from one passage to another, and (iii) texts that present a mix or blend of (usually) an authorial and a figural narrative situation.

1.20. Suppose somebody asked you whether narrative theory has anything of interest to offer on "How to write a novel". What you could say – after duly pointing out that narrative theory is more concerned with how narrative texts work than with how to write them – is this. The history of the novel shows us that there are three tried and tested recipes. Recipe no. 1 gives you what narratologists call a homodiegetic narrative: You select one of the story's characters and let her/him tell it as a tale of personal experience. Recipe no. 2 gives you an authorial narrative: You use an overt and heterodiegetic narrator who does not belong to the cast of characters, invest him/her with far-ranging knowledge privileges (up to omniscience), and let him/her tell a story of (for instance) social realism. Finally, recipe no. 3 creates a figural narrative: You use an entirely covert narrator and present the story as if seen through the eyes of an internal focalizer. (See Abbiati 2012 for more detailed creative writing tips grounded on precisely these narratological basics.)

1.21. Applying the technical terms defined above, see what you make of the following passage from *Crome Yellow* by Aldous Huxley (first published 1921):

Chapter One

Along this particular stretch of line no express had ever passed. All the trains – the few that there were – stopped at all the stations. Denis knew the names of those stations by heart. Bole, Tritton, Spavin Delawarr, Knipswich for Timpany, West Bowlby, and, finally, Camlet-on-the-Water. Camlet was where he always got out, leaving the train to creep indolently onward, goodness only knew whither, into the green heart of England.

They were snorting out of West Bowlby now. It was the next station, thank Heaven.

Can you say whether this a homodiegetic or a heterodiegetic narrative? Personally, I can't see any first-person pronoun referring to somebody involved in the action. This isn't what a homodiegetic narrator *remembers*, is it? The only story-internal character present at all is somebody called Denis, and he is referred to by the third person singular pronoun. Is it likely that a first-person character – an experiencing-I – would suddenly join him out of the blue? I guess not; most likely this is a heterodiegetic narrative. (And so it is.)

1.22. But now allow me to pose some challenging questions. First, what can one say about the quality of the narrative voice? Before you answer, compare this current excerpt to the three other heterodiegetic incipits that we discussed earlier – Cozzens (1.8), Eliot (1.14), Hemingway (1.16).

Which of these is stylistically closest to the current Huxley incipit? Let me tentatively pursue, just for fun, two outrageously false tracks in order to show where one might go wrong.

Well then, in the first two sentences, at least, we seem to be getting some background information on setting and railway lines, right? Is this then like what we had in the Cozzens excerpt, an addressee-conscious narratorial exposition in a neutral tone of voice? – I do hope you say no because it's plain wrong. For, unlike the Cozzens incipit, this one has plenty of emotional and subjective expressions in it – expressions like "goodness only knew", "the green heart of England", "thank Heaven" – and since these are strong voice markers they suggest a *highly overt* rather than a *neutrally overt* voice. So, can I tempt you to say this is heterodiegetic-overt narration just like in the Eliot incipit? In other words, is the voice we are hearing the voice of the narrator? – No, of course not, don't let me trap you again. You will have noted, I am reasonably certain, that the third sentence begins with the words "Denis knew", and this is a powerful clue. Once we recognize that Denis could be the text's reflector or internal focalizer – the character through whose eyes we see the action – then the text is rather close to the *figural* style of the Hemingway excerpt (1.12). And that is what it is, a figural narrative situation just like we had in the Hemingway incipit. Let us try to prove our point, if possible beyond any reasonable doubt.

1.23. Although this is not really a difficult text, the questions raised by it are difficult to answer on a theoretical level. Any strategy that helps explain how readers process such texts is therefore most welcome.

One such strategy is the 'FID test' originally proposed by Michael Toolan (2001: 132). FID is a common abbreviation for **free indirect discourse** – a term which I am sure you have come across hundreds of times already in your studies (we'll get to it later, section 8). Put simply, FID is a technique for rendering a character's speech or thought. FID does this *indirectly* in the sense that it transposes pronouns and tenses into the pronoun/tense system of the narrative's ordinary narrative sentences (for instance, it may shift a first person into a third person, and the present tense into the past). But there are no quotation marks, and often any identification of speaker, thinker, or perceiver (*he said/thought/noticed* etc) is also dropped. As a consequence, there is often no formal difference between FID (reporting a character's speech or thought) and a plain narratorial statement. Now, it may not be very important whether a sentence is the one thing or the other – for instance, nothing may hinge on whether *It was twelve o'clock; he had plenty of time to catch the plane* is just the rendering of a character's thought or a piece of information given by the narrator, or even both. Then again, it may make all the difference: suppose the clock is slow (a fact not known by the character), the character therefore misses his plane, the plane crashes ... you see what I mean.

In light of this, consider "It was the next station, thank Heaven". If we take that to be a representation of a thought going through Denis's head, then we construe the sentence as FID. Read as a narratorial statement, the sentence might express the narrator's relief – "thank heaven" – to have finally come to, I don't know, this part of the exposition perhaps. Of course, this second reading is an entirely far-fetched one. In order to test whether a sentence is FID or a narratorial statement, Toolan suggests to construct two unambiguous and fully explicit versions – one which explicitly binds the sentence to the point of view of the character, and another which explicitly binds it to the point of view of the narrator. The next step is to assess, on the strength of content and context, which version has the better "fit". Contrast these two versions, then:

I, the narrator, can tell you, the reader, that it was the next station, thank Heaven.

It was the next station, thank Heaven, Denis thought.

As might be expected, given the context of the sentence and the general content of the passage, the second construction is much more plausible than the first one. Hence we conclude that the original sentence is indeed a FID representation of Denis's thought. We can even 'backshift' it to recover its putative original form – "It is the next station, thank Heaven" is what Denis very likely thinks, and we see at once that it fits well. We could say that the FID test registers positively on the sentence in question. The upshot of this is that we can now claim that the emotional tone projected from "thank Heaven" is not the narrator's but Denis's.

1.24. Let us now extend the FID test and turn it into an 'IF test' (this is *not* a common term), a test of internal focalization. Internal focalization is mainly concerned with what is present or goes on in a character's consciousness – thoughts as well as perceptions, feelings, emotions, memories. For instance, that list of oddly named train stations – is that some kind of information that the narrator provides for our benefit, or is it something that Denis rehearses in his mind? Again we should use context and content in order to decide this question. We note, then, that the sentence preceding the sentence in question actually tells us that Denis knows the names of the stations "by heart". Don't write this off as an accident; rather, take it as contextual evidence supporting the interpretation that he is now rehearsing them.

1.25. Huxley's text really requires us to make many similar decisions, and basically they all work out in the same way. For instance, who is more likely to conceptualize the train's further progress as "creeping indolently onward" and "snorting out of West Bowlby", the narrator or Denis? Who does not really know (or perhaps care) where the train goes ultimately – "goodness only knew whither" – the narrator or Denis? And who is the originator of the image of "the green heart of England"? Recall that a standard authorial narrator normally has a huge knowledge privilege – up to omniscience, we said. Well, I trust the pieces of the puzzle have long fallen into place. Yes, it seems we can easily ascribe all judgments and expressivity markers in this passage to Denis, the internal focalizer. And, somewhat surprisingly, the FID/IF test even works for the very first sentence, the sentence that may have looked like plain narratorial exposition at first glance. Compare:

I, the narrator, can tell you, reader, that along this particular stretch of line no express had ever passed.

Along this particular stretch of line (Denis thought) no express had ever passed.

While the IF test is never absolutely conclusive, it allows us to argue for or against a particular option. In this case, we see that the internally focalized reading is quite an appropriate one. (Admittedly, however, the story's first sentence could also be the incipit of an authorial narrative.)

1.26. To confirm our previous intuition, see how the text, as it progresses, jells into a plain case of figural narration with all that's implied by it:

Denis took his chattels off the rack and piled them neatly in the corner opposite his own. A futile proceeding. But one must have something to do. When he had finished, he sank back into his seat and closed his eyes. It was extremely hot.

Oh, this journey! It was two hours cut clean out of his life; two hours in which he might have done so much, so much – written the perfect poem, for example, or read the one illuminating book. Instead of which – his gorge rose at the smell of the dusty cushions against which he was leaning.

Two hours. One hundred and twenty minutes. Anything might be done in that time. Anything. Nothing. Oh, he had had hundreds of hours, and what had he done with them? Wasted them, spilt the precious minutes as though his reservoir were inexhaustible. Denis groaned in the spirit, condemned himself utterly with all his works. What right had he to sit in the sunshine, to occupy corner seats in third-class carriages, to be alive? None, none, none.

Misery and a nameless nostalgic distress possessed him. He was twenty-three, and oh! so agonizingly conscious of the fact. The train came bumpingly to a halt. Here was Camlet at last.

For an exercise, test your own intuitions by selectively applying the FID/IF test in this passage. Again, all distinct voice-indicating emotional expressions will attach more plausibly to the internal focalizer than to the narrator. This confirms what we found earlier, namely that any vocal quality of this text belongs to the character, not the narrator. Ultimately, we can say very little about the narrator's voice because the narrator effectively hides (himself and his voice) behind the presentation of the internal focalizer's voice (and perception and consciousness). One could also say he hides his own voice by imitating the character's voice.

1.27. Let's try another turn of the screw. As we are coming to the end of this section, I want to test our present toolbox by looking at two further examples. The first is the incipit of Jane Austen's *Emma* first published in 1816). For a fair division of labor, I propose to do most of the work at first, answering the simple questions, and then you get a chance to have a go at the hard ones.

CHAPTER 1

EMMA WOODHOUSE, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her.

This is clearly an overt narratorial voice engaged in giving concise and reader-conscious expository information on the main character (a block characterization, as we will say later in this script). The paragraphs that follow present additional background information on the Woodhouse family. The narrator introduces a governess, summarizes Emma's childhood and adolescence, and comments on the developing friendship between the two women thus:

She [Emma] was the youngest of the two daughters of a most affectionate, indulgent father, and had, in consequence of her sister's marriage, been mistress of his house from a very early period. Her mother had died too long ago for her to have more than an indistinct remembrance of her caresses, and her place had been supplied by an excellent woman as governess, who had fallen little short of a mother in affection.

Sixteen years had Miss Taylor been in Mr Woodhouse's family less as a governess than a friend, very fond of both daughters, but particularly of Emma. Between them it was more the intimacy of sisters. Even before Miss Taylor had ceased to hold the nominal office of governess, the mildness of her temper had hardly allowed her to impose any restraint; and the shadow of authority being now long passed away, they had been living together as friend and friend very mutually attached, and Emma doing just what she liked; highly esteeming Miss Taylor's judgment, but directed chiefly by her own.

Some of character traits attributed to Emma are obviously wholly conventional, others strike one as slightly unexpected, perhaps deserving careful attention (and intonation!). Observe the projected tone of voice in "and Emma doing just what she liked", for instance. At any rate, in the following paragraph, the narrator gets down to a crucial point – the heroine's personality – more directly.

The real evils indeed of Emma's situation were the power of having rather too much her own way, and a disposition to think a little too well of herself; these were the disadvantages which threatened alloy [= impairment] to her many enjoyments. The danger, however, was at present so unperceived, that they did not by any means rank as misfortunes with her.

Clearly, this is said in a judgmental tone, and whatever else may be entailed by the summary characterization of Emma it is not an entirely positive one. Note that the narrator contrasts Emma's conscious thoughts and views with something she is *not* conscious of.

1.28. (*Emma*, continued.) The paragraphs following the preceding passage now move from plain exposition of background information (often using sentences cast in the past perfect tense) to a presentation of more concrete events and action (cast in the simple past, the novel's basic narrative tense). The novel's action proper begins on the evening of Miss Taylor's wedding day, an event which causes a major change of state in the affairs of the protagonists.

Sorrow came – a gentle sorrow – but not at all in the shape of any disagreeable consciousness – Miss Taylor married. It was Miss Taylor's loss which first brought grief. It was on the wedding-day of this beloved friend that Emma first sat in mournful thought of any continuance. The wedding over and the bride-people gone, her father and herself were left to dine together, with no prospect of a third to cheer a long evening. Her father composed himself to sleep after dinner, as usual, and she had then only to sit and think of what she had lost.

The event had every promise of happiness for her friend. Mr Weston was a man of unexceptionable character, easy fortune, suitable age and pleasant manners; and there was some satisfaction in considering with what self-denying, generous friendship she had always wished and promoted the match; but it was a black morning's work for her. The want of Miss Taylor would be felt every hour of every day. She recalled her past kindness – the kindness, the affection of sixteen years – how she had taught and how she had played with her from five years old – how she had devoted all her powers to attach and amuse her in health – and how nursed her through the various illnesses of childhood. A large debt of gratitude was owing here; but the intercourse of the last seven years, the equal footing and perfect unreserve which had soon followed Isabella's marriage on their being left to each other, was yet a dearer, tenderer recollection. It had been a friend and companion such as few possessed, intelligent, well-informed, useful, gentle, knowing all the ways of the

family, interested in all its concerns, and peculiarly interested in herself, in every pleasure, every scheme of her's; – one to whom she could speak every thought as it arose, and who had such an affection for her as could never find fault.

How was she to bear the change? – It was true that her friend was going only half a mile from them; but Emma was aware that great must be the difference between a Mrs Weston only half a mile from them, and a Miss Taylor in the house; and with all her advantages, natural and domestic, she was now in great danger of suffering from intellectual solitude. She dearly loved her father, but he was no companion for her. He could not meet her in conversation, rational or playful.

First of all, the knowledge privilege now exhibited by the narrator confirms that this is a heterodiegetic narrative situated in a typical authorial narrative situation (as you surely suspected from the beginning). There is no experiencing-I in the action, and a first-person narrator would have no way of knowing how Emma spent her time on the evening of that particular day.

1.29. More importantly, however, as you go through the text, you will (hopefully) notice a gradual development and shift in narrative orientation. Try to put your finger on it. First of all, the text begins to focus on single, concrete events. Whereas at the beginning of the novel we were given summary accounts of large-scale events (Emma's mother's death etc), we are now situated in the middle of an ongoing action sequence. Does this development go hand in hand with what we have previously identified as 'internal focalization'? Of course, we could easily apply Toolan's FID/IF test questions. Is it the narrator who, reader-friendly and duty-bound as she is, informs us of the fact that "The event had every promise of happiness for [Miss Taylor]"? In other words, is this an important piece of factual information she wants us to know? Or is there an alternative reading? Next, who is the source of the text's reference to "all her [Emma's] advantages, natural and domestic" – the narrator? (Remember the narrator's earlier comment about the "unperceived" disadvantages and dangers of Emma's situation, and that Emma had a tendency to think "a little too well of herself".) Again, who is a likely source for the judgment that "her father [...] was no companion for her. He could not meet her in conversation, rational or playful" – the narrator? And what difference does it make if it were *not* the narrator?

We can sum up the whole of the previous line of questioning by asking, **how many voices** does Austen's text project? And what are the consequences? Watch out, these are loaded questions, and they come with a host of interpretive implications (which is, of course, exactly what we need).

"*Emma* is the climax of Jane Austen's genius and the Parthenon of fiction" (Ronald Blythe, Introduction to the Penguin edition). OTT as it is, support Blythe's judgment by showing two things: (1) that the text is entirely modern in its anticipation of a modern narrative technique; (2) that the global narrative design of the novel is effectively implied and established right at the beginning (you'll have to speculate a bit on what the novel is going to be about).

Hopefully you are tending towards the following answers. We are beginning to hear *two* voices, that of an authorial narrator and that of Emma, often both in one sentence. The figural elements of the text show the beginnings of the historical move towards the figural narrative situation, to be properly invented roughly 100 years later. In the novel, Emma will learn, from experience and mistakes, how to acquire better judgment and how to make better decisions. Have a look at David Lodge's skillful disentangling of the two voices (Lodge 1992: 5-6):

Jane Austen's opening is classical: lucid, measured, objective, with ironic implication concealed beneath the elegant velvet glove of the style. How subtly the first sentence sets up the heroine for a fall. . . "Handsome" (rather than conventionally pretty or beautiful . . .), "clever" (an ambiguous term for intelligence, sometimes applied derogatively, as in "too clever for her own good") and "rich", with all its biblical and proverbial associations of the moral dangers of wealth; these three adjectives, so elegantly combined (a matter of stress and phonology – try rearranging them) encapsulate the deceptiveness of Emma's "seeming" contentment. . . [I]nterestingly enough, we begin to hear the voice of Emma herself in the discourse, as well as the judicious, objective voice of the narrator . . . we seem to hear Emma's own, rather self-satisfied description of her relationship with her governess, one which allowed her to do "just what she liked".

1.30. Finally, here is another incipit, this time from Raymond Chandler's *The High Window*, first published 1943. Write down a protocol of your reading experience; pay particular attention to your

understanding (or non-understanding) of the narrative situation as it evolves from sentence to sentence. The bracketed note numbers in the text refer to the "questions and hints" section below.

Chapter One

THE house was on Dresden Avenue in the Oak Knoll section of Pasadena, a big solid cool-looking[1] house with burgundy brick walls, a terra-cotta tile roof, and a white stone trim. The front windows were leaded downstairs. Upstairs windows were of the cottage type and had a lot of rococo imitation stonework trimming around them.

From the front wall and its attendant flowering bushes a half-acre or so of fine green lawn[2] drifted in a gentle slope down to the street, passing on the way an enormous deodar[3] around which it flowed like a cool green tide around a rock. [...] There was a heavy scent of summer on the morning and everything that grew was perfectly still in the breathless air they get over there on what they call a nice cool day.[4]

All I knew about the people[5] was that they were a Mrs Elizabeth Bright Murdock and family and that she wanted to hire a nice clean private detective who wouldn't drop cigar ashes on the floor and never carried more than one gun.[6] And I knew she was the widow of an old coot with whiskers named Jasper Murdock who had made a lot of money helping out the community, and got his photograph in the Pasadena paper every year on his anniversary, with the years of his birth and death underneath, and the legend: His Life Was His Service.[7]

I left my car on the street and walked over a few dozen stumbler stones set into the green lawn, and rang the bell in the brick portico under a peaked roof.[8]

Questions and hints:

1. "Cool-looking", it might be argued, is part of a textual isotopy (a network of semantically related concepts, see [P3.6](#) if you want). Underline the other occurrences, repetitions, phrases related in meaning.
2. What note is struck by indicating the size of somebody's lawn in *acres*?
3. "Deodar" – had to look it up, it's an "East Indian cedar", Webster's *Collegiate* says. What does that tell you, I mean, not about me, about the narrator?
4. "They" – as in "us and them"?
5. What is your intuition here – narrating-I, experiencing-I, or self-reference of an authorial narrator?
6. That may be what she wanted, but was it what she got?
7. Any comment on projected attitude, tone, etc?
8. It certainly took a while, but now the text's narrative situation is finally firmly established. Why did the narrator do it the way he did? By way of experiment, what would one have to do to transpose ("transvocalize", Genette would say) this passage into a figural narrative? It is absurdly simple: change *four* words and it is done... [A. change the first-person pronouns to third.]

1.31. Here is a survey of the main features of the incipits discussed in this section.

Text	Overtness	Type (Genette)	Narrative Situation (Stanzel)
Salinger: "If you really want to hear about it ..." 1.3	highly overt	homodiegetic	first-person
Cozzens: "The snowstorm, which began at dawn ..." 1.8	neutrally overt	heterodiegetic	neutral (unobtrusively authorial) ³

³ Stanzel (1955: 28) briefly toyed with the concept of 'neutral narration', but this was equivalent to the heterodiegetic-covert mode rather than to the heterodiegetic-weakly-overt voice that characterizes the Cozzens passage. As a matter of fact, after two introductory paragraphs, Cozzens' text shifts gears, introduces an internal focalizer and proceeds in the mode of standard figural narration. See also [3.3.11](#).

Drabble: "My career has always been marked ..." 1.12	highly overt	homodiegetic	standard first-person autobiographical
Eliot: "With a single drop of ink the Egyptian ..." 1.14	highly overt	heterodiegetic	authorial (standard 19C pattern)
Hemingway: "He lay flat on the pine-needed ..." 1.16	covert	heterodiegetic	figural (standard 20C pattern)
Huxley: "Along this particular stretch of the line ..." 1.21 , 1.24	covert	heterodiegetic	figural
Austen: "Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, ..." 1.27	overt	heterodiegetic	dynamic: authorial exposition <i>and some</i> internal focalization
Chandler: "The house was on Dresden avenue ..." 1.30	(ultimately) overt	homodiegetic	first-person

Exercise. Pick some novels or short stories yourself and analyze them by working through the catalog of questions available via the toolbox. You could invite friends, let them bring some novels and do the whole thing as a group exercise, or a quiz ...

1.32. Outline of major concepts introduced so far.

A. Narrative voice [1.3](#)

- 1) Who speaks? [1.3](#), [1.18](#)
- 2) expressivity markers, [1.4](#)
- 3) overt/covert voice distinction, [1.9](#)
- 4) how to hide a voice, [1.9](#), [1.17](#)

B. Internal focalization [1.16](#), [1.24](#)

- 1) Who sees? [1.18](#)
- 2) internal focalizer/reflector, [1.18](#)
- 3) FID/IF test [1.23](#), [1.24](#), [8.6](#)

C. Basic types and typical narrative situations

- 1) Genette's basic types
 - a) homodiegetic, [1.10](#), [1.20](#)
 - b) heterodiegetic, [1.10](#), [1.21](#), [1.28](#)
- 2) Stanzel's narrative situations ([3.3.1](#))
 - a) first-person, [1.11](#)
 - b) authorial, [1.13](#), [1.20](#)
 - c) figural, [1.18](#), [1.20](#), [1.26](#)

1.33. This is the end of the Getting Started section, and I am sorry to say that the rest of this document is much rougher going – one definition will simply chase another. Remember that being able to identify whether text X is homodiegetic or heterodiegetic, or authorial or figural, or what not, is fine, but not much. What is really important is that these concepts come with a whole infrastructure of assumptions, expectations, implications, and, above all, questions. The following is a rough template of possible questions.

A. Questions regarding narrative situation

1. What is the text's major narrative situation? Or does it use several narrative situations? If so, what is the pattern or strategy behind the juxtaposition of several narrative situations?

- Does the text stand in the tradition of certain other texts? Or does it deviate in certain respects from the stylistic norm, perhaps to the extent that it originates a new pattern?

B. Questions focusing on the narrator

- Who does the author choose for a speaker? Does s/he have a name and/or a distinctive voice? Is the narrator overt or covert or somewhere in between? Is the voice quality different in specific location such as (chapter) beginnings and endings?
- Does the narrator make any assumptions about actual or potential addressees? Is there a clear-cut narrator-audience contract? Is the extent of the narrator's (human) limitation or omniscience ever discussed or problematized?
- Is the narrator largely reliable or does s/he deceive him- or herself or others? Does his or her unreliability concern value judgments or facts?
- If the text were 'transvocalized', ie, narrated by another narrator and in a different narrative situation, which effects would be gained, which lost? (See Stanzel 1984: ch3.1 for examples, including the beginning of *The Catcher in the Rye*.)

C. Questions regarding focalization

- Does the narrator use none, one, or many story-internal focalizers? If the latter, to establish which point? In first-person narration, to what extent is the experiencing-I used as an internal focalizer?
- How accurate are the perceptions and thoughts of the focalizers, and to what extent are they fallible filters (Chatman)? Does the narrator ever comment on the focalizer's perception from a superordinate perspective?
- If there are several focalizers (multiperspectival narration), do their various perceptions contradict or corroborate those of other focalizers?
- Is the general attitude of the narrator one of sympathy/empathy towards his or her focalizer? Are the focalizer's perceptions and thoughts reported consonantly or dissonantly (ironically)?

Hopefully, the narratological concepts introduced in this section will act like analytical tools that enable you to say *because because because...* And that is good because, ultimately, being able to say "because" is what theory and essay writing is all about (Aczel 1998b: 49).

2. The narratological framework

Luckily we can boil the vastly complex field of narratology down to the question "Who narrates what how?" This allows us to make use of the following multi-part mind map (underlined items clickable).

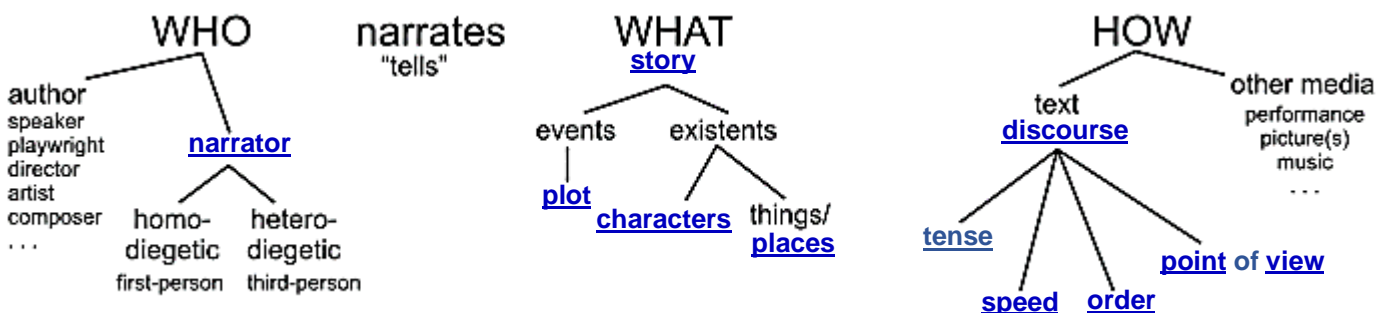


Fig. 2. WHO narrates WHAT HOW?

On the text-external level, WHO is the author; on the text-internal level, WHO is the narrator (2.3.1). Narrators come in two types, homodiegetic and heterodiegetic (telling first-person and third-person stories, respectively). WHAT do narrators do? They *narrate* or *tell* a *story*. Stories are made up of

characters, things, and events. Events have a chronological and a causal order (plot). The HOW of narrative 'discourse' is determined by choice of tense (past? present?), speed (slow? normal? fast?), event ordering (chronological? non-chronological?), and point of view (internal focalization? external focalization?).

Note that our mind map can be vastly enriched by adding further question-words or phrases. For instance, we could ask Who tells what TO WHOM (the target audience: adult readers? children?); WHY (entertainment? education? argument?); TO WHAT EFFECT (laughter? tears?); IN WHICH SITUATION? (courtroom? doctor's office? political rally?), and so on. Widening the field in this manner is actively pursued by much of recent narratological research. Note, too, that the terms listed here, especially 'narrator' and 'discourse', relate mainly to verbally told stories. Once the scope is expanded to encompass genres like comic strip, film, drama, opera, radio play etc many of the concepts used above need to be revised and adapted – a task that has yet to be accomplished.

2.1. Background and basics

2.1.1. As a discipline, narratology began to take shape in 1966, the year in which the French journal *Communications* published a special issue entitled "The structural analysis of narrative", which is still a good working definition of narratology. The term narratology itself was coined three years later, by one of the contributors to that special issue, Tzvetan Todorov (1969: 9):

- **narratology:** the theory of the structures of narrative. To investigate a structure, or to present a 'structural description', the narratologist dissects the narrative phenomena into their component parts and then attempts to determine functions and relationships.

Many narratologists today consider **natural narratives** such as occur in everyday conversation to be the most elemental and prototypical instance of storytelling. Natural storytelling is an event in which the participants are flesh-and-blood persons engaged in direct communication. In contrast, in written narratives neither narrator nor reader can see or hear the other. However, even for writers and readers the absent party is usually evoked as an imaginary presence. Specifically, readers can re-create a mental image of the narrator from lines of text. The idea that readers habitually re-create the prototypical storytelling scenario of natural narratives is the main tenet of **natural narratology** as proposed by Fludernik (1996). We made use of the natural narrative hypothesis in the Getting Started section of this script ([1](#)), where one of our tasks was to abstract narrators' voices from written texts.

Ultimately, the roots of narratology, like the roots of all Western theories of fiction, go back to Plato's (428-348 BC) and Aristotle's (384-322 BC) distinction between 'mimesis' (imitation) and 'diegesis' (narration). Chatman (1990: ch7) uses these concepts to distinguish diegetic narrative genres (epic narratives, novels, short stories) from mimetic narrative genres (plays, films, cartoons); most commentators, however, follow Genette's (1980 [1972]: ch4; 1988 [1983]: 49) proposal that narrative fiction is a 'patchwork' of both mimetic and diegetic parts, mainly to be divided into a 'narrative of words' (speech and dialogue) and a 'narrative of events' (1988 [1983]: 43).

2.1.2. Practically all theories of narrative distinguish between WHAT is narrated (the 'story') and HOW it is narrated (the 'discourse'). Some theorists, among them Gérard Genette, opt for a narrow meaning of the term 'narrative', restricting narratives to verbally narrated texts (Genette 1988 [1983]: 17); others (Barthes 1975 [1966], Chatman 1990, Bal 1985) argue that anything that tells a story, in whatever genre, constitutes a narrative. It is this latter view which is adopted here (see [2.2](#) for a fuller diagram of narrative text types). On this basis, our main definitions are as follows:

- **narrative:** anything that tells or presents a story, be it by oral or written text, picture, performance, or a combination of these. Narratives can be found in conversation, jokes, novels, plays, films, comic strips, etc.
- **story:** a sequence of events involving characters. **Events** include both natural and non-natural happenings (such as floods and car accidents). Characters get involved by being **agents** (causers of events), **patients** or **beneficiaries** (being affected by events). Linguists further make a useful distinction between verbs which signal willful ('volitional') acts (*What does X do?*

– jump from a bridge, watch a show) and verbs which signal non-volitional acts or experiences (*What does X experience?* – falling from a bridge, seeing an accident).

See Ryan (2006: 8) for a much more detailed definition of narrative listing eight "conditions of narrativity". In critical practice, 'events' and 'action' are often used synonymously. However, see Schmid (2010: ch1) for a stricter differentiation between general 'happenings' and story-relevant 'events' (defined as unexpected and unprecedented incidents).

2.1.3. According to the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (the very founding-father of structuralism), any sign consists of a 'signifier' and a 'signified' – basically, a tangible *form or substance* and a non-tangible *meaning*. For a narrative text – a complex sign – the signifier is a 'discourse' (a mode of presentation) and the signified is a 'story' (an action sequence). Hence, narratological investigation usually pursues one of two basic orientations:

- **discourse narratology:** analyzes the stylistic choices that determine the form or realization of a narrative text (or performance, in the case of films and plays). Also of interest are the pragmatic features that contextualize text or performance within the social and cultural framework of a narrative act.
- **story narratology:** focuses on the action units that 'emplot' and arrange a stream of events into a trajectory of themes, motives and plot lines (Bremond 1970, Prince 1982, Pavel 1985a, Ryan 1991). The notion of emplotment plays a crucial role in the work of theorists like the historian Hayden White (1996 [1981]) and cultural philosophers such as Paul Ricoeur (1991) and Michel Foucault.

Further on the story/discourse distinction see Jakobson (1970 – French terms *énoncé* and *énonciation*), Dolezel (1973: Introduction); Sacks et al. (1974 – narrative vs conversational turns); Culler (1975a); Chatman (1978: ch1); Genette (1989 [1972]: 164-69; Genette (1988: 18, 61-62, 130); Lintvelt (1981: ch4.6.2); Bal (1983 [1977]); Fludernik (1993: ch1.5 – survey of story and discourse models); Schmid (2010: chV).

2.1.4. Classical narratology. The main tenets of discourse narratology are well presented in the writings of Stanzel, Chatman, Cohn, Genette, Bal, Rimmon-Kenan, Lintvelt, and Fludernik. Most of the monographs published in narratology's classical period – the nineteen seventies and eighties – are still good introductions to the field, especially Genette (1980 [1972]), Chatman (1978), Cohn (1978), Sternberg (1993 [1978]), Todorov (1981), Prince (1982), Stanzel (1984), and Bal (1985). Particularly useful are Rimmon-Kenan's (1983, revised edition 2002) concise survey, Prince's (1987, revised ed. 2003) dictionary of terms, Onega and Garcia Landa's (1996) reader (containing reprints of many foundational essays), the critical surveys by O'Neill (1994) and Nelles (1997), and the linguistically oriented discussions and exercises in Toolan (2001).

2.1.5. More recent variants of **postclassical narratology** are discussed in D. Herman, ed. (1999) and L. Herman and Vervaeck (2005), Alber and Fludernik (2010). Today's narratological branches include (among others) psychoanalytic narratology (Brooks 1984), historiographic narratology (Cohn 1999), possible worlds narratology (Ryan 1991; 1998; Ronen 1994; Gutenberg 2000), legal narratology (Brooks and Gewirtz, eds. 1996); feminist narratology (Warhol 1989; Lanser 1992; Mezei, ed. 1996), gender studies narratology (Nünning and Nünning eds 2004), cognitive narratology (Perry 1979, Sternberg 1993 [1978], Jahn ([1997](#))), natural narratology (Fludernik 1996), postmodernist narratology (McHale 1987, 1992; Currie 1998), rhetorical narratology (Phelan 1996, Kearns 1999), cultural studies narratology (Nünning 2000), transgeneric narratology (Nünning and Nünning, eds 2002, Hühn 2004), political narratology (Bal, ed 2004), and psychonarratology (Bortolussi and Dixon 2003 [empirical approach]). See Ionescu (2019) for a fuller survey of postclassical developments.

Current researchers emphasize the openness of the discipline, particularly vis à vis linguistics (Fludernik 1993a), cognitive science (Duchan et al 1995), artificial intelligence (Ryan 1991) and pragmatics (Pratt 1977; Adams 1996). For an encyclopedic survey of approaches and trends in modern and ancient narrative theory see the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* (Herman, Jahn, Ryan, eds 2005). For a massive (1712 pp.) collection of foundational essays see Bal, ed. (2004 – vol. 1: Major Issues in Narrative Theory; vol. 2: Special Topics; vol. 3: Political Narratology; vol. 4 Interdisciplinarity). Recent studies include Abbott (2002), a dedicated transgeneric approach

containing chapters on "narrative and life" (ch 1), narrative rhetoric, cultural masterplots (ch4), closure (chs 5, 12), "overreading and underreading" (ch7), David Herman (2002), an investigation of the cognitive, stylistic, and linguistic basics of narratology; Marie-Laure Ryan, ed. (2004), a collection of essays on cross- and transmedial forms such as pictures, music, cinema, and computer games, more recently continued in Ryan (2006) (ch I: Narrative in Old Media, ch II: Narrative in New Media). Leech and Short (2007) demonstrate a linguistic approach. New general introductions in Fludernik (2009) and Schmid (2010). *Narratologia*, published by de Gruyter, is a series of full-length studies (the current (2020) volume count stands at 70).

2.1.6. Internet sources

- [NARRNET](#), the European Narratology Network, a website maintained by the U of Hamburg, Germany. Among the services offered are an extensive bibliography, a list of researchers, current projects, events, links, and discussion forums.
- [LHN: The Living Handbook of Narratology](#). A part of NARRNET, LHN is a dynamically updated and collection of "articles on concepts and theories fundamental to narratology and to the study of narrative in general". All entries can be downloaded as PDF docs.
- [ISSN](#), the International Society for the Study of Narrative, organizes huge annual conferences. Browsing is free but membership requires a subscription to the journal *Narrative*.
- [ENN](#), the European Narratology Network, hosts bi-annual conferences and provides links to various resources. Membership is free.

Note that the conference programs published by ISSN and ENN are excellent pointers to up-to-date research interests and developments.

2.2. Narrative genres

2.2.1. So far we have only alluded to just a few representative forms of narrative. But arguably, narrative has a far wider scope. Consider the famous list submitted by Roland Barthes (from his seminal contribution in *Communications* 8, mentioned in [2.1.1](#), above):

There are countless **forms** of narrative in the world. First of all, there is a prodigious variety of **genres**, each of which branches out into a variety of **media**, as if all **substances** could be relied upon to accommodate man's stories. Among the **vehicles** of narrative are articulated language, whether oral or written, pictures, still or moving, gestures, and an ordered mixture of all those substances: narrative is present in **myth, legend, fables, tales, short stories, epic history, tragedy, drame [suspense drama], comedy, pantomime, paintings (in Santa Ursula by Carpaccio, for instance), stained-glass windows, movies, local news, conversation**. Moreover, in **this infinite variety of forms**, it is present at all times, in all places, in all societies; indeed narrative starts with the very history of mankind; there is not, there has never been anywhere, any people without narrative; all classes, all human groups, have their stories, and very often those stories are enjoyed by men of different and even opposite cultural backgrounds [...]. (Barthes 1975 [1966]: 237; my emphases)

In this passage I have highlighted not only the individual types of narrative but also the various terms used by Barthes for the 'forms' themselves – 'genres', 'media', 'substances', and 'vehicles'. Here is a taxonomy which imposes a kind of order on Barthes's list.

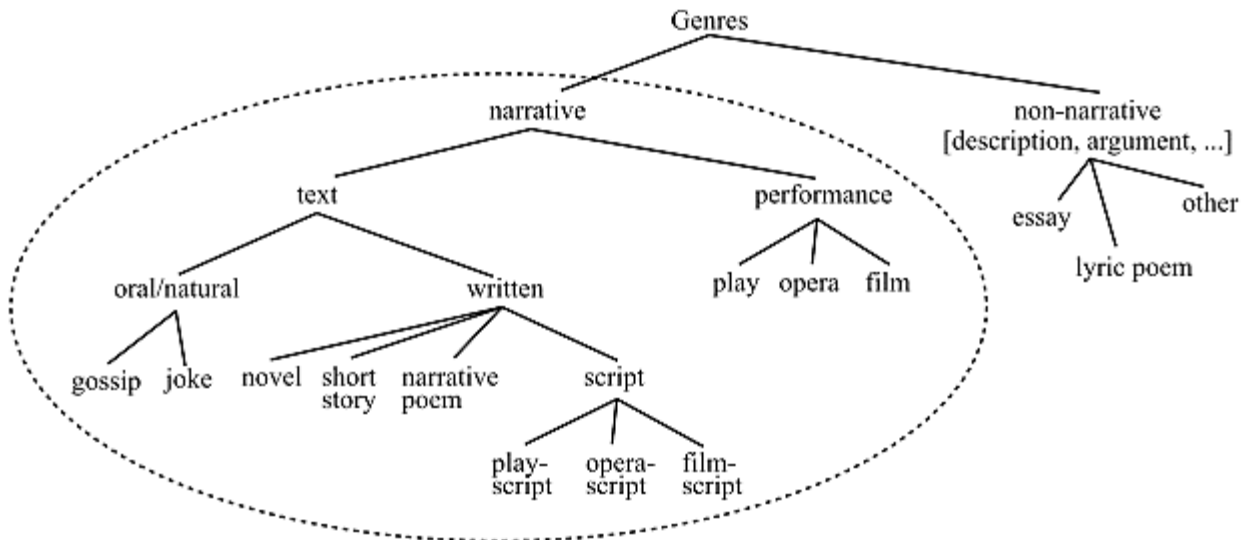


Fig. 3. A taxonomy of narrative genres.

Obviously, this diagram is not exhaustive but it does list representative and typical genres. Actually, it might be a good idea to assume that each tree node has an additional branch leading to an implicit "Other" category, and that this may serve as an empty slot that can be filled with any new category that might come up (this is the way Chatman 1990: 115 handles it). If you come across a genre not accounted for by any branch of the tree – radio plays? hypertext narratives? comic strips? – try fitting it in as best as is possible (or maybe the tree needs to be modified). Note that some forms occur more than once – eg check the nodes allotted to poems and plays.

2.2.2. As noted above, narratology is concerned with *all* types of narratives, literary and nonliterary, verbal and nonverbal. One major distinction that is usually made is that between fictional and nonfictional narratives:

- A **fictional narrative** presents an imaginary narrator's account of a story that happened in an imaginary world. A fictional narrative is appreciated for its entertainment and educational value, possibly also for providing a vision of characters who *might* exist or might have existed, and a vision of things that *might* happen or could have happened. Although a fictional narrative may freely refer to actual people, places and events, it cannot be used as evidence of what happened in the real world.
- A **nonfictional narrative** (also **factual narrative**) presents a real-life person's account of a real-life story. Unless there are reasons for questioning an author's credibility, a factual narrative can serve as evidence of what happened in the real world. In principle, the author of a factual narrative is accountable for the truth of its statements and can always be asked *How do you know?*

Because of the systematic relatedness of these concepts, many factual narratives such as historiographic texts or biographies have fictional counterparts (historiographic fiction, fictional biographies, etc) (Cohn 1999). On the notion of **panfictionality** (= no matter how factual, every narrative involves a narrator's imagination, hence is fiction) see Ryan (1997b).

2.2.3. Here is an incomplete list of various narrative themes and genres.

- **narratives of personal experience** (also called **personal experience narrative: PEN**): Labov's (1972) famous analysis of a corpus of stories based on interview questions such as "Were you ever in a situation where you were in serious danger of being killed?".
- **biblical narratives**: Kermode (1979); Sternberg (1985); Bal (1987, 1988).
- **teacher's narratives**: Cortazzi (1993).
- **children's narratives**: Applebee (1978); Branigan (1992: 18-19).

- **medical narratives (doctors/patients):** Hunter (1993), Gülich (2020)
- **family narratives:** Flint (1988); Jonnes (1990); *Style* 31.2 (1997) [special issue, ed. John Knapp].
- **courtroom narratives/legal narratives:** Brooks and Gewirtz, eds. (1996); Posner (1997)
- **prison narratives:** Fludernik and Olson, eds. (2004)
- **historiographic autobiography/fictional autobiography:** Lejeune (1989); Cohn (1999: ch2); Löschnigg (1999).
- **hypertext narratives:** Ryan (1997a)
- **musical narratives:** McClary (1997); Wolf (1999); Kafalenos (2004)
- **filmic narratives:** Kozloff (1988); Chatman (1978; 1990); Bordwell (2004), see also this project's film page [pppf.pdf](#)
- **mental (or 'internal') narratives:** Schank (1995); Ricoeur (1991); Turner (1996); Jahn (2003)

2.3. Narrative communication

2.3.1. As we have already shown in the Getting Started section (1.6), literary narrative communication involves the interplay of at least three communicative levels. Each level of communication comes with its own set of addressers and addressees (also 'senders' and 'receivers').

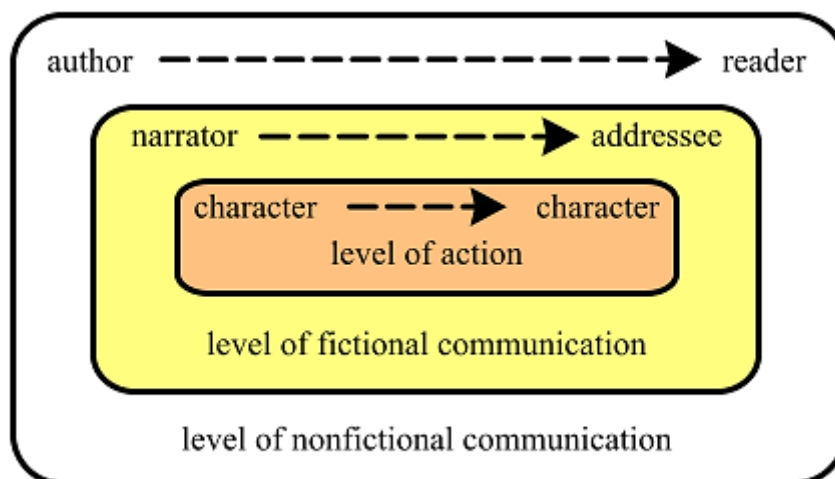


Fig. 4. Levels of narrative communication (again).

This model distinguishes between the levels of action, fictional communication or 'mediation', and nonfictional communication, and establishes useful points of reference for key terms like *author*, *reader*, *narrator*, and *narratee/addressee* (for a book-length study on communication in narrative see Coste 1989; for the pragmatic status of narrative statements Hamburger 1977 and Genette 1991).

For example, on the level of nonfictional (or 'real') communication, the author of the short story "The Fishing-Boat Picture" is Alan Sillitoe, and any reader of this text is situated on the same level of communication. Since author and reader do not communicate *in* the text itself, their level of communication is an 'extratextual' one. However, there are also two 'intratextual' levels of communication. One is the level of narrative communication (or 'mediation', or 'narrative discourse'), where a fictional first-person narrator named Harry tells the fishing-boat picture story to an unnamed addressee or 'narratee' (for an argument that Harry might be his own narratee see 9.1). Finally, on the level of action, Harry and his wife Kathy are the major communicating characters of the story. We call this latter level the 'level of action' because we are assuming that speech acts (Austin 1962 [1955], Searle 1974 [1969]) are not categorically different from other acts.

2.3.2. Some theorists add another intermediate level of *implied fictional communication* (a level below the author-reader level) comprising an **implied author** (a text's projection of an overarching intratextual authority above the narrator) and an **implied reader** (a text's overall projection of a reader role, superordinate to any intratextual narratee). The main reason for implementing this level is to account for unreliable narration (7.6). See Booth (1961), Chatman (1990) [one proposing and the other defending the concept]; Fieguth (1973); Iser (1971, 1972, 1976) [on readers and 'implied readers']; Bal (1981b: 209), Genette (1988 [1983]: ch19) [for critical discussion], Nünning (1993), and Kindt and Müller (1999)

2.3.3. Following the reception-oriented model proposed by Rabinowitz (1987), many narratologists differentiate between the stipulated belief systems/interpretive strategies of 'authorial' vs. 'narrative' audiences:

- **authorial audience:** the audience of real readers addressed by the author.
- **narrative audience:** the fictional audience addressed by the narrator. The term covers both named or otherwise explicitly specified addressees as well as the wider set of unspecified, implied, or hypothetical addressees. Kearns (1999), however, makes the sensible suggestion to reserve the term 'narratee' for explicitly mentioned addressees.

The two kinds of audiences are rarely the same. In particular, readers have to decide whether they should or should not adopt the narrative audience's presuppositions as projected by or reflected in the narrator's discourse. See Prince (1980) for the first major account of the narratee (on which Genette commented, "I would willingly and unashamedly annex that article", 1988: 131), Rabinowitz (1987), Phelan (1996) and Kearns (1999) for further elaboration and application of the audience concepts.

2.3.4. Although the terms person, character and figure are often used indiscriminately, narratologists often try to infuse a greater degree of precision by making the following distinction.

- A **person** is a real-life person; anyone occupying a place on the level of nonfictional communication. Authors and readers are persons.
- A **character** is *not* a real-life person but only a "paper being" (Barthes 1975 [1966]), a being created by an author and existing only within a fictional text on the level of action. Example: the character Harry in Sillitoe's "The Fishing Boat Picture".
- The term **figure** is often simply used as a variation of 'character'; however, some theorists also usefully employ it to refer to the narrator. For instance, it is correct to say that the first-person narrator in Sillitoe's story is a 'narrator figure'.

2.3.5. Metalepsis, a transgression of levels. Normally, the levels of action, fictional mediation, and nonfictional communication (as shown in the graphic of 2.3.1) are hermetically sealed domains indicating crucial thresholds of control and awareness. Any agent situated on a higher-level dominates and frames all lower-level agents, while lower-level agents are unaware of the existence of the higher-level agents. For instance, the characters at the level of action do not know that they are characters in some narrator's story, and they cannot complain if their acts or motives are misrepresented by this narrator. Similarly, a narrator such as Holden Caulfield is not aware of the fact that he is a fictional figure in the novel written by J.D. Salinger (point spelled out in more detail in 1.6).

Occasionally, however, one finds some playful and not-so-playful transgressions of levels, which Genette calls 'metalepses' (Genette 1980 [1972]: 234-237). Typical cases cited in the literature are (1) characters attempting to establish communicative contact with either audience or author or vice versa (see the device of the 'aside *ad spectatores*' in drama and film, also actors 'acting out of character'), and (2) narrators and narratees seemingly joining the characters in the action. Examples:

Once again Gold found himself preparing to lunch with someone – Spotty Weinrock – and the thought arose that he was spending an awful lot of time in this book eating and talking. . . Certainly he would soon meet a school-teacher with four children with whom he would fall madly in love, and I would hold shortly out to him the tantalizing promise of becoming the country's first Jewish Secretary of State, a promise I did not intend to keep. (Joseph Heller, *Good as Gold*, qtd Lodge 1992: 22)

You shall see them, reader. Step into this neat garden-house on the skirts of Whinbury, walk forward into the little parlour – there they are at dinner. [...] You and I will join the party, see what is to be seen, and hear what is to be heard. (Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley* 9)

Clearly, a metalepsis can either be playful and harmlessly metaphorical (as in the Brontë text) or else (as in the Heller) a serious transgression violating the "sacred frontier between two worlds, the world in which one tells, the world of which one tells" (Genette 1980 [1972]: 236) – in other words, the domain of the discourse and the domain of the story. See D. Herman (1997) for a formal description of metalepsis and Malina (2000) for an in-depth exploration of functions, effects, and types of 'reconstructive', 'deconstructive', 'subversive', and 'transformative' metalepses. See Pier (2016) for a recent overview.

Related phenomena include *alterations* (3.3.15), the *alienation effect* in drama (D6.1), the *device goof* in film (F5.3.3), and *parabasis* in classical rhetoric (the latter term referring to a character directly addressing the audience).

2.4. Narrative Levels

2.4.1. Story-telling can occur on many different levels. As Barth (1984 [1981]) puts it, there may be "tales within tales within tales". The model presented in 2.3.1, above, provides a *general* framework which can easily be adapted to more complex circumstances. One such circumstance arises when a character in a story begins to tell a story of his or her own, creating a narrative within a narrative, a tale within a tale. The original narrative now becomes a 'frame' or 'matrix' narrative, and the story told by the narrating character becomes an 'embedded narrative' or 'hyponarrative' (Bal 1981a: 43):

- A **matrix narrative** is a narrative containing an embedded **hyponarrative**. The term 'matrix' derives from the Latin word *mater* (mother, womb) and refers to "something within which something else originates" (*Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*). In linguistics, a 'matrix sentence' is one that embeds a subordinate sentence. Ordinarily, the transition to a hyponarrative, the termination of the hyponarrative, and the return to the matrix narrative are explicitly signaled in a text; occasionally, however, a text may close on a hyponarrative without explicitly resuming the matrix narrative (see example in subgraphic [c] below). One could call this a **dangling matrix narrative**. The somewhat rarer opposite to this would be an **uninitialized hyponarrative** (postmodernist example: Agota Kristof, *The Notebook* [1986]).

2.4.2. For a fairly logical and hence recommended analysis of embedded narratives, Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 91) suggests the following terms:

- A **first-order/first-degree narrative** is a narrative that is *not* embedded in any other narrative; a **second-order/second-degree narrative** is a narrative that is embedded in a first-order narrative; a **third-order/third-degree narrative** is one that is embedded in a second-order narrative, etc.
- A **first-order/first-degree narrator**, by analogy, is the narrator of a first-order narrative, a second-order narrator is the narrator of a second-order narrative, etc, in exact correspondence.

See Genette (1980 [1972]: 228-234; 1988 [1983]: ch14) [extradiegetic, diegetic, intradiegetic, metadiegetic]; Bal (1981: 48-50) [on 'hypo-' vs. 'meta-']; Lanser (1981); Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 91-94) ['graded' narrators and narratives]; Duyfhuizen 1992; O'Neill (1994: ch3); Nelles (1997: ch5); Pier (2014).

2.4.3. Here are three popular ways of depicting embedded narratives.

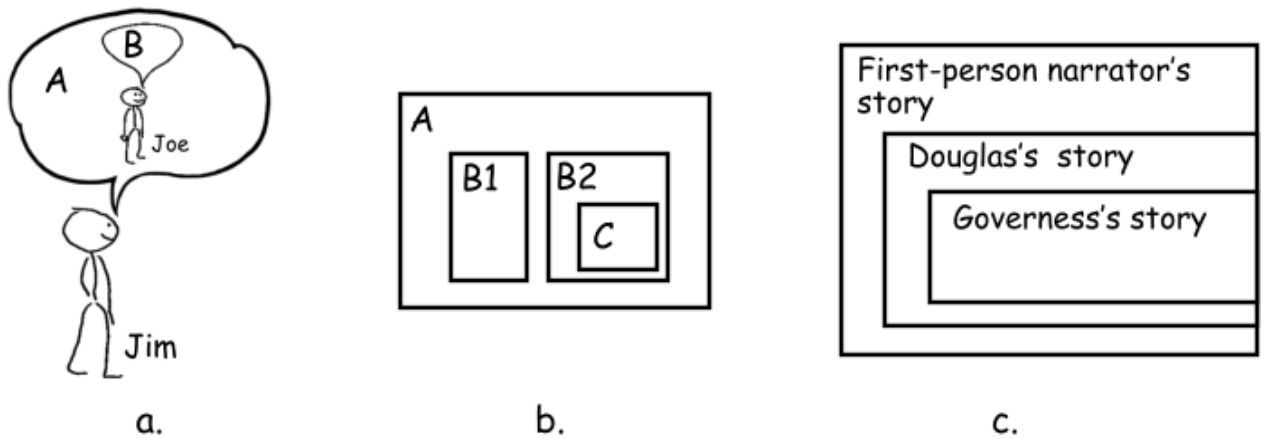


Fig. 5. Embedded narrators and narratives.

In (a) first-order narrator Jim narrates first-order narrative A. In narrative A, second-order narrator Joe tells second-order narrative B (adapted from Genette 1988 [1983]: 85). Graphics (b) and (c) are so-called 'Chinese-boxes models' which (theoretically) can be drawn to great accuracy, indicating both the relative lengths of the different narratives as well as their potentially 'open' or 'closed' status (Lintvelt 1978; Ryan 1991: 178; Branigan 1992: 114). In example (b), A is a first-order narrative, B1 and B2 are second-order narratives, and C is a third-order narrative. (Question: which of these are (also) matrix narratives? Answer: A and B2.) Example (c) illustrates the embedding structure of Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*, which ends on the conclusion of the Governess's third-order narrative without returning to either of its two superordinate narratives.

There are a number of texts that are famous for their multiple embeddings: *The Arabian Nights*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Jan Potocki's *Saragossa Manuscript*, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, John Barth's "Menelaiad". See also Chatman (1978: 255-257), Barth (1984 [1981]), Ryan (1991: ch9), Baker (1992).

2.4.4. As an exercise, work out the following problems. Some may be a bit tricky; use simple Chinese-boxes to argue your answers.

1. Can a hyponarrative be a matrix narrative?
2. Can a matrix narrative be a hyponarrative?
3. Must a first-order narrative be a matrix narrative?
4. Can a text have more than one first-order narrative?
5. Can a character be a first-order narrator?
6. Can a character be both a second-order narrator and a third-order narrator?

[Answers. **1.** Sure. **2.** Absolutely. **3.** Nope. **4.** Yes: Dickens, *Bleak House*. **5.** No! On what level do we get characters? (2.3.1). **6.** No prob.]

2.4.5. Comment. The foregoing account makes short shrift of a host of rather unhappy terms that haunt the narratological literature, including the term 'frame narrative' itself – does it refer to a narrative that is framed or one that is or provides a frame? Note that, on occasion a narrative can be both. With reference to graphic (a) in 2.4.3, above, Genette calls the narrator of A an 'extradiegetic narrator' whose narrative constitutes a 'diegetic level', while B is a 'metadiegetic narrative' told by an 'intradiegetic' (or, confusingly, 'diegetic') narrator. On the next level of embedding, one would get a meta-metadiegetic narrative told by an intra-intradiegetic narrator. Against this, Bal (1981a: 43) and Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 91-93) have argued that *hypo-* (from Greek 'under') is a more adequate prefix than *meta-* (from Greek 'on, between, with') to refer to what are, at least technically (though not necessarily functionally), subordinate narratives. Oddly, however, in their system, B (in graphic [a]) is a 'hyponarrative' told by a 'diegetic narrator', and if there were an additional level, Bal and Rimmon-Kenan would be happy to have a 'hypo-hyponarrative' told by a 'hypodiegetic narrator', and so on.

Although the *hypo-* concept is a useful one, linking hypodiegetic narrators to hypo-hyponarratives is awkward. More drawbacks of the nomenclature become apparent when one tries to tackle the problems set in 2.4.4.

2.4.6. Embedded narratives can serve one or several of the following functions:

- **actional integration:** the hyponarrative serves as an important element in the plot of the matrix narrative. For instance, in *The Arabian Nights* Scheherazade's stories keep the Sultan from killing her. Indeed, in the end, he marries her because she is such an excellent storyteller. Or think of a surprise witness in a crime or courtroom novel whose tale solves the case.
- **exposition:** the hyponarrative provides information about events that lie outside the primary action line of the matrix narrative (specifically, events that occurred in the past).
- **distraction:** "So tell us a story while we're waiting for the rain to stop" (Genette 1988 [1983]: 93).
- **obstruction/retardation:** the hyponarrative momentarily suspends the continuation of the matrix narrative, often creating an effect of heightened suspense.
- **analogy:** the hyponarrative corroborates or contradicts a story line of the matrix narrative ("You are not the only person ever deceived by a faithless lover; let me tell you about [...]") (Barth 1984 [1981]: 232).

2.4.7. Hyponarratives are also often used to create an effect of '*mise en abyme*', a favorite feature of postmodernist narratives (Dällenbach 1981; Ron 1987; McHale 1987: ch8; Wolf 1993). Figure 6 cites a visual example.

- **mise en abyme:** the infinite loop created when a hyponarrative embeds its matrix narrative. "It can be described as the equivalent of something like Matisse's famous painting of a room in which a miniature version of the same paintings hangs on one of the walls. [...] A famous example from Gide's work is *The Counterfeiters* (1949) where a character is engaged in writing a novel similar to the novel in which he appears" (Rimmon-Kenan 1983: 93).



Walt Kelly, *Ten Ever-Lovin' Blue-Eyed Years*
With Pogo (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959), p.71.

Fig. 6. A pictorial *mise en abyme*.

Spence (1987: 188) cites the following example:

It was a dark and stormy night. The band of robbers huddled together around the fire. When he had finished eating, the first bandit said, "Let me tell you a story. It was a dark and stormy night and a band of robbers huddled together around the fire. When he had finished eating, the first bandit said: 'Let me tell you a story. It was a dark and stormy night and . . .'"

3. Narration, Focalization, and Narrative Situations

This section combines the theories of Gérard Genette (1980 [1972]; 1988 [1983]) and Franz K. Stanzel (1982; 1984 [English transl.]). Additionally, it also considers various revisions and modifications suggested by Chatman (1978, 1990), Lanser (1981), Lintvelt (1981), Cohn (1981, 1999), Bal (1985), Fludernik (1996, 2009), Schmid (2010). The best preparation for understanding the key distinctions made here is to read the "Getting started" chapter of this script ([1](#)).

3.1. Narration (voice)

The term 'voice' metaphorically invokes one of the three grammatical categories of verb forms – the others being tense and mood (Genette 1980 [1972]: 213). In terms of grammatical voice, a verb is either 'active' or 'passive'. In a more general definition, voice indicates "the relation of the subject of the verb to the action which the verb expresses" (Webster's *Collegiate*). In narratology, the basic voice question is "Who speaks?" (= who narrates this?). In the present account, voice is also understood as a characteristic vocal or tonal quality projected by a text.

3.1.1. As regards the question *Who speaks? Who is the text's narrative voice?* we are going to use the following definition of a narrator:

- A **narrator** is the speaker or 'voice' of the narrative discourse (Genette 1980 [1972]: 186). He or she is the agent who establishes communicative contact with an addressee (the 'narratee'), who manages the exposition, who decides *what* is to be told, *how* it is to be told (especially, from what point of view, and in what sequence), and *what is to be left out*. If necessary, the narrator will defend the 'tellability' ([1.5](#)) of the story (Labov 1972) and comment on its lesson, purpose, or message.

3.1.2. In Jakobson's terms, narratorial discourse (like any other discourse) can serve a variety of 'functions', mainly (a) an addressee-oriented 'phatic function' (maintaining contact with the addressee), (b) an 'appellative function' (persuading the addressee to believe or do something), and (c) an 'emotive' or 'expressive function' (expressing his/her own subjectivity). All of these functions are indicative of a text's projection of narratorial voice (cp [1.4](#)). See Jakobson (1960) for the discourse functions; Fowler (1977) on the notion of a narrator's 'discourse stance'; Bonheim (1982) on the presence or absence of narratorial 'conative solicitude'; Chatman (1990) on narratorial 'slant' ("the psychological, sociological and ideological ramifications of the narrator's attitudes, which may range from neutral to highly charged" 1990: 143), and rhetorical approaches to narratorial discourse (Booth 1961, Phelan 1996, Kearns 1999).

3.1.3. Whatever you may think of 'political correctness' in general, interpretive discourse must decide on how to gender a narrator grammatically, mainly because it would be stylistically awkward never to use a pronoun at all. A generic 'he' is clearly out of the question, and the option suggested by Bal – "I shall refer to the narrator as *it*, however odd this may seem" (1985: 119) – is not only extremely odd, indeed, but, as Ryan (1999: 141n17) points out, "incompatible with consciousness and linguistic ability". By way of compromise, most scholars now follow what has become known as 'Lanser's rule':

- **Lanser's rule:** in the absence of any text-internal clues as to the narrator's sex, use the pronoun appropriate to the author's sex; ie, assume that the narrator is male if the author is male, and that the narrator is female if the author is female, respectively (Lanser 1981: 166-68; Lanser 1992: ch1; Lanser 1995).

Hence the narrator of Dickens's *Hard Times* would be assumed to be male and referred to as "he", while the narrator of Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* would be assumed to be female and referred to as "she". See Culler (1988: 204-207) for a critique of the rule and for pointing out some interesting ramifications. Problematic in Lanser's gendered pronouns are (1) that they may attribute a narrative voice quality which is better left indeterminate, at least in certain cases (saying "narrative agency" and "it" poses just the opposite problem, however); (2) that they establish a questionable author-narrator link (cp [2.3.1](#)).

The problem of sexually indeterminate narrators usually arises with authorial narrators (heterodiegetic narrators) only. See Lanser (1995) and Fludernik (1999) for a discussion of sexually indeterminate *first-person* narrators in Jeannette Winterson's *Written on the Body* and Maureen Duffy's *Love Child*.

3.1.4. Depending on how the presence of a narrator is signaled in the text, one distinguishes between 'overt' and 'covert' narrators:

- An **overt narrator** is one who refers to him/herself in the first person ("I", "we" etc), one who directly or indirectly addresses the narratee, one who offers reader-friendly exposition whenever it is needed (using the 'conative' or 'appellative' discourse function), one who exhibits a 'discoursal stance' or 'slant' toward characters and events, especially in his/her use of rhetorical figures, imagery, evaluative phrases and emotive or subjective expressions (Jakobson's 'expressive function'), one who 'intrudes' into the story in order to pass philosophical or metanarrative comments, one who has a distinctive voice.
- A **covert narrator**, in contrast, is one who exhibits none of the features of overtness listed above: specifically, s/he is one who neither refers to him- or herself nor addresses any narratees, one who has a more or less neutral (nondistinctive) voice and style, one who is sexually indeterminate, one who shows no 'conative solicitude' whatsoever, one who does not provide exposition even when it is urgently needed, one who does not intrude or interfere, one who lets the story events unfold in their natural sequence and tempo ("lets the story tell itself", as is frequently, though not uncontroversially, said [Lubbock 1957 [1921]: 62; qtd Genette 1988 [1983]: 45]); in short, one whose discourse fulfills no obvious conative, phatic, appellative, or expressive functions. Covert narration can be most easily achieved by letting the action be seen through the eyes of an internal focalizer ([3.2.2](#)).

See [1.4](#), above, for a list of typical 'voice markers' which, in addition to the pragmatic signals discussed above, consider *content matter* and *subjective expressions*.

Obviously, overtness and covertness are relative terms, that is, narrators can be more or less overt, and more or less covert. Usually (but not always) overtness and covertness vary in inverse proportion such that the presence of one is an indication of the absence of the other. In analysis, it is always a good idea to look out for typical signals (or absences) of narratorial overtness or functionality.

3.1.5. Following Genette, we will make a *categorical* distinction between *two* principal types, homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narrators and narratives. The distinction is based on the narrator's "relationship to the story" (1980 [1972]: 248) – ie, whether s/he is present or absent from the story. To repeat from 1.10:

- In a **homodiegetic narrative** the (homodiegetic) narrator tells a story of personal experience. In other words, he or she is also one of story's acting characters. A homodiegetic narrator therefore splits up into a **narrating-I** (telling the story on the level of fictional communication) and an **experiencing-I** (on the level of action).
- In a **heterodiegetic narrative**, the story is told by a (heterodiegetic) narrator who is *not* present as a character in the story. A heterodiegetic narrator can have a narrating-I (using the first person on the level of fictional communication) but s/he cannot have an experiencing-I.

Usually, the two types correlate with a text's use of first-person and third-person pronouns. To repeat the rule of thumb mentioned in [1.11](#),

- a text is homodiegetic if among its story-related action sentences there are some that contain first-person pronouns (*I did this; I saw this; this was what happened to me*), indicating that the narrator was *at least* a witness to the action;
- a text is heterodiegetic if all story-related action sentences are third-person sentences (*She did this, this was what happened to him*).

3.1.6. In order to determine the 'relation' type of a narrative or a narrator, one must check for the presence or absence of an **experiencing-I** in the story's plain action sentences, ie, sentences which present an event involving the characters in the story. Note well that narrative texts make use of many

types of sentences which are *not* plain action sentences – descriptions, quotations, comments, etc (1.11).

As Genette points out, the criterial feature of homodiegetic narration is whether the narrator was ever present in the world of his/her story. The bare fact that homodiegetic narrators refer to themselves in the first person is not an absolutely reliable criterion for two reasons: (1) overt heterodiegetic narrators refer to themselves in the first person, too, and (2), more rarely though, there are some homodiegetic narrators who refer to themselves in the third person (famous classical example is Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*). See Tamir (1976); Genette (1980 [1972]: 245-247); Stanzel (1984: 79-110, 200-224, 225-236), Edmiston (1991).

3.1.7. At this point, let us briefly return to the concept of **voice**. Of course, a voice can only enter into a text through a reader's imaginary perception; hence, unless the text is an oral narrative in the first place, or is performed in the context of a public reading, or is an audio text, voice is strictly a readerly construct (Jahn 2001b). In the classical narratological model, 'voice' is primarily associated with the narrator's voice (this is also how we treated the topic in 1.3 ff). In 1.29, however, we were led to ask *how many voices* were projected in a particular passage from Austen's *Emma*. Under the growing impact of Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of narrative it is now standard practice to grant projection of voice to characters as well as narrators. On this basis, then,

- **textual** or **intratextual voices** are those of the narrator (= the text's 'narrative voice') and the characters; whereas
- the **extratextual voice** is that of the author. One normally considers the author's voice in two scenarios only: (a) when one has reason to believe that it is more or less identical to that of the narrator (as is often the case in authorial narration (aptly named, as one can see)), also in nonfictional, real-life, or historiographic narrative, or (b), conversely, when the author's and the narrator's voices are likely to be significantly *different* – in other words, when one assumes that the author intentionally uses a narrative voice distinct from his or her own.

3.1.8. Vocal characteristics can be profitably investigated by analyzing somebody's **dialect** (regional features, esp. pronunciation), **sociolect** (speech characteristics of a social group), **idiolect** (singular or idiosyncratic style), and **genderlect** (the gender-specific style preferred by women and men, respectively).

3.1.9. According to Bakhtin (1981a [1973]), there are two basic voice effects that can characterize a narrative text:

- **monologism:** the effect created when all voices sound more or less the same, producing a 'monologic' text.
- **dialogism:** the effect created when a text contains a diversity of authorial, narratorial, and characterial voices creating significant contrasts and tensions. The result is a **polyphonic** or dialogic text.

3.1.10. Not surprisingly, most theorists and interpreters (including Bakhtin himself) consider the dialogic text the more sophisticated, interesting and challenging form. There are two additional Bakhtinian terms that are frequently mentioned in this context:

- **heteroglossia** (literally, 'other-language'): the use of language elements inherited or learned from others. The concept stresses the fact that 'our' language is never truly our own, and that no language can be entirely private or idiosyncratic; hence, heteroglossia normally suffuses all discourses.
- **alterity:** the theme or effect of otherness or strangeness (especially as opposed to what is familiar and to what one considers one's own selfhood and unique identity). Cp the alterity effect created by the Russian-influenced slang used by the juvenile hooligans in Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*.

Genette (1980 [1972]: ch5) [voice = narrator's voice]; Bakhtin (1981a [1973]); Lanser (1981) [extra- and (intra)textual voices]; Fowler (1983) [excellent analysis of polyphony and dialect/sociolect in

Dickens's *Hard Times*]; Fludernik (1993a: 324) [on heteroglossia]; Aczel (1998a) [voice and intertextuality; voices in Henry James].

3.2. Focalization (point of view)

3.2.1. Genette's focalization

Adopting the term *focalization*, Genette sets out to explore the "different points of view from which [...] the action is looked at" (1980: 161). Further definitional questions include "Who sees?", "Who perceives?", "Who is the character whose point of view orients the narrative perspective?" (1980: 186), "Who serves as a text's center of orientation?", and, ultimately, "In what way is narrative information restricted with respect to completeness of information or omniscience?" (1988: 74). Although these prompts address different features – a text's alignment to a character's perception on the one hand and the overall scope and restriction of 'narrative information' on the other – they are easily combined using the following general definition.

- **focalization:** the selection and restriction of narrative information relative to somebody's perception, knowledge, and point of view.

Surveying Western narrative fiction, Genette distinguishes three major types of focalization – zero (unrestricted), internal (restricted to 'inside views', that is, views into or from within a character's mind), and external (restricted to 'outside views'). Genette also distinguishes three arrangement patterns – fixed, variable, and multiple focalization ([3.2.5](#)).

3.2.2. In non-focalization or zero focalization: the story's events are narrated from a wholly unrestricted or omniscient point of view. Typical example: Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749) and many other 18C and 19C heterodiegetic or authorial novels.

Here is an excerpt from a 20C novel, James A. Michener's *Hawaii* (1961).

Across a million years, down more than ten million years [the island] existed silently in the unknown sea and then died, leaving only a fringe of coral where the birds rest and where gigantic seals of the changing ocean play. Ceaseless life and death, endless expenditure of beauty and capacity, tireless ebb and flow and rising and subsidence of the ocean. Night comes and the burning day, and the island waits, and no man arrives. The days perish and the nights, and the aching beauty of lush valleys and waterfalls vanishes, and no man will ever see them. (p. 9)

The passage exhibits a panoramic point of view encompassing huge vistas of space and time. The narrator appears to have access to limitless information which transcends what is accessible to ordinary humans. He lightly refers to a time span of "more than ten million years" and asserts that "no man will ever see" the scenery's "aching beauty of lush valleys and waterfalls". To Genette's question "Who sees" the expected, if slightly surprising, answer is *nobody* because no perceiving character is present. To the question concerning the scope of narrative information the answer is *no restriction*, the narrator is omniscient. Hence, according to Genette, the passage is nonfocalized. [But is it? ([3.2.8](#))]

3.2.3. In internal focalization the story's events are focalized through a story-internal character. Narrative information is basically restricted to data available to this character's perception.

- **focal character / reflector / reflector character:** a character whose perception filters the narrative.

The term *reflector* was introduced by Henry James, who also used *center* and *mirror*. Alternate terms include *focal character* (Genette), *figural medium* (Stanzel), *filter* (Chatman), and *internal focalizer* (Bal). The proliferation of terms is an indication of the importance of the concept and the immense influence of the style.

Using a reflector character produces a subjective and 'impressionistic' view of the storyworld. It makes the reader co-experience what it is like to be in the head of somebody participating in the story's events. Third-person internal focalization is basically identical to the *figural narrative situation* (3.3.4), which, strictly speaking, wasn't invented until the early 20C period called 'modernism' (however, see de Jong 2001 for a discussion of much earlier proto-forms such as in Homer around 1000 BC).

For a typical example reconsider the beginning of Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1943) (already qtd in the Getting Started section under the heading of *figural narrative situation*):

He lay flat on the brown, pine-needled floor of the forest, his chin on his folded arms, and high overhead the wind blew in the tops of the pine trees. The mountainside sloped gently where he lay; but below it was steep and he could see the dark of the oiled road winding through the pass. There was a stream alongside the road and far down he saw a mill beside the stream and the falling water of the dam, white in the summer sunlight.

[To repeat some observations from 1.10, the passage closely represents and follows the reflector character's current perceptions – things he sees, feels, and hears ("he could see", the "pine-needled floor", the "gently" sloping ground; the wind blowing "high overhead".) Note that all narrative information is restricted and aligned to the reflector's current spatial and temporal co-ordinates. The notable effect of this technique is that the reader is *sucked* into the story, invited to see the world just as the character sees it, and co-experience what it is like to be a participant in the events. It is a hugely successful stylistic device, and we squarely owe it and its many variations to Henry James, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf.]

Many modernist novels of 'literary impressionism' built stories around carefully chosen reflector characters. These included seemingly everyday people such as Woolf's Clarissa Dalloway, an upper middle-class mother and wife, and Joyce's Leopold Bloom, an advertisement canvasser. Other popular reflector figures were intellectuals, artists, and children (Caracciolo/Guédon 2017), or characters placed in exceptional circumstances. In Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), one reflector is a shell-shocked and suicidal schizophrenic; in Graham Greene's *A Gun For Sale* (1936), the reflector is a murderer; and in Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano* (1947) he is an alcoholic.

3.2.4. External focalization is a form of presentation that restricts itself to mere "outside views", neutrally reporting what would be visible and audible to a virtual camera (plus sound recorder), without any "inside views" into the minds of the characters. (In contrast, zero focalization freely allows and internal focalization strictly depends on inside views.) Externally focalized narratives typically consist of dialogue and "stage directions" only, as in the following often quoted beginning of Hemingway's short story "The Killers" (1927).

The door of Henry's lunch-room opened and two men came in. They sat down at the counter.

What's yours? George asked them.

"I don't know," one of the men said. "What do you want to eat, Al?"

"I don't know," said Al. "I don't know what I want to eat."

Outside it was getting dark. The street-light came on outside the window. The two men at the counter read the menu. Nick Adams watched them. He had been talking to George when they came in.

[Not an entirely convincing example either? See 3.2.8 for an alternative approach.]

3.2.5. Genette additionally distinguishes three arrangement patterns. (1) Texts employing **fixed focalization** are exclusively presented from the point of view of a *single* reflector as in Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916). (2) **Variable focalization** occurs in narratives that employ *several* reflectors (in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, events are variously seen through the eyes of six major characters). (3) **Multiple focalization** (a special case of variable focalization) occurs in texts in which the events are told two or more times, each time seen through a different reflector (Patrick White's *The Solid Mandala*, detailed discussion in Jahn (2007), now excerpted in 9.3.

Genette also points out that focalization patterns can be static or dynamic along longer stretches of text. Fixed internal focalization is a static pattern by definition, other patterns dynamically shift from one type to another. For instance, Genette notes that many 19C novelists tend to introduce characters

via externally focalized block description before picking one of them as a reflector and presenting the events from his or her point of view (1980: 190).

3.2.6. Two special cases of focalization have attracted some attention in the literature, so I will briefly mention them here:

- **hypothetical focalization:** the representation of events or existents as they might have been perceived by a hypothetical observer or virtual spectator. [Herman 1994; Edmiston 1991: 150-9; Fludernik 1996: ch5.3.] Example: "Perhaps the eye of a scrutinizing observer might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure" (Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher").
- **empty center focalization:** basically like internal focalization except there is no actual reflector character present in the scene. Focalization in this case is assumed to proceed from the point of view of an 'empty (deictic) center'. Banfield (1987 – discussion of the "Time Passes" section of Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*); Fludernik (1996: ch5.2 – 'figuralization' in Mansfield's "At the Bay")

3.2.7. Here is a selectively annotated list of references to the classical (Genettean) account: Genette (1980 [1972]: 185-194 [building on Blin's (1954) concept of *restriction de champ*]); Bal (1983: 35-38); Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 71-85); Nünning (1989: 41-60); Vitoux (1982); Cordesse (1988); Toolan (1988: 67-76); Kablitz (1988); Edmiston (1989; 1991: Introduction and Appendix); Füger (1993); O'Neill (1994: ch4); Herman (1994); Deleyto (1996 [1991]); Nelles (1997: ch3); Jahn (1996, 1999, 2007); Niederhoff (2013) [focalization=restriction, perspective=perception]; Herman (2009). Focalization concepts have also been put to use in analyses of films (Jost 1989, Deleyto 1996 [1991], Branigan 1992: ch4, Kuhn 2009), pictures (Bal 1985: ch7; Bal 1990), comic strips (O'Neill 1994: ch4), and graphic novels (Hescher 2016). Controversial issues are discussed in Genette (1988 [1983]: ch11-12), Chatman (1986), Bal (1991: ch6); Fludernik (1996: 343-347), Jahn (1996, 1999, 2007), Toolan (2001), Prince (2001), Phelan (2001), Margolin (2009).

3.2.8. Constructivist focalization

The model presented in the following 20+ paras is an expansion of several earlier attempts (Jahn 1996, 1999, 2007). If, along with Genette, you believe the subject has caused "enough ink to flow" (1988: 65) feel free to skip forward to [3.3](#).

Why another account of focalization? Is anything wrong with the original model? Let us briefly review some critical comments.

- If we associate a reflector character with the question "who sees?" and the narrator with the question "who speaks?" it is easy to overlook that both can do both, ie, see and speak. Yet Genette intends the division to be rigorous, in effect barring the narrator from being able to see, both in the sense of "looking at the action" and in the wider sense of seeing something from a point of view. This, many narratologists now think, is a major fault.
- Closely related to this, calling an authorial narrative 'nonfocalized' seriously begs the question. Rather than suggesting *no* point of view, omniscience more likely rests on the authorial narrator's license to assume *any number* of points of view, including some not normally available in real life. Michener's text in 3.2.2 really proves the point.
- Regarding 'external focalization', as represented by the Hemingway text in 3.2.4, one does note that the passage includes the rather telling sentence "Nick watched them". As a matter of fact, the passage is easily read as a segment of internal focalization following Nick's attention and interest focus – even if the text refrains from representing any of Nick's thoughts or emotions directly. But we also have strategies for reading other people's minds by judging their actions and reactions (see Zunshine 2006 on 'Theory of Mind'). "The Killers" is Nick's story of initiation ([3.3.4](#)), and in order for it to work we need to know what the character sees and experiences, not what an objective camera, placed in an arbitrary location, happens to record.

- While most of the examples cited by Genette refer to heterodiegetic texts, focalization is better conceived of as pertaining to all narrative texts, specifically including first-person/homodiegetic ones (Edmiston 1991). Actually, Genette (1988: 78) did propose the term 'prefocalization' to account for homodiegetic texts, but that came as an afterthought only and has proved inconsequential.
- 'Perception' is a key concept with regard to focalization, yet most of its psychological underpinnings, especially its cognitive, emotional, and ideological conditioning is ignored in Genette's account (Rimmon-Kenan 1983).

As will be shown in the following, it is not too difficult to act on the objections and suggestions listed here – we'll get rid of nonfocalization, accept narrator-focalizers (Bal 1991), use a model that equally applies to first-person and third-person texts, and treat perception as psychologically conditioned. In doing so, we may not get all issues sorted, even introduce some problems of our own, but such is theory. In the words of Walt Kelly, the author of the classic *Pogo* cartoons, it will be our aim here to sprinkle some blossoms around and then run through the field barefooted in order to find out where the thorns are.

3.2.9. I am labeling the model 'constructivist' because it builds on the assumption that we can never perceive a thing X directly, let alone as "what it really is". Constructivists assume that seeing amounts to creating a mental representation of the sensory input that our sense organs are capable of recording, in effect allowing us to see a real X as a mental Y. 'Y' in this formula is a 'percept', a mental representation that our mind is able to manipulate, store, and retrieve, as opposed to both the pure 'sense data' recorded by our senses, and also the world as it really is. As Stanley Fish and many constructivists since have argued, humans – like all sentient organisms – have a 'shaping eye' that needs to construct what it sees, and being able to see is a function not only of the perceptive capabilities of the eye itself but of the interpretive mechanisms and strategies that an organism brings to the task. Very simply and reductively put, we see (a) what our eyes are constitutionally capable of seeing and (b) what we are interested in seeing. Note that natural perception is limited in several ways. Thus, our eyes happen to be insensitive to either extremely small or extremely large objects, such as objects on the atomic or the galactic scale. The deficiencies can be addressed by making use of (or inventing) tools like the microscope and the telescope. Another, equally important, limiting condition is that we may see sharp enough alright but simply not have the brains to see the relevant shape or pattern, such as recognizing a medical symptom. In this case, the deficiency can be cured by acquiring (learning) the interpretive strategy that enables us to do it. [Nünning (2001); Church (2000) on 'seeing as'; Fish (1980: 333) on 'shaping eyes' and 'interpretive strategies'; Jackendoff (1983: ch8) on 'preference rules'.]

Take the case of the common or garden frog, call him Kermit. Kermit's eyes are well suited to translate certain external stimuli into the sense data that his brain is able to interpret. Kermit is particularly interested in small, black, moving objects because these might be flies. Flies, he knows, are food, so whenever he sees a small, black, moving object, he will hop to and try to catch it, errors having been known to occur. Other things he largely ignores, except maybe females and competitors, for whom, I am sure, he also has stock modes of perception and action. Kermit's perception, one can say, is driven by a specially tuned mindset. Does this amount to saying that a frog's and a human's perceptive mechanisms amount to the same thing? Indeed, the basic constructivist design seems to be just the same. What difference there is lies less in the perceptive power of a frog's and a human's eyes than in the different mindsets that drive us, and them. To Kermit, flies are food, to me they are not. If Kermit sees X as Y, I am more likely to see X as Z, a fact that not only holds for frogs vs people, but also for people vs people. There you go: this is the very phenomenon that our model seeks to theorize further.

Apart from its constructivist foundation, the present approach heavily borrows from some much earlier accounts, especially Henry James's reflections on, and experiments in, perspectivized storytelling (1881), William James's (1890) theory of subjectivity, and Karl Bühler's (1934) notion of a person's spatio-temporal co-ordinate system.

3.2.10. Because an act of perception can be cast as a sentence containing 'wh-words' as placeholders the following multi-part mind map comes in handy for a first orientation.



Fig. 7. WHO perceives WHAT.

The WHO slot in this map identifies the perceiver or *subject of perception*; WHAT is the percept or *object of perception* (also the Y in the seeing-X-as-Y formula or the thing/situation/event focused on). For the purposes of focalization the most relevant perceivers are narrators and reflectors, nevertheless other characters (non-reflectors) and readers must also be considered as possible subjects of perception. An act of perception involves online or offline input based on the usual perceptual modes, offline perceptions being dreams, visions, and recalled memory scenes. Percepts may be stable or unstable (less or more ambiguous), fine or coarse in resolution, new or familiar, plain or supported by verbal concepts. (The ellipses marks in these phrases suggest the likely presence of intermediate categories.) Finally, the WHICH POINT OF VIEW slot includes facets like (1) the here-and-now situatedness of the act of perception (also known as the perceiver's *origo* or *deictic center*), (2) the perceptual equipment available to the perceiver (including any technical and organic options as well as their affordances and limitations), and (3) the all-important aggregate of mindset factors. All of these elements will be examined in much more detail in the following sections.

While the general definition of focalization as given in [3.2.1](#) is still compatible with our revised approach, we can now refine it as follows.

- focalization:** the perspectivization of narrative information by alignment to the orientation, perception, and thought of a **focalizer**. A focalizer may be a narrator (**narrator-focalizer**) or a character (**reflector, character-focalizer, internal focalizer**). Like any perceiver, a focalizer 'sees X as Y', in effect creating a filtered and colored view of the world. Apart from a focalizer's specific perceptual ability, restriction, or equipment (being short- or far-sighted, using a magnifying glass etc), his/her worldview also depends on a **mindset** of mental dispositions such as state of mind, attitude, interest, attention, knowledge, preferences, norms and values, ideological orientation, interpretive strategies etc (Rimmon-Kenan's 'facets of focalization', Nünning's 'norms and values', Fish's 'interpretive strategies', Jackendoff's 'preference rules').

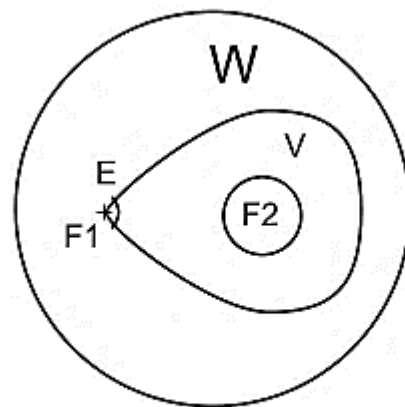
At this point, think of Patrick Süskind's novel *Perfume*, in which the main focalizer is gifted with an exceptional sense of smell. Or of Rose, the main character in Ursula LeGuin's "The Diary of the Rose", who knows how to operate a 'psychoscope', a science fiction gadget that visualizes other people's thoughts. Next, think of the proverbial optimist who sees his glass as half full, or of people who have a 'one-track mind'. Or of our friend Kermit the frog, to whom most things out there either are or aren't flies. Think of a murder mystery in which one chapter presents the story's events as seen through the eyes of a pathological serial killer, while another shows us one of his attacks as filtered through the perception of a victim, and a third one lets us witness the deductive reasoning of the profiler-detective second-guessing how the murderer's mind ticks. Note how the same narrative content could be presented quite differently – by selecting other focalizers or no internal focalizers at all, other points of attack, different sequential arrangements etc. Consider Mansfield's short story "Miss Brill" (1920), where we encounter a third-person reflector with an entirely rose-tinted worldview (to be wholly demolished in the end). Explore the hooliganized world created by and in the mind of the homodiegetic narrator-cum first-person reflector in Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* (1962). Grapple with the jaded pedophile's mind coloring Nabokov's *Lolita*. Note how easy it is to accept characters *and* narrators as focalizers and to adduce heterodiegetic and homodiegetic examples.

For ease of reference, I will generally consider a focalizer's perception and thought acts as parts of their mental activity or **mentation**. Narrators, performing their job of focalizing a narrative, give the narrative a perspectivized shape (this is the only sense of 'focalizer' that Genette accepts [1988: 73]).

The narrative discourse itself is a product of the narrator's mentation, which usually includes reader-oriented (pragmatic) goals such as being polite, relevant, and informative. Internal focalizers, in contrast, entertain *no* pragmatic relations with the reader, nor have they any inkling of the fact that they are used as internal focalizers. It is the narrator-focalizer who controls everything, and, strictly speaking, all internal focalizers are only stand-ins – substitute focalizers, used by the narrator (the 'primary' focalizer), for the special purposes and effects of internal focalization. There is only one way in which narrators and readers can interact with reflectors and that is by the unilateral process of 'transposition', to which I will come in a moment.

3.2.11. Let us be clear about the consequences of such "coming to terms" (Chatman 1990). The first and most basic premise followed here is that any narrative text has at least one narrator-focalizer. Second, a text may or may not have one or several internal focalizers. Third, because narrators are accepted as focalizers the term 'nonfocalization' no longer fits anything, not even a seemingly objective utterance like "Water boils at 100°C" (cf Genette [1988: 101]). The same goes for the examples of 'zero focalization' cited in Jahn (1999). Fourth, 'external focalization' may still meaningfully refer to a behaviorist description, or neutral report, of events, nevertheless it is here understood to proceed from, hence to express, a narratorial point of view. In order to avoid confusion, I have already suggested to deprecate the term 'external focalization' in favor of 'outside view', acknowledging that however neutral or behaviorist an outside view may be, it is based on somebody's viewpoint and perception (the narrator's 'imaginary perception', to be precise). Fifth, while it makes terminological sense to oppose the terms 'internal focalizer' and 'external focalizer' (the latter Bal's variant designation for a narrator-focalizer), the plain fact is that an "external" focalizer's focalization does not normally result in external focalization (outside view), indeed that happens only rarely. For this reason, I will stick to the term 'narrator-focalizer', denoting an agent who is free to use inside and/or outside views as s/he sees fit.

3.2.12. In order to get a firmer grip on further aspects of perception I would like to dig up a 'mental model' of vision that I introduced in an earlier essay (Jahn 1996).



F1 focus-1; *E* eye;
F2 focus-2, area in focus; *V* field of vision; *W* world

Fig. 8. A model of visual perception.

Figure 8 displays the basic relationships between a *World*, an *eye*, and a *field of vision*. More specifically, it lists two 'foci' corresponding to two distinct meanings of the word *focus*, a key concept also in Genette's exposition. Hence *F1*, or 'focus-1', is the burning point of the eye's lens (the point marked "+" indicating a person's literal 'point of view'), and *F2* or 'focus-2', is the *area in focus* including the object focused on.

Because vision stands out as the standard prime example of perception, it lends itself to be treated as prototypical and paradigmatic. Naturally there is no denying that there are important differences between the various perceptual channels, but there is also a strong general family resemblance that allows us to recognize many common features, especially things like mindset conditioning and the 'shaping-eye' effect. Therefore, by metaphoric extension, our model's eye may be taken to represent any and all sense organs, while *F1* stands for a perceiving subject, a focalizer, a text's 'central

consciousness' etc, and F2 indicates the 'what' or 'percept' that is seen (Bal's 'focalized'). Finally, V circumscribes the extent of a focalizer's perception, including liminal cases such as peripheral, out-of-focus, and semiconscious percepts. Note that both F2 and V are variable in location and extent and therefore already act as initial filters (reductions, restrictions) on the complexity of the world. Because filtering errors are of particular interest in this context the reader is invited to take part in the striking 'selective attention test' offered at www.dansimons.com/videos.html demonstrating the so-called 'inattentive blindness' effect.

Commenting on the 'vision-centric' approach pursued here, Huck (2009) has pointed out that we do not actually have an "aural, olfactory or even a haptic equivalent to a point of view: a point of smell, maybe, or a point of taste" (2009: 202). Well, one can certainly speak of a 'point of audition'; it's a well-established film-theoretical term. Nevertheless, Huck has a point. Perhaps a more suitable common element could be found in a parameter question like "WHO perceives WHAT as happening WHERE/WHEN" – in which WHO is the central consciousness that shapes perception and sensation, WHAT is the X-perceived-as-Y percept, and WHERE/WHEN is the perceived spatio-temporal situatedness of Y.

3.2.13. Along with Bickerton (1995) let us distinguish two kinds of perception:

- **online perception / primary perception:** vision, audition, touch, smell, taste, and other sensations (pain, heat etc), based on actual sensory input. Jost's and Nelles's terms for the textual representations of these are **ocularization** (vision), **auricularization** (audition), **gustativization** (taste), **olfactivization** (smell), and **tactivilization** (touch).
- **offline perception / imaginary perception:** the imaginary sights, sounds, touches, smells, tastes, and other sensations that one perceives in recollection, vision, hallucination, and dream (without actual sensory data input). Often colloquially referred to as what one sees/hears "in the mind's eye/ear".

As Gerald Prince (2001: 44) says, "the verb 'perceive' has to be taken in a broad rather than narrow acceptation: to apprehend with the senses (to see, hear, touch, etc) or with the mind, or with something like their equivalent. In other words, what is perceived may be abstract or concrete, tangible or intangible – sights, sounds, smells, or thoughts, feelings, dreams, and so on".

In Marcel Proust's seven-volume novel *In Search of Lost Time* (1913-27) (one of the key texts of 20C fiction and Genette's master test case), both online and offline perceptions show up as recurring topics (*leitmotifs*), and interestingly they are all seemingly chance and trivial – the *sight* of some trees from a coach, the *sound* of a spoon on a plate, the *feel* of uneven flagstones in a courtyard, the *taste* of a Madeleine cookie dunked in a cup of tea (that's the universally known one), the *smell* of a public toilet on the Champs Elysées, and *bending down* to open one's shoelaces.

3.2.14. Further on offline perception consider this passage about a condemned man's vision of future events:

I see the lives for which I lay down my life, peaceful, useful, prosperous and happy, in that England which I shall see no more. I see Her with a child upon her bosom, who bears my name. I see her father, aged and bent, but otherwise restored, and faithful to all men in his healing office, and at peace. I see the good old man, so long their friend, in ten years' time enriching them with all he has, and passing tranquilly to his reward.
(Dickens, *Tale of Two Cities*, copied from 5.2.1)

In fiction, the representation of imaginary perception generally uses the same styles and techniques that are used to represent characters' online perception. This can be employed for manipulative purposes as in the 'verisimilar dream' case where the reader at a late point in the narrative proceedings is told that previous happenings were "all a dream" (cp James Thurber's great short story "The Lady on 102"). That said, imaginary perception often advertises its status by being notably less realistic than online perception. It is, of course, not bound by real-life constraints and allows all sorts of spatiotemporal jumps. Add to this that it can be extremely fuzzy or 'grainy' one moment and extremely 'high density' the next, as when a significant memory detail swims into focus. The Proust examples mentioned above – all of them loaded 'epiphanies' (3.3.10) – are cases in point. Perhaps the most famous example can be found in Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" where, in the

final stanza, it is the poet's *remembered* (offline) vision of the daffodils that makes him understand the true impact of the original experience:

I gazed – and gazed – but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Consider also the finely paradoxical statement "I shut my eyes in order to see" generally attributed to the French painter Paul Gauguin.

Regarding narrative texts, two special cases of offline perception are of particular importance. One is that in the process of narrating the narrator imagines or recollects the incidents of the story, or, to factor it out more succinctly, the heterodiegetic narrator *imagines* and the homodiegetic narrator *recollects*, recollection clearly being a special type of imaginary perception. The other special case, often noted by theorists, is that narrative "invites the reader's imaginative cooperation" (Genette 1993: 39-40), or as Ohmann (1971: 14) puts it, the text "leads the reader to imagine a speaker, a situation, a set of ancillary events". We, too, will consider the reader a crucial player in the 'game of focalization' (Vitoux 1982).

Another point worthy of note is that imagining sights and sounds is generally easier than imagining smells and tastes. As Ryan (2010: 470) argues, percepts of taste and smell may well rely on being associated with wider conceptual processes and structures. Indeed, it is sensible to assume that perception can involve conceptualization (thought), either concurrently or as a cause and effect process. Similarly, Herman (2009: 123) has argued that focalization needs to be correlated to general sense-making strategies available via a 'cognitive grammar'. We will take these notions on board by closely linking focalization and other mental activities.

3.2.15. Figure 9 lists and connects elements and processes of mentation.

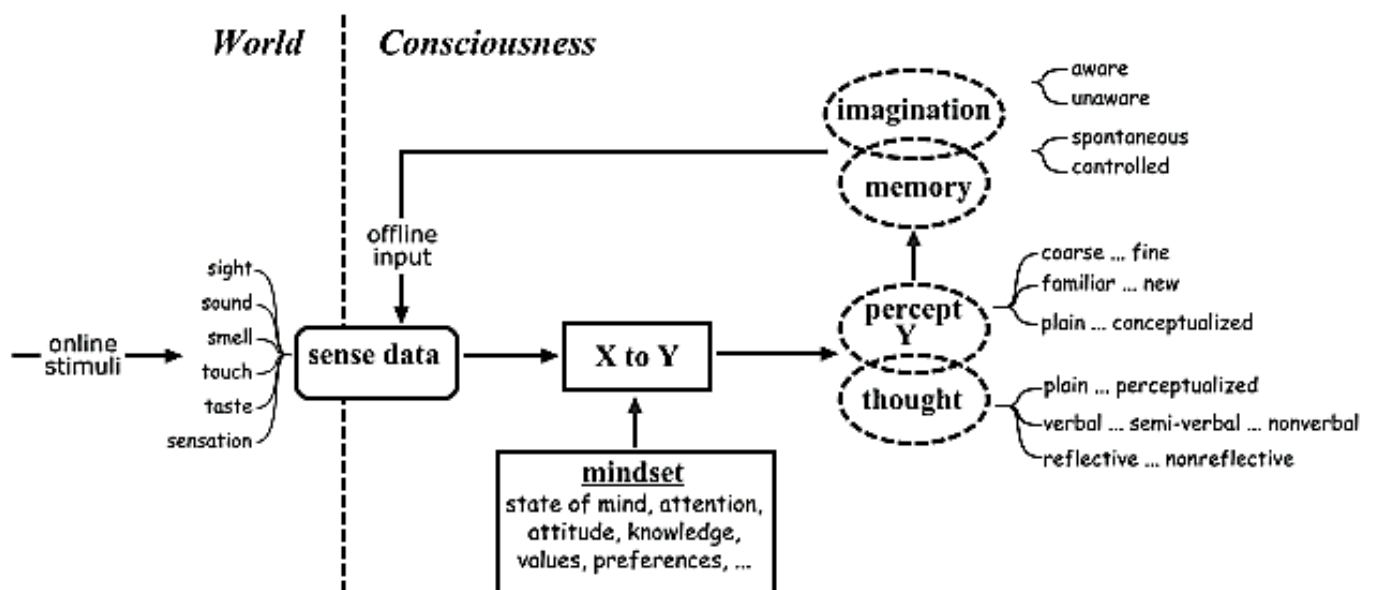


Fig. 9. Processes of mentation.

The graphic shows the external World as opposed to a human Consciousness, with the vertical dotted line separating the external and the internal or psychological space. World meets mind at the point where our senses translate external stimuli into 'sense data'. Considering the limited sensitivity of our

sense organs this first filtering is responsible for the relative coarseness or 'graininess' of the input data. The 'X to Y' module then goes on to construe percept Y as the product of the data and any or all of the mindset factors.

Fairly often, a percept will be accompanied by a concurrent stream of thought, and for this reason *percept* and *thought* have been drawn as permeable and overlapping shapes. A percept may trigger a thought, and a thought may shadow or supplement a percept (see the note on 'conceptualization' and 'perceptualization' in the next para). For offline sense-data input the model specifies *imagination* and *memory* as input-generating modules. While much of the makeup of these modules resists rational and intuition-based analysis, what we can say is that, like percepts and thoughts, imagination and memory are best treated as linked and mutually supportive faculties. For instance, imagination can flesh out a fleeting impression and make a fuzzy memory more distinct. This generally is a necessary and enabling condition, but it can also be a possible cause of error (usually called the 'false memory syndrome', see this [wikipedia](#) entry for definition and examples). The farther we go back in memory the stronger the influence of imaginary gap-filling tends to be, up to a point where we can no longer be certain that what we remember ever actually happened (see [3.2.29.3](#) for a narrator's comment on this). Moreover, any sense data played back via the secondary route of memory needs to be reprocessed by the "X to Y" module, possibly resulting in a Y' notably different from the original Y – usually because one's mindset has changed in the course of time. But the converse is also true – very few if any of the elements generated in and by the imagination are wholly "new" because many offline percepts can be traced back to percepts already present in memory. Of course, even though not shown in the graphic, there is also a strong linkage between memory and the various mindset components.

Note that the narrator – the agent responsible for the text's realization – is under no obligation to present a focalizer's mentation *exhaustively*. Rendering all of a character's perceptions, feelings, thoughts and emotions at any given moment just isn't a practicable option. Much of the information would be redundant, communicative efficiency would suffer severely, narrative speed would become unmanageable ([5.2.3](#)). Add to this that readers are usually good at handling selective information and filling gaps. Nevertheless, we can of course distinguish between styles of 'rich' and styles of 'sparse' representations. In "The Killers" example, for instance ([3.2.4](#)), we encounter a markedly sparse representation which displays the reflector's visual and auditory percepts but excludes any mention of emotions, feelings, and thoughts. The opposite case – a rich representation covering much minute detail of many mental activities – can be found in Péter Nádas's novel *Parallel Stories* (2005).

For a further distinction, consider that both imaginative perception and memory recall can happen in 'controlled' or 'spontaneous' fashion, with (obviously) various stages in between. Typically, a narrator can exert a high degree of control over his or her imaginative visions, often aided by the process of revision. We need to use the term 'spontaneous' with due caution, however, as there may be all sorts of causes that we are not necessarily conscious of. Let us also note that the perceiver of imaginative data may be aware or unaware of its offline status – which, by the way, is often used as a deceptive narrative device). Still, as long as we are aware of the deceptive potential, the distinction generally allows us to tag a dream as 'offline/unaware' and a day-dream as 'offline/aware'.

3.2.16. Percept and thought usually appear in correlation and interaction, and sometimes they may be linked as cause and effect. I will use the term **conceptualization** to describe the fact that a percept has triggered a thought or evoked a particular concept (for instance, I may recognize a squiggle on a piece of paper as *uncle George's signature*). Conversely, I will speak of **perceptualization** when a thought or concept evokes a percept ("imagine a *duck*"). Generally, a person who has access to specialist knowledge is likely to have more 'articulate' perceptions than others, such as when somebody is able not only to just see a tangle of wires but to identify a damaged electrical coil. Narrative texts present many instructive examples. Readers generally perceptualize what the text tells them (see [3.2.18](#) and [3.2.22](#) for examples), and narrators often take great pains to use the exactly right words to represent a character's perceptions. Note the use of typical diction and dialect in the following example:

Ol Abe always felt relaxed and great in his Cadillac and today he felt betteranever. Ghuddham if this wasnt a real fine day and he looked at the back seat, at the floor (seems to be a little messy, but the boys always clean it out after theys finished washin), rubbed his hand along the fine upholstery, patted the dashboard again (ghuddamn if it didnt shine like a babys ass), turned up the radio and once more dug the cats washin their cars with buckets of water, soap and sponges. (Selby, *Last Exit to Brooklyn* 275)

Consider also the following passage in which the text simulates the reduced conceptual competence of an animal, a lion, who the narrator momentarily picks as a reflector. The "object" and "thing" observed by the lion is a safari jeep. There is quite a jarring effect when the text suddenly shifts to an entirely different level of conceptualization.

Then watching the object, not afraid, but hesitating before going down the bank to drink with such a thing opposite him, he saw a man figure detach itself from it and he turned his heavy head and swung away toward the cover of the trees as he heard a cracking crash and felt the slam of a .30-06 220-grain solid bullet that bit his flank and ripped in sudden hot scalding nausea through his stomach. (Hemingway, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber")

3.2.17. Depending on whether it is online or offline perception (3.2.13) that is taking part in an act of mentation, let us distinguish between **online mentation** and **offline mentation**. Using these terms we can lay out a general framework of focalization that includes levels, dependencies, and processes.

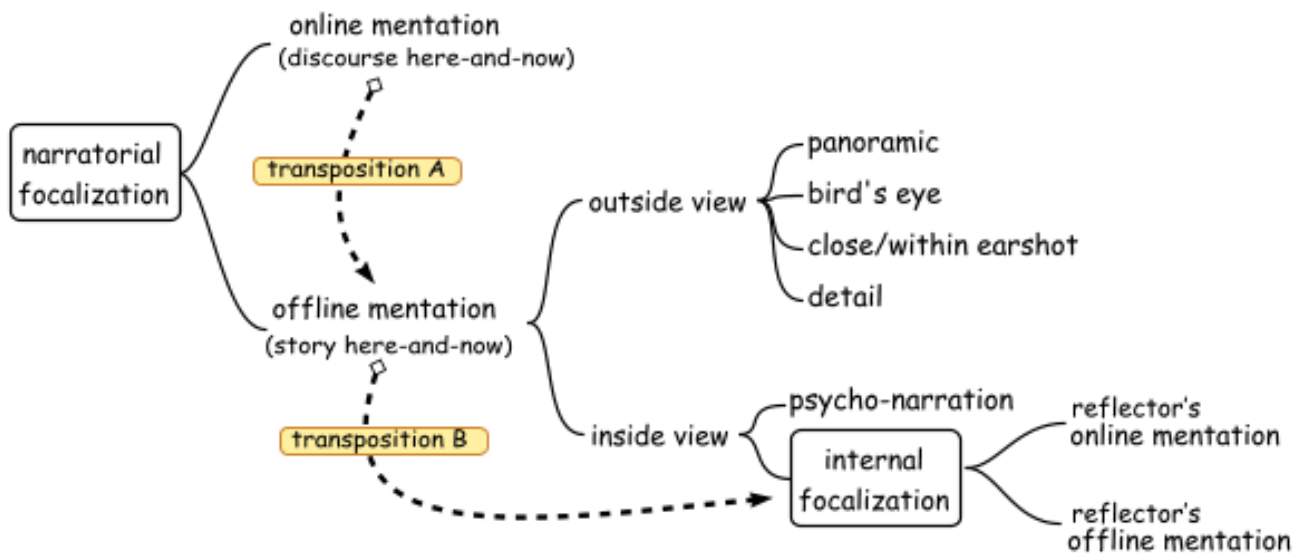


Fig. 10. The framework of focalization.

A narrator's *online mentation* is grounded in the point-of-view co-ordinates of his or her discourse here-and-now (basic stance: Here I am, telling this story). Provisionally, we may take this to be the reader's reception here-and-now as well – Here I am, reading this novel, in the presence of someone telling a story.

A narrator's *offline mentation* allows him or her – and us – to relocate to the imaginary co-ordinates of the story, as indicated by the 'transposition A' jump from *discourse here-and-now* to *story here-and-now*. Many point-of-view options fan out at this point, for instance, Here I (the narrator) am, looking at the scene of action from a panoramic point of view; or, Here I am, positioning myself within earshot, so that I can overhear (and thus report) a conversation between characters; or, Here I go, executing 'transposition B' to co-experience the reflector's own online or offline mentation. Readers, for their part, may imaginatively hear the narrator speak and, like the narrator, let themselves be transported to various locations in the story here-and-now, or right into the mind of a reflector character. Of course, characters, too, imaginatively transpose to other times and places, but in their case it is from a base position of story here-and-now to offline here-and-now, and, normally, back again. As just noted, in the mode of internal focalization any reflector's offline here-and-now becomes a target transposition location for narrator and reader as well.

3.2.18. Unsurprisingly, authors and narrators are well aware of the fact that transposition is part and parcel of the "imaginative co-operation" required from readers (Genette 1993). Note the following "invitations":

It was now the middle of May, and the morning was remarkably serene, when Mr Allworthy walked forth on the terrace where the dawn opened every minute that lovely prospect we have before described to his eye. [...] Reader, take care. I have unadvisedly led thee to the top of as high a hill as Mr Allworthy's and how to get

thee down without breaking thy neck, I do not well know. However, let us e'en venture to slide down together, for Miss Bridget rings her bell, and Mr Allworthy is summoned to breakfast, where I must attend, and, if you please, shall be glad of your company. (Fielding, *Tom Jones* [1749])

You shall see them, reader. Step into this neat garden-house on the skirts of Whinbury, walk forward into the little parlour – there they are at dinner. [...] You and I will join the party, see what is to be seen, and hear what is to be heard. (Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley* [1849])

As a matter of fact, we can hardly ever refuse a narrative's invitation to "step into" the story or join the story's "party" – unless, that is, if we decide to stop reading or listening. Interestingly, the Brontë passage was copied from [2.3.5](#), where it is cited as an example of narrative 'transgression'. In the light of our present theorizing I am tempted to say that it is nothing less than a narrative essential. Nevertheless, we should allow for the fact that potential transposition targets may exert a variable gravitational pull, depending on factors like the perceptual graininess of the text and the degree of narratorial or figural prominence. As we saw in our initial discussion of the figural narrative situation ([1.17](#) f.), features like these are often directly correlated.

3.2.19. The concept of transposition is squarely owed to Karl Bühler, who illustrated it by referring to the saying *If the mountain won't come to Mohammed then Mohammed must go to the mountain*. In Bühler's adaptation, Mohammed is cast in the role of a perceiver, and the mountain is assumed to be a distant object beyond his range of online perception. Yet Mohammed doesn't necessarily have to go to the mountain. Locked in his current spatiotemporal coordinates – his 'I-here-now point of origin' or (as Bühler called it) 'origo' – Mohammed can (i) let the mountain come to him by picturing it to be standing right outside his window, or else (ii) he can *mentally* go to the mountain and see it from an assumed point of view, or (iii) he can point in the direction of where he knows the mountain to be, describing it from afar and relating it to his own bodily orientation. Type (ii) is what Bühler famously calls 'transposition to the *Phantasma*' – the precise move readers execute when they immerse themselves in a fairy tale, listen to a travelogue, or read a novel. For illustration Bühler presents an eye-opening observation:

Suppose the hero is sent to Rome and the author has the choice whether he should continue his account with *there* or *here*. "*There* he stamped around the forum the whole live-long day, *there* ..." It could just as well be *here*; what is the difference? *Here* implies a displacement of Mohammed to the mountain, whereas *there* at such a position in the context simulates the third type. (1990 [1934]: 155)

Even in everyday perception and conversation, Bühler points out, we are continually transposing to virtual deictic positions, mentally rotating our body axes in order to assess where something is in relation to ourselves, or how something must appear to somebody else, or to guess what it must be like to be in a particular situation. Interestingly, the one target location Bühler does not explicitly mention is moving into somebody's head and seeing the world from a reflector's point of view. However, it is clear that this, too, is a variant of his transposition to the *Phantasma*.

While I will stick with Bühler's term many competing concepts have been suggested in the literature. Gerrig (1993) uses 'immersion', Duchan et al. (1995) develop a 'deictic shift theory'. Ryan (1991) describes processes of 'recentering' and 'relocation' in possible worlds; Ryan (2013) discusses 'immersion', 'telepresence', and 'interactivity' as well as degrees of readerly "absorption", including (at the high end of the scale) stages such as "imaginative immersion", "entrancement", "addiction", and others. Wolf (2013) and Koblizek, ed (2017) are readers on a theory of 'aesthetic illusion'. Drawing on neuroscientific research, Wojciehowski and Gallese (2011) have proposed a widely noted theory of 'embodied simulation'.

3.2.20. Let's look at two examples of **narratorial focalization**, both specifically concerned with online mentation. A narrator's online mentation is usually presented in the narrative mode of comment ([5.3.2](#)). Comment is a narrative pause which momentarily focuses not on past story events but on the narrator's current situation, as s/he is presenting (writing or speaking) the narrative discourse. Here are two examples, one homodiegetic and one heterodiegetic.

I read over the above lines and cannot help remarking in myself a certain discomfort, a physical oppression only too indicative of the state of mind in which I sit down today in my little study, mine these many years, at

Freising on the Isar, on the 27th of May 1943, three years after Leverkühn's death (three years, that is, after he passed from deep night into the deepest night of all), to make a beginning at describing the life of my unhappy friend now resting – oh, may it be so! – now resting in God. (Mann, *Doctor Faustus* 9)

The novel's homodiegetic narrator here pauses in the act of telling the story to look at "the above lines" (this is the online perception of the manuscript that lies before him, and at the same time it is the printed text we are just reading). Then he goes on to comment on his present environment, the current date, his "state of mind", and his current difficult project, which is writing the biography of his friend Leverkühn. The passage helps us build a mental image of the narrator, his discourse here-and-now, his emotional state, and, last but not least, the particular mindset that drives his perception of the story matter. Logically enough, we will call this type of focalization **online homodiegetic** and its third-person counterpart **online heterodiegetic**.

For an example of the online heterodiegetic type we'll go right back to one of the earliest novels in English, Robert Greene's *Pandosto*, written in 1588. It begins as follows:

Among all the passions wherewith human minds are perplexed there is none that so galleth with restless despite as that infectious sore of jealousy, for all other griefs are either to be appeased with sensible persuasions, to be cured with wholesome counsel, to be relieved in want, or by tract of time to be worn out – jealousy only excepted, which is so sauced with suspicious doubts and pinching mistrust that whoso seeks by friendly counsel to raze out this hellish passion, it forthwith suspecteth that he giveth this advice to cover his own guiltiness.

Here the heterodiegetic narrator starts out with a general reflection. Although not explicitly mentioning his current environment, his here-and-now is of course present in the very existence of the discourse text itself. Detecting certain 'voice markers' (1.4) we can hear the narrator's voice in his emotional diction and intricate parallelisms (euphuisms). Moreover, his sweeping statements on the subject of jealousy seem to invite us to partake in the social game that the psychologist Eric Berne has called *Ain't it Awful*. Then, by way of perceptualization, he begins to create two actor roles: one a victim of the "hellish passion", and the other a well-intentioned but ineffectual counselor, both turning into fleshed-out characters in what follows. (In *A Winter's Tale* Shakespeare used a modified version of the plot.) Just like in the Mann passage quoted before, the narrator's mindset shapes form and structure of the narrative he is going to tell.

Many critics have dismissed comment passages, especially when coming from a heterodiegetic narrator, as rambling and irrelevant excursions. True enough, momentarily foregrounding the narrator's here-and-now, they keep the reader from getting on with it – getting on with what the characters do and what happens next at the level of story here-and-now. However, as the two excerpts demonstrate, narrators may use such 'intrusions' (Lodge 1992: ch2) for important tasks such as revealing their mindsets, reaching out to their readers, and creating a common focus of interest. Now often termed 'metanarrative comment', a narrator's online mentation is well worth close analysis (Neumann and Nünning 2014); be warned, however, that some narrators may turn out to be unreliable or even deceptive both in presentation and in evaluation (7.6). If, on the other hand, narrators do not let any online mentation enter their discourse then it is up to the reader to work out the teller's mindset and communicational stance from other textual cues.

3.2.21. From narratorial online mentation we now turn to the more important case of narratorial offline mentation – with the narrator "looking at the action". Using three main sets of features – (i) presence or absence of characters in the scene, (ii) position of the narrator's scenic point of view/point of audition, (iii) choice of outside or inside views – we can derive five main types (plus many subtypes):

(1) Outside view I: no characters in scene

In a scene without any characters the narrator freely positions him- or herself so as to report happenings and describe existents from a panoramic, bird's eye, close up, or detail point of view. (The Michener passage quoted in 3.2.2 uses a panoramic view.)

(2) Outside view II: characters in scene

Even if there are characters – potential internal focalizers – present in the scene, the narrator may still choose to use outside views only. The point-of-view positions or camera shots are the same as listed in (1). The 'within earshot' position perhaps deserves special mention because it identifies a point of audition that allows the narrator to overhear and report a current conversation. (See the annotated Hardy passage in 3.2.22 for an example.)

(3) **Inside view I: hypothetical**

Without actual or certain knowledge of what a character saw or thought, the narrator reports what s/he thinks a character "must have" seen or thought – the basis of the inference being implicit self-characterization (7.5), general and actual behavior, or even ordinary speculation (loosely called 'mind-reading'). The device is frequent in heterodiegetic nonfiction such as historiography and biography, but it can also appear in homodiegetic speculation on other minds (or even one's own, see 3.2.29.3). Example: "Kafka must have been wildly resentful of his two brothers" (Cohn 1999: 27).

(4) **Inside view II: psycho-narration**

Looking into a character's mind, the narrator reports and comments on conscious, semi-conscious, or unconscious processes from a distanced, "psycho-analytical" point of view. Typically, the narrator will discuss and evaluate a character's mentation, and may incidentally note what the character is *not* aware of. As Cohn (1999: 26) puts it, it is a "technique where the narrator's voice is clearly set off from the language that runs through his subject's head". (See Cozzens example in 3.2.29.4.)

(5) **Inside view III: internal focalization**

The narrator positions him- or herself in the mind of a character-focalizer, thereby delegating focalization to the reflector's mentation. This is the standard setup of reflector-mode narration in general, and the figural narrative situation in particular, see 3.3.8 ff.

3.2.21.1. In the process of reading, attribution of focalization must be considered revisable and dynamic. Consider the sentences "The room was dark. John opened the door and entered" (Chatman 1990: 30). One can easily read this as 'outside view I (no character in scene)' for the first sentence and 'outside view II/character in scene' for the second, with perhaps a time lapse in between. Now consider, in contrast, "John opened the door and entered. The room was dark". A likely reading for this is 'outside view II (character in scene)' for the first sentence and 'inside view III (internal focalization)' for the second. However, if we accept that cognitive 'recency' beats cognitive 'primacy' (as I think we should, Jahn 1997) then "John opened the door" can already be read (or re-interpreted) as internal focalization. In a similar vein, the troublesome incipit of Hemingway's "The Killers" can be seen as either (a) involving a shift from 'outside view/characters in scene' to 'inside view/internal focalization' or (b) as involving no shift because the whole passage can be re-interpreted as 'inside view/internal focalization' once Nick is established as a reflector.

3.2.21.2. Further refinement to narratorial offline focalization becomes available by paying attention to the various modes, goals, and preferences of homodiegetic vs heterodiegetic narration. As readers of this script you know that homodiegetic and heterodiegetic content mainly varies with respect to the accessibility, validity, and accountability of information. That is, while the heterodiegetic narrator has conventional access to other minds and may freely and factually present third-person inside views, the homodiegetic narrator has first-hand access to the mind of the experiencing-I/first-person reflector only (with category (3), above, possibly serving as a substitute option). Unlike heterodiegetic narrators, homodiegetic narrators are only witnesses to the narrated events, and the reliability of their judgment can always be challenged by the question *How do you know*. The heterodiegetic narrator *imagines*, and what s/he imagines is narrative fact; the homodiegetic narrator *recollects*, and what s/he remembers may or may not be true. As for the fifth type, internal focalization, we can, of course, differentiate between homodiegetic (first-person) and heterodiegetic (third-person) reflectors, but since both types of reflectors are equally locked in the here and now of a story situation, differences between them can only be small. The Chandler excerpt that was quoted in 1.30 and the technique of *interior monologue* (8.9), which is used in both homodiegetic and heterodiegetic texts, can serve as cases in point.

3.2.22. Scarry's (1995) annotated reading of the beginning of Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* may serve to illustrate the heterodiegetic case of *outside view II: characters in scene*. Scarry uses italics to

spell out the "labour of imaginative construction" that the text puts on its readers. It is a great experiment in close reading.

On an evening in the later part of May [*picture this:*] a middle-aged man was walking homeward from Shaston to the village of Marlott, in the adjoining Vale of [*hear the names*] Blakemoor or Blackmoor. [*Look closely at the walker's legs.*] The pair of legs [*now picture their work of weight-bearing*] that carried him [*assess how well they hold that weight*] were rickety, [*and how that affects his motion*] and there was a bias in his gait [*watch which way the load leans*] which inclined him [*superimpose a geometric figure into the midst of this representational picture*] some what to the left of a straight line. . . . [*Picture a second person.*] Presently he was met by an elderly parson [*look closely at his legs*] astride on a [*look closely at the colour*] gray mare, who, as he rode, [*hear the sounds coming now*] hummed a wandering tune. [*Hear a voice saying*] 'Good night t'ee,' [*and look to see who it comes from*] said the man with the basket. (Scarry 1995: 21)

Actually, some commentators have begun to question whether readers always read as imaginatively perceptive as Scarry proposes, or indeed whether it is something a good reader should do. Sanford and Emmott's (2012) distinction between phases of 'deep' and 'shallow' text processing might be worth exploring further. To my mind, however, realistic or not, Scarry's reading is highly enlightening, and if there is a choice between it and one that is shallow, or cursory, or careless, there is every reason to give it particular weight and attention. Moreover, regarding the special context of outside-view focalization it is striking how Scarry's experiment brings out the range of possible spatial standpoints, with the 'within earshot' option playing a prominent role. More than any other reading mode Scarry's reading demonstrates how a passage of narrative text can be based on camera-like 'shots' and 'angles', as mind-mapped in [3.2.17](#). Indeed, many of the technical terms used in cinematic practice would seem to be applicable, see paras [F2](#) and [F5.1](#) of PPP's film doc.

At this point we are, of course, strongly reminded of Genette's call to order that "unlike the director of a movie, the novelist is not compelled to put his camera somewhere; he has no camera" (1988: 73). Against this let us now posit the stark antithesis that a narrator does have a camera, albeit only a virtual one, a recording device that selects and displays the sights and sounds that encompass a story's scenes and events. Indeed, we can go further and say that the narrator has *two* virtual cameras: one for outside views, and one for inside views – a **scenic camera** and a **psycho-camera**. Remember, the concept of a virtual camera proved quite helpful in defining the concept of 'external' focalization ([3.2.4](#)) (even if we decided not to use it). Moreover, terms like *vision from behind* and *vision from within* – Pouillon's definitions of narratorial and reflectorial focalization (approvingly cited by Genette 1972: 189) – are also very obvious analogies of shots taken by a film camera (in this case the 'over-the-shoulder' and the 'point-of-view' shot, respectively, cp [F4.2.4](#)).

To labor the point just a little, consider the following impressive 'zoom-out' shot, depicting a reflector's offline vision.

Out from Brocton. across the entire county, across county after county, across state after state, across woods and templed hills, across waterways and railways, across beaches, bays, and capes, across the corporate limits of towns large and small, across great cities spreading for square miles, across the enormous panoramas of the whole eastern seaboard, the same shining morning, the same serene radiance, might confidently be figured to lie. (Cozzens, *By Love Possessed* 509).

3.2.23. A focalizer, we said earlier, sees X as Y, creating a filtered and colored image of the world depending on a range of mindset dispositions. Contrasting the offline perceptions (memories) of four hypothetical travelers – four potential focalizers – William James offered this splendid illustration:

Let four men make a tour in Europe. One will bring home only picturesque impressions, costumes and colors, parks and views and works of architecture, pictures and statues. To another all this will be non-existent; and distances and prices, populations and draining arrangements, door- and window-fastenings, and other useful statistics will take their place. A third will give a rich account of the theatres, restaurants, and public balls, and naught beside; whilst the fourth will perhaps have been so wrapped in his subjective broodings as to tell little more than a few names of places through which he passed. (William James, 1890: 286-7)

One can easily recognize that the four men's varying "impressions" – all clearly filtered and colored views of the world – are the result of perceptions caused and shaped (partly also impeded) by

individual mindsets. Interestingly, James refrains from censuring any of the views as inadequate or false, even though it would surely be fair to say that the fourth man is less perceptive than the other three. Henry James, recognizing the literary potential of his brother's thought experiment, added a significant twist to it in his famous image of the "House of Fiction":

[At] each of [the windows of the House of Fiction] stands a figure with a pair of eyes, or at least with a field-glass, which forms, again and again, for observation, a unique instrument, insuring to the person making use of it an impression distinct from every other. He and his neighbours are watching the same show, but one seeing more where the other sees less, one seeing black where the other sees white, one seeing big where the other sees small, one seeing coarse where the other sees fine. . . . (Henry James, Preface to *The Portrait of A Lady*)

Translated into the terms used here, this means that "watching the same show", one observer sees X as Y while another sees X as Z – invoking the very 'seeing-as' condition of focalization that the present account builds on. Of course, the important question – touching fiction as well as life in general – is whether one's seeing-as interpretation of the world is correct or distorted, whether it gets us through in life, and whether it agrees with other people's perceptions. But we need to tread carefully here: views that may, at first glance, strike one as unusual or even pathological may turn out to be valid and enlightening in the long run or under special circumstances. Often enough, as readers of fiction, we encounter a strange worldview that we are happy to try on for size, on the speculative notion that it might open our minds to something new and worthwhile. For instance, consider the new genre of 'autism fiction', of which Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* is the perhaps best-known example.

3.2.24. While the Jamesian examples strongly suggest that perception is always and inescapably subjective, successful social interaction normally relies on the fact that people are able to see things identically. Hence people can usually agree on what they have seen, especially when a percept is shaped by a common conceptualization or summarized at a certain level of abstraction. When a train is pulling into a station, most people – very small children, train spotters, and space aliens excepted – will see no more nor less than just that, a train pulling into the station. This is because irrespective of individual mindsets and preferences, percepts are often compacted to fit universally familiar 'frames'. Moreover, words like 'train', 'station' etc are so unspecific that a reader can easily accept the associated perception as inherently identical, verifiable, and sharable.

Normally, focalizers are singular entities, but once they begin to perceive and think identically and collectively, either as 'social minds' (Palmer) or as 'interpretive communities' (Fish), they can appear in the plural number. We can therefore distinguish between **singular focalizers** and **collective focalizers**, the latter including both plural narrators or a group of characters ('collective reflectors'). Stanzel (1984: 172); Banfield (1982: 96); Richardson (2009). Examples:

We did not say she was crazy then. We believed she had to do that. We remembered all the young men her father had driven away, and we knew that with nothing left, she would have to cling to that which had robbed her, as people will. (Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily", a 'we-narrative', [3.3.11](#)).

A small crowd meanwhile had gathered at the gates of Buckingham Palace. Listlessly, yet confidently, poor people all of them, they waited; looked at the Palace itself with the flag flying; at Victoria, billowing on her mount, admired the shelves of running water, her geraniums; singled out from the motor cars in the Mall first this one, then that [...]. (local use of collective reflectors in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*)

Using the label 'social minds' Palmer (2010) analyzes many cases of shared perception and thought. In scenarios like political debate, the courtroom, and war we can frequently observe *groups* of social minds, each characterized by specifically colored perceptions, to meet and, often enough, fight.

3.2.25. Given that two observers may or may not see things identically we often find ourselves in the critical position of having to compare percepts and assess degrees of difference or congruence. Comparing the percepts of two observers watching the same scene, a judgment can range from perfect congruence to total discrepancy or, as some critics say, consonance and dissonance (Genette 1983: 66; Caracciolo 2013):

- **congruent perception:** a thing, person or event X perceived identically by two (or more) observers, both seeing X as Y.
- **discrepant perception:** a thing, person or event X perceived differently by two observers, one seeing X as Y and the other seeing X as Z.

Note that these terms identify two polar positions on what should be seen as a sliding scale.

Congruence may be partial only, percepts may *count as* identical or non-identical, differences may be small or big, relevant or irrelevant to a question in hand. As in James's *House of Fiction*, in order for us to judge a focalizer's perception we need to compare it to an alternative perception of, preferably, the same thing. (And if we already have a reasonable grasp of a character's mindset we might be able to predict how s/he would see X if the situation ever came up.) Alternative perceptions clearly become significant when the text juxtaposes *narrator vs. character* (narratorial focalization challenging internal focalization) or *character vs. character* (internal focalization A challenging internal focalization B). If we add the reader to the equation, as we should, we can also set *reader vs. narrator* and *reader vs. character*. Although Henry James envisaged a consonant relationship between narrators and readers because "the teller of a story is primarily, none the less, the listener to it, the reader of it, too" (James [1934: 63]; qtd Stanzel [1984: 141]), it may be more prudent to treat the reader as a free agent who can, if necessary, deviate from the narrator's point of view up to outright challenging the narrator's reliability (7.6).

3.2.26. The most promising if technically intricate toolset for handling discrepant perception is offered in Gilles Fauconnier's (1994) theory of 'mental spaces'. Mental space theory focuses on the fact that ordinary thinking often needs to use bubbles of protected semantic spaces, not only for keeping things apart and orderly but also for thinking in terms of comparison, projection, and 'blending' (Fauconnier and Turner 2002). Many mental spaces are construed on the spur of the moment, while others are cordoned off more permanently as when we contrast the world of the present and the world of the past, the world of appearances and the world of scientific fact, the world of war and the world of peace, the world of facts and the world of imagined things. Indeed, our constructivist formula "seeing X as Y" is a "space builder" construction, creating mental spaces X and Y (never mind that X in the constructivist's view is not directly accessible). However, when the narrator sees X as Y, and a character sees X as Z, and the reader sees X as W, then Y, Z, and W constitute mental spaces that invite the dynamics of similarity, contrast, projection, and blending. The creative reasoning that is triggered in this process may well go right to the heart of a text's meaning and purpose. See Dancygier (2012) and Schneider and Hartner eds (2012) for sample analyses. Still to be explored is whether Text World Theory (Gavins 2007) and Possible World Theory (Bell and Ryan 2019) could be used to complement Fauconnier's system.

3.2.26.1. Fauconnier illustrates the basic mechanisms of mental spaces by referring to the seemingly odd sentence "In Len's painting, the girl with blue eyes has green eyes" (1994: 12). In order to deal with the sentence we need to construct two spaces: (i) the world of reality, where the girl has blue eyes, and (ii) the world of Len's painting, where her eyes are green. Now, although the girl is clearly the "same" girl, she resides in two spaces where she is assigned certain properties including the blue/green eyes discrepancy that would be contradictory if handled within a single space. Balancing separate spaces, essential insight may become available via comparison and projection. I don't actually know what or if any insight accrues from Len's picture; however, here is a perfect narrative companion piece, in which the insight arising from blending smacks the narrator in the face:

Later I learnt, among other things, never to buy cheap raincoats, to punch the dents out of my hat before I put it away, and not to have my clothes match too exactly in shade and colour. But I looked well enough that morning ten years ago; I hadn't then begun to acquire a middle-aged spread and – whether it sounds sentimental or not – I had a sort of eagerness and lack of disillusion which more than made up for the coat and hat and the ensemble like a uniform. The other evening I found a photo of myself taken shortly after I came to Warley. My hair is plastered into a skullcap, my collar doesn't fit, and the knot of my tie, held in place by a hideous pin shaped like a dagger, is far too small. That doesn't matter. For my face is, not innocent exactly, but *unused*. I mean unused by sex, by money, by making friends and influencing people, hardly touched by any of the muck one's forced to wade through to get what one wants. (Braine, *Room at the Top* 7)

The person jointly present in both current and past mental spaces is the first-person "I". Like the girl with the blue and green eyes, this person splits into two versions: the narrating-I, situated in his current discourse here-and-now, and the ten-years-younger experiencing-I as it appears in recollection

and photo. Surveying the mental space of the photo the narrator notes some good and some bad points in the outward and inward constitution of the younger self. Comparing this to what he has become in the mental space of the present, the narrator comes to the harsh realization that while the good points outweighed the bad ten years ago, things are just the other way round now.

3.2.26.2. Let me make an attempt to explicate the blending processes at work in the Braine passage by drawing one of the typical diagrams and using some of the specialist terms. Because the narrator's striking conclusion is already based on a completed blending process the first thing we must do is "decompress" the text in order to reconstruct its "input spaces" – in this case, obviously, the ten-year old picture of the character on the one hand, and the current feature set of the narrating-I on the other. Actually, we know that the character's name is Joe and that at story-now he is 25 (p32), so let us simply use "Joe-25" and "Joe-35" to designate the experiencing-I and the narrating-I, respectively. Although the feature sets of the two Joes are not identical, there are several "counterpart mappings" linking similar as well as contrasting elements such as clothes and facial features. A selection of features from the input spaces is now "projected" into the "blended space", as represented by the straight arrow lines going towards the rounded rectangle. As a result, the blend acquires an "inner space" compression of Joe's external change (cp Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 94). In addition, the blend is further "elaborated" by adding the psychological and ethical dimension that eventually makes the narrator recognize his regrettable behavioral and moral development. Moreover, this additional insight is apparently "projected back" to the original spaces (curved arrow lines) so that the characterization derived from the blend retroactively also colors the two original input spaces. In fact, this is what enables the narrator to make his pointed comparison. (See also Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 46; Hartner 2012: 102.)

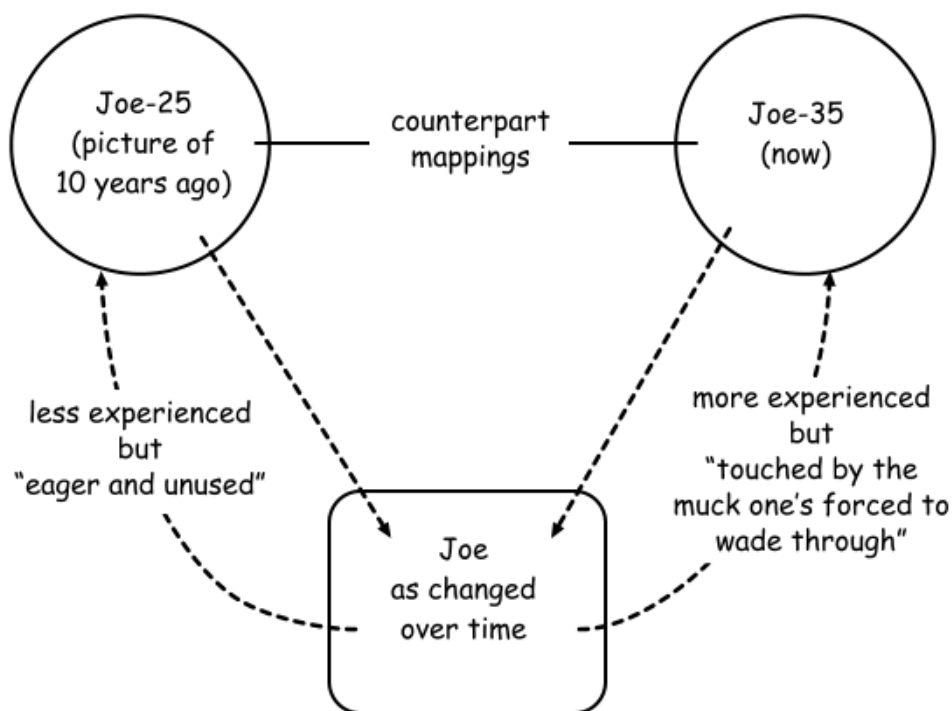


Fig. 11. Blending in John Braine's *Room at the Top*.

3.2.27. Let us briefly turn to the linguistics of point of view cues. On a textual level we may roughly distinguish the following types. (1) **Subjective expressions** comprise appellations, exclamations, emphasis, certainty qualifiers ('epistemic expressions'), idiolect, dialect, and 'mind style' (8.12) (Banfield 1982; Fludernik 1994: ch8). (2) **Mindset cues** include direct or oblique references to a person's attitude, interest, knowledge, beliefs, value judgments, hopes, fears, etc (eg, one person's "terrorist" may be another's "martyr") (3) **Deictic expressions** point to a particular speaker, thinker, or perceiver (person deixis) and his or her here-and-now (place/time deixis). Pronouns and tenses come under this rubric as do words like *here, there, now, then, yesterday, tomorrow, come, go*.

Consider the deictics in a narrative sentence like "She felt sad now" (Galbraith 1995: 25). Relative to the narrator's I-here-now, *she* has the deictic import of 'not I, the narrator, who is uttering this sentence', and the past tense has the deictic import of 'not now as I, the narrator, am speaking'. Note, however, that, there is a deictic *now* in the sentence that relates to the I-here-now point of origin of the third-person character (an internal focalizer) and her act of perception, which is co-temporal with story-now. Balancing these deictic pointers, we see that the narratorial deixis is largely concerned with maintaining the past-tense/third-person framework, while the character's feelings are naturally aligned to her I-here-now. We could say that in this case the narrator's presence is *residual* only, subliminal even, as far as the reader may be concerned. Many critics (notably Hamburger and Stanzel) have claimed that the past tense actually loses its past meaning in this context – a good idea, actually, because it explains why *now* can co-occur with a past tense verb (as would *here* with a distant location relative to discourse-here).

3.2.28. The juxtaposition of narratorial and internal focalization that we proposed in [3.2.17](#) implies a hierarchical order in which internal focalization is subordinate to, or dominated by, a level of narratorial focalization, even if the latter may only be implicit. Overall, it is tempting to say that internal focalization needs to be 'embedded' in a level of narratorial focalization, just like a second-order story can only be told from within a first-order story (see [2.4](#) on 'narrative levels'). Like embedded stories, embedded focalization scenarios are often depicted in the form of 'Chinese boxes' diagrams (Nünning 2001, Dancygier 2012).

As Ryan (1991: 180-81) has argued, Chinese boxes, while instructive as final-product models, are not very specific about the mechanics and effects of shifts that occur when moving from one level to another. Perhaps, Ryan suggests, procedural aspects are better captured by a dynamic structure known as a 'stack' in computer science. The concept comes with a bit of AI jargon, which is quickly established. The particular type of stack most relevant for embedding scenarios is one called a 'LIFO' (last-in, first-out) stack. A stack is either empty or contains any number of elements. Only one element, the one on top of the stack, is visible at any one point, representing the current plane or level of story or focalization, say a third-order narrative, or a reflector's dream. Shifts are triggered by either of two operations: a new level or plane is created and becomes visible by 'pushing' it on top of the stack, and an old (prior) plane becomes accessible by 'popping' other elements off the stack until it becomes the topmost and current one.

Simple as the design of stacks is, its explanatory power lies in its clever combination of structure and process. Many of the so-called 'deictic shift theorists', most notably Galbraith (1995), have suggested that if we are dealing with the reader's task of negotiating the leveled structure of a narrative text then we are constructing an 'ontological' LIFO stack, or as we shall take the liberty of saying here, a stack of focalizations. Typical elements successively pushed onto a stack of focalizations include (a) a ground level of narratorial online perception, (b) the narrator's view of the story world, (c) a character's online perception, and (d) a character's offline perception (recollection, vision, or dream). If narrator, reader, or character return to a prior level of the stack, a pop discards the top-level element. Once we come to the end of the story, a final pop (or series of pops) clears away the fiction's stack. Closing the book, the reader returns to his or her own online perception.

3.2.29. Rejecting Bal's notion of embedded focalizations, Genette drops an intriguing remark: "I do not believe", he says, "the *focus* of the narrative can be at two points *simultaneously*" (1988: 76f, his italics). Translated into stack terminology, Genette's statement amounts to asserting that only the element on top of the stack is visible at any one point (which is what we also claimed above). We focus on – we only see – what's on top of the stack. This goes some way toward explaining our readiness to execute the Bühler transposition, to jump from discourse to story and from story into the mind of an internal focalizer. The fact that an element can be popped off the stack so that the one underneath becomes the current one is plainly analogous to the process of returning from an imaginary location to an online setting.

However, as we have noted in our discussion of the sentence "She felt sad now", texts may actually retain pointers to one or more prior orientations. Similarly, the stack of focalizations may be semi-transparent, allowing us to be aware of more than one level and as a result permitting the reader to choose between competing points of view without losing sight of the overall complex pattern. Let us take a look at four sample passages to see these options in action,

3.2.29.1. First consider the very common authorial-figural borderline case (you will meet it again as an exercise in [3.3.12-13](#)).

According to the Buddhist belief, those who have done evil in their lives will spend the next incarnation in the shape of a rat, a frog or some other low animal. U Po Kyin was a good Buddhist and intended to provide against this danger. He would devote his closing years to good works, which would pile up enough merit to outweigh the rest of his life. Probably his good works would take the form of building pagodas. Four pagodas, five, six, seven – the priests would tell him how many – with carved stonework, gilt umbrellas, and little bells that tinkled in the wind, every tinkle a prayer. And he would return to the earth in male human shape – for a woman ranks at about the same level as a rat or a frog – or at best some dignified beast such as an elephant.

All these thoughts flowed through U Po Kyin's mind swiftly and for the most part in pictures. His brain, though cunning, was quite barbaric, and it never worked except for some definite end; mere meditation was beyond him. (Orwell, *Burmese Days*)

The passage proceeds from telling us something about Buddhism in general to presenting a "good" Buddhist's mind in action. It is done in such a manner that we are momentarily transported into U Po Kyin's head in order to witness the reflector's thoughts and perceptions more or less directly. Still, the authorial narrator plainly uses the reflector as a medium to present a world view that is largely unfamiliar to the reader, and the brief parading of the reflector's mentation serves both characterization and narrative exposition in so far as it introduces a new character, actually, the main character's antagonist. The different mindsets that are at work here – the narrator's and the character's – can be distinguished as separate but interrelated mental spaces. Above all, we can see that "a good Buddhist" means different things to narrator and character.

3.2.29.2. Next, consider the 'dual' focalization in the following first-person childhood recollection passage from Dickens's *David Copperfield* (1849-50):

And now I see the outside of our house, with the latticed bedroom-windows standing open to let in the sweet-smelling air, and the ragged old rooks'-nests still dangling in the elm-trees at the bottom of the front garden. Now I am in the garden at the back, beyond the yard where the empty pigeon-house and dog-kennel are – a very preserve of butterflies, as I remember it, with a high fence, and a gate and padlock; where the fruit clusters on the trees, riper and richer than fruit has ever been since, in any other garden, and where my mother gathers some in a basket, while I stand by, bolting furtive gooseberries, and trying to look unmoved. A great wind rises, and the summer is gone in a moment. We are playing in the winter twilight, dancing about the parlour. When my mother is out of breath and rests herself in an elbow-chair, I watch her winding her bright curls round her fingers, and straitening her waist, and nobody knows better than I do that she likes to look so well, and is proud of being so pretty. That is among my very earliest impressions.

As is commonplace and typical, the homodiegetic narrator's recollection is selective and mobile. The first sentence's "now" is the narrator's current discourse-now, but his imaginary vantage point already moves to a distant point in time, also identified as "now". Only the narrator himself (the narrating-I) can pass the judgment that the fruit his mother is gathering in the remembered scene is "riper and richer than fruit has ever been since, in any other garden". Looking at (and into the mind of) his younger self (experiencing-I), the narrator notices that the child is "trying to look unmoved". Then, as only offline perception can manage it, time is made to pass in a rush, the narrator imaginatively leaping from the garden in summer to the parlor in winter. The same two characters are present but now his mother is in full focus, winding her "bright curls" and looking "so pretty". Watching, narrator and character (and reader) alike are charged with emotion. However, even as the narrator adopts the child's perception, his view is already significantly qualified (via "backward projection") by the knowledge of a past irretrievably gone.

3.2.29.3. Here is another early childhood recollection, this time attended by explicit narratorial comment, from Paul Auster's *Report From the Interior*.

In the beginning, everything was alive. The smallest objects were endowed with beating hearts, and even the clouds had names. Scissors could walk, telephones and teapots were first cousins, eyes and eyeglasses were brothers. The face of the clock was a human face, each pea in your bowl had a different personality, and the grille on the front of your parents' car was a grinning mouth with many teeth. Pens were airships. Coins were flying saucers. The branches of trees were arms. Stones could think, and God was everywhere. There was no

problem in believing that the man in the moon was an actual man. You could see his face looking down at you from the night sky, and without question it was the face of a man. Little matter that this man had no body – he was still a man as far as you were concerned, and the possibility that there might be a contradiction in all this never once entered your thoughts. At the same time, it seemed perfectly credible that a cow could jump over the moon. And that a dish could run away with a spoon.

Your earliest thoughts, remnants of how you lived inside yourself as a small boy. You can remember only some of it, isolated bits and pieces, brief flashes of recognition that surge up in you unexpectedly at random moments – brought on by the smell of something, or the touch of something, or the way the light falls on something in the here and now of adulthood. At least you think you can remember, you believe you remember, but perhaps you are not remembering at all, or remembering only a later remembrance of what you think you thought in that distant time which is all but lost to you now.

This passage begins by presenting a series of childish perceptions. Despite the fact that these are not precisely oriented in time and space, the first paragraph still invites us to co-experience the child-focalizer's "animism" (a word used later by the narrator himself). In other words, following the Pavlovian reflex of transposition we may read the first paragraph in the mode of internal focalization. Yet on the levels of style, conceptualization, and narrative mode – summary – we clearly remain aware of the narrator's enveloping orientation and mindset. In fact, when the reflector layer pops off in the second paragraph the narrator relocates to the "here and now of adulthood" and becomes free to offer his clear-sighted comment.

3.2.29.4. Finally, let us reconsider a passage from J.G. Cozzens's *Castaway*, first published in 1956. I already discussed this in an earlier essay on focalization (Jahn [1996](#)) but in the following I have re-edited it to cross-reference the constructivist approach pursued here. [This para replaces the speculative 'voice tracks' model presented in v2.0]

Forced to observe the gun he held with care—indeed with dawning anxiety—he saw on the barrel where it met the inflexible breech the engraved words "*Fabrique Nationale d'Armes de Guerre Herstal Belgique*," which was plainly no direction for opening it. To Mr Lecky these foreign words were an unpleasant discovery, suggesting a necessarily inferior weapon, and he sat still, no longer even trying to open it. He was, in fact, holding a Browning automatic twelve-gauge shotgun, complicated by magazine cutout and double extractors. For this, naturally, none of the ammunition he had laid out would serve. (Cozzens, *Castaway* 90)

The context: the reader has so far followed Mr. Lecky, the novella's single internal focalizer, on a Robinsonade through a deserted department store. Feeling threatened by an unknown pursuer, he has pillaged the store's sports department in order to pick up a gun, and is looking at it now. The current focalization scenario is as follows: narrator and reader have executed transposition B to enter the text's mode of internal focalization and to witness Mr. Lecky's current *online mentation* (3.2.17). Unusually, for a predominantly figural narrative, the heterodiegetic narrator overtly steps forward, asserting that while Mr. Lecky sees X (the gun) as Y, he, the narrator, sees X as Z (3.2.9 on *seeing as*). For Mr. Lecky the gun is nondescript; for the narrator it is a specific gun whose make and operation he can identify. In Henry James's words, he is the *one seeing more where the other sees less* (3.2.23, also 3.2.30 item 6). The narrator further tells us that Mr. Lecky does not understand the French inscription on the gun, that he makes a false inference ("inferior weapon"), and that he is unaware of particular consequences ("none of the ammunition . . . would serve"). Drastically exposing the reflector's 'fallibility' (Chatman), the narrator momentarily shifts into the mode of *psycho-narration* (3.2.17), as indeed he has done on previous occasions, and will again on subsequent ones. He even slips in a "naturally", taking the reader's agreement for granted. As a matter of fact, however, even when informed of the gun's make and operation, ordinary readers like you and me are likely to see this particular X neither as Y nor as Z, but as W, based on our own *mindset preferences* (3.2.15). Many readers may indeed make better sense of the French inscription than Mr. Lecky does, but very few of us will have the detailed and above all *relevant* knowledge of guns that the narrator has. Balancing the *discrepant perceptions* (3.2.25) of these three *mental spaces* (3.2.26) – the reflector's, the narrator's, and our own – we can engage in *the creative reasoning* (3.2.26 again) that is necessary for us to relate and evaluate the views of the two active focalizers and, not least, to assess our own position vis-a-vis narrator and character. Complicated as the focalization setup is, we seem to be able to handle it without much conscious effort. At the same time our constructivist approach provides us with a good set of tools that enable us to talk about it on a fairly advanced analytical level.

3.2.30. To round it all off, here is a checklist of research questions.

1. **In what tradition of focalization techniques does the text stand?** Is it contemporaneous with the modernist styles of literary impressionism (James/Joyce/Woolf/Mansfield) ([3.2.3](#)) or does it predate or postdate it? Does the presentation of inside and outside views deviate from contemporary practice or norms? Is it innovative or retrogressive (reviving an earlier style)?
2. **How does the narrator fill his/her role as primary focalizer?** Are there specific locations, such as chapter beginnings or endings privileging the narrator's point of view? Which kinds of online perception ('metanarrative' comment passages) does the narrator engage in ([3.2.20](#))? Which kinds of offline perception (imaginary perception, recollection, etc)? Does the narrator keep a low or high profile, is s/he covert or overt ([1.9](#))? When, if at all, is the narrator likely to intrude into passages of internal focalization? Does s/he prefer to use psycho-narration over interior focalization? Does s/he make use of a psycho-camera ([3.2.22](#)) and who does s/he point it at?
3. **Which characters are used as internal focalizers and which are not?** Does the narrator present groups of characters as social minds (plural/collective focalizers) ([3.2.24](#))?
4. **How transparent are the mindsets of the focalizers?** Is it easy or hard for the reader to infer or deduce them? How explicit or implicit are the pointers to mindset dispositions? What and how much is left to the reader's gap filling or speculation? Are the mindsets static or do they develop over the course of the story, or (for the narrator) the telling of the text?
5. **Which filtering devices do we encounter?** To what extent is the text concerned with 'equipment filtering' (organic or artificial – eg sense of smell in Süskind's *Perfume* or the psychoscope in Le Guin's "The Compass Rose"). To what extent is it concerned with 'mindset filtering' (usually all of the time, of course), possibly a combination of both ([3.2.9](#))?
6. **How coarse or how fine is the focalizers' mentation?** Do they have any perceptual weaknesses? Cognitive weaknesses? Are perceptual/cognitive achievements or failures significant topics of story and plot? How plausible are the focalizers' thoughts, how attractive or challenging are their imaginary perceptions? In their views of the world out there, are they 'fallible filters' (Chatman), or are their misconceptions understandable, pardonable, defensible, 'ecologically' viable? Do any of the focalizers have particular perceptive or cognitive strengths? Are they experts in one area but ignorant in another? How does the text handle specialist knowledge? Does it help the reader to understand the expert bits by offering narratorial exposition, comment, editorial footnotes or any other paratextual or epitextual glossaries, notes, credits, hypertext links, a bibliography?
7. **How rich or sparse, how detailed or superficial is the text's representation of mentation?** ([3.2.15](#)) What is the proportion of online to offline perception? Does the text move towards central moments of online focalization or offline focalization? Does the text ever obscure the status of online vs offline perception ([3.2.14](#))? To what effect? Is the level of detail of the presentation constant or variable? Is it correlated to subject matter? How much does the text expect or require the reader to contribute? When filling the gaps, is the reader ever led astray or garden-pathed (Jahn [1999](#))? If so, then locally and revisably, or over extended periods? Is there a learning effect?
8. **Which stylistic means** are used to represent different types of mentation? Specifically, to what extent does the text employ 'interior monologue,' 'free indirect discourse', and 'narrated perception' in order to present information or achieve special effects ([8.4](#))? How liberally or sparingly does it use explicit tags such as *he saw*, *he thought* etc)? Using Nelles's terms, in what proportion does the text present and perhaps prioritize ocularization (vision), auricularization (audition), gustativization (taste), olfactivization (smell), and tactivilization (touch) ([3.2.13](#))?
9. **What is the role of congruent and discrepant perceptions** ([3.2.25](#))? Do they involve the level of character vs character or narrator vs character(s)? Are they ever alluded to or even discussed explicitly? Which topics or subjects do they concern? Are the conflicts ever resolved? Can the reader negotiate the different perspectives by separating them as mental spaces ("A sees X as Y, whereas B sees X as Z") ([3.2.26](#))? Does the reader happen to see X as W ([3.2.29.4](#))? If the narrator's and the reflector's perceptions do *not* markedly differ, what are the reasons – narrator restricting him- or

herself to what is 'public knowledge' in the storyworld? narrator remaining neutral or non-committal? narrator allowing (intentionally/unintentionally) his or her concepts to become 'colored' by the character's concepts ([8.13](#))?

10. Can one refine any of these questions by paying attention to the specific conditions of first-person/homodiegetic and third-person/heterodiegetic narration ([3.3](#))? What special characteristics can be attributed to first-person vs third-person internal focalizers or to homodiegetic vs heterodiegetic narrator-focalizers?

3.3. Narrative situation

Both Genette (1988 [1983]: ch17) and Stanzel (1984) use the term narrative situation to refer to more complex patterns of narrative features. Genette's system uses the subtypes of voice (narration) and mood (focalization) in order to explore a range of possible combinations; Stanzel is more interested in describing 'ideal-typical' or (as we shall say) prototypical configurations and arranging them on a 'typological circle' (1984: xvi). The following paragraphs will mainly focus on the interpretive implications of Stanzel's model. For an excellent comparative survey of the two approaches, including some proposals for revisions, see Cohn (1981). For alternative models see Fowler (1986), Simpson (1993), and Lintvelt (1981).

3.3.1. Stanzel's narrative situations are complex frameworks aiming at capturing typical patterns of narrative features, including features of relationship (involvement), distance, pragmatics, knowledge, reliability, voice, and focalization. This line of approach results in complex 'frames' of defaults and conditions (Jahn [1997](#)). The basic definitions are as follows (more detailed explications to follow below):

- A **first-person narrative** is told by a narrator who is present as a character in his/her story; it is a story of events s/he has experienced him- or herself, a story of personal experience. The individual who acts as a narrator (**narrating-I**) is also a character (**experiencing-I**) on the level of action (more: [3.3.2](#)).
- An **authorial narrative** is told by a narrator who is absent from the story, ie, does *not* appear as a character in the story. The authorial narrator tells a story involving other people. An authorial narrator sees the story from an outsider's position, often a position of absolute authority that allows her/him to know everything about the story's world and its characters, including their private thoughts and even their unconscious motives (more: [3.3.5](#)).
- A **figural narrative** presents a story as if seeing it through the eyes of a character (more: [3.3.7](#)).

3.3.2. First-person narration

In first-person narration, the first-person pronoun refers both to the narrator (**narrating-I** or **narrating self**) and to a character in the story (**experiencing-I**). If the narrator is the main character of the story s/he is an **I-as-protagonist**; if s/he is one of the minor characters s/he is an **I-as-witness** (see next para for additional first-person narrator types). With respect to focalization, a first-person narrative can either be told from the hindsight awareness of the narrating-I (typical discursual attitude: *Had I known then what I know now*) or from the more limited and naive level of insight of the experiencing-I (functioning as an internal focalizer). Epistemologically (knowledge-wise), first-person narrators are restricted to ordinary human limitations (Lanser 1981: 161): they cannot give witness accounts of things that happened in different locations, they don't know what will happen in the future, they cannot (under ordinary circumstances) narrate the story of their own death (with exceptional 'postmortal narratives' such as Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* [Haller 2019] duly noted), and they cannot know for certain what other people think or thought (the common problem of 'other minds').

The temporal and psychological distance between the narrating-I and the experiencing-I is called **narrative distance**. Usually, the narrating-I is older and wiser than the experiencing-I, but other configurations are thinkable (as in 'dementia narratives' such as Ishiguro's *The Unconsoled*, see Bitenc

2020). Here is an example exhibiting the typical experience differential (partly already qtd in 3.2.26.1; see 1.12 and 9.1 for further examples):

Later I learnt, among other things, never to buy cheap raincoats, to punch the dents out of my hat before I put it away, and not to have my clothes match too exactly in shade and colour. But I looked well enough that morning ten years ago [*exact specification of temporal distance*]; I hadn't then begun to acquire a middle-aged spread and – whether it sounds sentimental or not – I had a sort of eagerness and lack of disillusion which more than made up for the coat and hat [*a block characterization of the experiencing-I, from the point of view of the narrating-I*] (Braine, *Room at the Top* 7)

3.3.3. Evidently, the first-person types I-as-protagonist and I-as-witness, originally proposed by Friedman (1967 [1955]), can be related to the narrator's degree of involvement in the story world. Following up on this, Susan Lanser has made an attempt to locate additional roles on a gradient that stretches between the two poles of 'heterodiegesis' and 'autodiegesis'. Consider Lanser's instructive graphic (1981: 160):

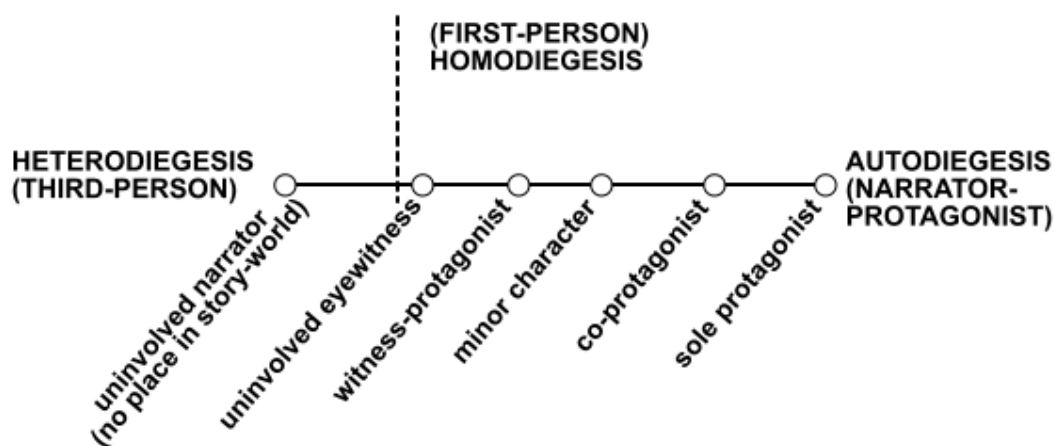


Fig. 12. Homodiegetic narrators (Lanser).

An **I-as-co-protagonist** would be Nick Carraway in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Other experiencing selves include the **I-as-minor-character** in Dickens's "The Signalman", the **I-as-witness-protagonist** in chapter 1 of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, and the **I-as-uninvolved-eyewitness** in Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" (actually, it's a "we" in this case).⁴

3.3.4. Typical story patterns of the first-person narrative situation. Generally, a first-person/homodiegetic narration aims at presenting an experience that shaped and changed the narrator's life and made her/him into what s/he is today. Sometimes, a first-person narrator is an important witness offering an otherwise inaccessible account of historical or fictional events (including science-fiction scenarios). Typical subgenres of first-person narration are fictional autobiographies, initiation stories, and skaz narratives, as defined in the following.

- A **fictional autobiography** is an I-as-protagonist (Genette: autodiegetic) narrative in which the first-person narrator tells the story (or an episode) of his/her life. Example: Sillitoe, "The Fishing Boat Picture" (see 9.1 for a case study).
- A **story of initiation** is a story about a young person's introduction into a new sphere of society, activity, or experience. Many stories of initiation involve some stage in the transition from childhood and ignorance to adulthood and maturity and climax at a moment of

⁴ Note that the *heterodiegetic* narrator makes an appearance at the 'heterodiegesis' pole of Lanser's scale using the definition "uninvolved narrator/no place in story world". Although it is difficult to grade uninvolvedness, it would seem possible, in theory, to describe the involvedness status of different heterodiegetic narrators as being more or less close to, or distant from, the world of the characters. Mansfield's "A Cup of Tea", for instance, provides a rare example of a narrator position practically straddling the heterodiegesis-homodiegesis divide (dotted line in Fig. 12): both the story's heterodiegetic narrator and its third-person protagonist belong to the same upper middle-class environment and use the same sociolect (cp Murphy/Walsh 2017).

recognition. As Freese (1979) has shown, many stories of initiation also begin with a journey, often they involve a character's first sexual experience or some growing-up ritual or ceremony, which sometimes turns into an ordeal. Occasionally, the protagonist (technically, the 'initiate') can turn to an adult helper, but often enough there is no helper, or the helper turns out to be a fraud, and the whole initiatory experience may become a catastrophic and traumatic failure. (Note that not all initiation stories are *necessarily* homodiegetic ones. Consider also what it means to say that someone is "uninitiated".) Example: Sherwood Anderson, "I want to Know Why" [note that the story's title already alludes to motif of ignorance]. See also Brooks and Warren (1959); Buchholz (2004) on female initiation stories.

- **skaz narrative** (from Russian *skaz*, 'speech'): a literary form that represents an oral (or 'conversational') story-telling situation in which a speaker tells a story to a present audience. Apart from having a distinctly oral diction and syntax, a skaz-narrator's discourse is also characterized by a high incidence of phatic and appellative elements, signaling the presence of the listening audience. Skaz is closely related (and usefully compared to) the poetic genre of the 'dramatic monologue'. (Not all skaz narratives are necessarily homodiegetic ones, however). See Banfield (1982: 172, 306n 25); Fludernik (1996: 178-179, 394n1); Schmid (2010: chIV.2). Examples: Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, Ring Lardner, "Haircut", Salinger, *Catcher in the Rye*.

3.3.5. Authorial narration

An authorial narration tells a story from the point of view of an 'authorial narrator', ie, somebody who is not, and never was, a character in the story itself. (Note, however, that, like a first-person (Genette: homodiegetic) narrator, an authorial narrator may refer to him- or herself in the first person.) Often, the authorial narrator's status of an outsider makes her/him an authority commanding practically godlike abilities such as omniscience and omnipresence. Many authors allow their authorial narrators to speak directly to their addressees, to comment on action and characters, to engage in philosophical reflection, and to 'interrupt' the course of the action by detailed descriptions (online mentation [3.2.20](#), pauses [5.2.3](#)). As Friedman puts it, "The prevailing characteristic of omniscience [...] is that the [authorial narrator] is always ready to intervene himself between the reader and the story, and that even when he does set a scene, he will render it as he sees it rather than as his people see it" (1967 [1955]: 124). Example: Fielding *Tom Jones*.

3.3.6. Typical authorial story patterns. Usually, the authorial narrator is an omniscient and omnipresent mediator (or 'moderator') telling an instructive story (a story containing a moral or a lesson) set in a complex world. The authorial narrator's comprehensive ('Olympian') world-view is particularly suited to reveal the protagonists' moral strengths and weaknesses, and to present a tightly plotted narrative. Typical subgenres are 18C and 19C novels of social criticism. See Stanzel (1984: 141-184, 185-224); Stanzel (1964: 16, 18-25); Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 95-96); Genette (1980 [1972]: 243-245); Nünning (1989: 45-50, 84-124).

3.3.7. Figural narration

A figural narration presents the story's events as seen through the eyes of a third-person 'reflector' character (or internal focalizer or 'figural medium'). The narrative agency of figural narration is a highly *covert* one; some theorists go so far as to say that figural texts are "narratorless" (Banfield 1982). See Stanzel (1984: 141-184, 185-200, 225-236); Stanzel (1964: 17, 39-52). Weldon's "Weekend" is a figural short story: everything – or almost everything – is seen from Martha's point of view.

Caution: never use the term 'figural narrator': the narrative agency of a figural text is a 'covert authorial narrator', according to Stanzel (or a 'covert heterodiegetic narrator', according to Genette).

3.3.8. While figural narration is realized as a heterodiegetic (third person) text, we can also make use of the more flexible concept of 'reflector-mode narration' which allows the inclusion of first-person texts:

- **reflector-mode narration:** a mode of narration in which the story is presented as seen through the eyes of *either a third-person or a first-person* reflector character/internal focalizer.

3.3.9. Typical figural story patterns. A figural narrative presents the story's action as seen through the eyes of a reflector figure. Often, a figural text presents a distorted or restricted view of events – to many authors, such a distorted (but 'psychologically realistic') perspective is more interesting than an omniscient or 'objectively true' account of events. Because figural texts have a covert narrator (a withdrawn, subdued narrator) only, figural stories typically begin 'medias in res' (in the middle of things), have little or no exposition, and attempt to present a direct (ie, both immediate and unmediated) view into the perceptions, thoughts, and psychology of a character's mind. Typical subgenres are 'slice-of-life' and 'stream of consciousness' (8.8) stories, often associated with 20C literary impressionism and modernism (Stevenson 1998). Indeed, many authors specifically aimed at capturing the distortive perceptions of unusual internal focalizers – eg, a drug addict (Dickens, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*), a drinker (Lowry, *Under the Volcano*), a two-year old child (Dorothy Richardson, "The Garden"), a dog (Woolf, *Flush*), a machine (Walter M. Miller, "I Made You"). Although figural storytelling is usually considered a modern form, whose beginnings are located in the 19C, see de Jong 2001 for a discussion of proto-forms of figural storytelling in Homer.

3.3.10. Four additional elements of figural narratives are worthy of closer attention: incipits using referentless pronouns and familiarizing articles, slice-of-life format, epiphanies, and the mirror trick.

- **referentless pronoun:** many figural stories begin with a third-person pronoun whose referent has not yet been established. This is usually indicative of a narrator's covertness, his/her relinquishing of exposition and conative solicitude. Usually, the pronoun identifies the text's internal focalizer. Stanzel (1984: ch6.3).
- Similarly, a **familiarizing article** presents new information (as far as the reader is concerned) in the guise of given information (as far as a story-internal character is concerned). Cf. the incipit of Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*: "He [referentless pronoun, identifying the reflector] lay flat on the [familiarizing article] brown, pine-needled floor of the [another familiarizing article] forest [...]". Who is "he"? Which forest? Bronzwaer (1970); Stanzel (1984: ch6.3).
- **slice of life story/novel:** a short story or novel whose story time (5.2.2) is restricted to a very brief episode in a character's life, often only a day, a few hours, or even just a single moment. Examples: Joyce, "Eveline", Mansfield, "Miss Brill", Richardson, "The Garden", Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, Joyce, *Ulysses* (but note, the latter text is a 600+ page novel!). See Buchholz (2004: chV.1.2) for an analysis of five modernist short stories.
- **epiphany:** originally, a Greek term denoting the 'manifestation' or appearance of divine quality or power. The term was appropriated by James Joyce in *Stephen Hero* (1905) to denote a moment of intense insight, usually occasioned by the perception of a more or less ordinary object or event. The term is closely related to what other authors variously term 'moment of vision' (Conrad, Woolf), 'moment of being' (Woolf, again), or 'glimpse' (Mansfield). According to Beja, "epiphany is a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether from some object, scene, event, or memorable phase of the mind – the manifestation being out of proportion to the significance or strictly logical relevance of whatever produces it" (Beja 1984: 719). Here is the relevant passage from Joyce's *Stephen Hero*:

Stephen as he passed [...] heard the following fragment of colloquy out of which he received an impression keen enough to afflict his sensitiveness very severely:

The Young Lady – (drawling discreetly) ...O, yes ... I was ... at the ... cha...pel...

The Young Gentleman – (inaudibly) ... I ... (again inaudibly) ... I ...

The Young Lady – (softly) ... O ... but you're ... ve...ry wick...ed ...

This triviality made him think of collecting many such moments together in a book of epiphanies. By an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself. He believed that it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments. (qtd Beja 1971: 72-73)

In the practice of many authors, notably Woolf and Mansfield, epiphanies may turn out to be deceptive, misguided, or otherwise erroneous (see Mansfield's "Bliss" for a particularly striking pseudo-epiphany). In many modernist texts, epiphanies are made to serve as climaxes or endings ('epiphanic endings').

- **mirror trick:** a way (perhaps the only way) of conveying the physical features of a reflector figure without using overt narratorial description. Example:

Mr. Hutton came to pause in front of a small oblong mirror. Stooping a little to get a full view of his face, he passed a well-manicured finger over his moustache. It was as curly, as freshly auburn as it had been twenty years ago. His hair still retained its colour, and there was no sign of baldness yet – only a certain elevation of the brow. "Shakespearean," thought Mr. Hutton, with a smile [...]. (Huxley, "The Gioconda Smile")

3.3.11. In addition to the three standard narrative situations, we will briefly mention four peripheral categories: we-narratives, you-narratives, simultaneous narration and camera-eye narration.

- **we-narrative:** a form of homodiegetic narrative in which the narrator's experiencing self belongs to a group of collective internal focalizers. Fludernik (1996: ch6.1.1); Margolin (1996; 2000).

We did not say she was crazy then. We believed she had to do that. We remembered all the young men her father had driven away, and we knew that with nothing left, she would have to cling to that which had robbed her, as people will. (Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily")

- **you-narrative/second-person narrative:** a narrative in which the protagonist is referred to in the second person. Functionally, *you* may refer (a) to the narrator's experiencing Self, (b) to some other character in a homodiegetic world, or (c) to a character in a heterodiegetic world. (Note, we are not talking here of the 'general' "you", meaning 'anyone', nor the "you" that first-person or authorial narrators use for addressing their narratees). You-narratives are special forms of homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narratives. More on this in Booth (1961: 150); Stanzel (1984: ch5.1, ch7.3); Bonheim (1990: ch15); Fludernik (1993b); *Style* 28.3 (1994; special issue); Fludernik (1996: ch6.1.1)

I persistently imagine you dead. You told me that you loved me years ago. And I said that I, too, was in love with you in those days. An exaggeration. (Alice Munro, "Tell Me Yes or No", qtd Bonheim 1990: 281) [homodiegetic you-narrative]

Claude Ford knew exactly how it was to hunt a brontosaurus. You crawled heedlessly through the grass beneath the willows, through the little primitive flowers with petals as green and brown as a football field, through the beauty-lotion mud. You peered out at the creature sprawling among the reeds, its body as graceful as a sock full of sand. (Brian W. Aldiss, "Poor Little Warrior!") [heterodiegetic you-narrative]

- **simultaneous narration:** a type of homodiegetic narrative in which the narrator tells a story that unfolds as s/he tells it. The problematic logic of this type of narrative situation demands that the narrator does not know how the story ends, that there can be no objective flashforwards, that all sentences of narrative report are in the present tense, and that the narrating and experiencing selves (external and internal focalizers) overlap and merge. Simultaneous narration exhibits a certain resemblance to both journalistic 'on-the-scene reporting' and interior monologue (8.9). The term was originally coined by Genette (1980 [1972]: 218-19); the current extended definition is Cohn's (1993). Examples: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892) [a diary-type story]; Beckett, "Text For Nothing: One"; Updike, "Wife-Wooing", Siegfried's story in this script (9.3).

But in the places where it [the wallpaper] isn't faded and where the sun is just so – I can see a strange, provoking, formless sort of figure, that seems to skulk about that silly and conspicuous front design. There's sister on the stairs! (Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper")

- **camera-eye narration:** the purely external or 'behaviorist' representation of events; a text that reads like a transcription of a recording made by a camera. Originally, the term was appropriated from the introductory paragraph of Christopher Isherwood's *Goodbye to Berlin* (quoted below); today, the term is more often used as a metaphor of strictly 'neutral' types of heterodiegetic narration. Stanzel (1955: 28) briefly toyed with the notion of a separate category of 'neutral narration' but eventually subsumed this under figural narration; however, 'neutral narrative' is still an active category in Lintvelt's (1981) model, where it is characterized

by covert narration, absence of inside views, and the point of view of a stationary camera. The standard example is Hemingway's "The Killers" (see below). Pouillon (1946: ch2) [introduction of the concept of outside view (*vision du dehors*)]; Friedman (1967 [1955]: 130-31); Stanzel (1984: ch7.3.2); Genette 1980 [1972]: ch4; Genette 1988 [1983]: ch11 [neutral narrative = Genettean 'external' focalization]; Lintvelt (1981: ch3). Examples:

From my window, the deep solemn massive street. Cellar-shops where the lamps burn all day, under the shadow of top-heavy balconied facades, dirty plaster-frontages embossed with scroll-work and heraldic devices. [...]

I am a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, recording, not thinking. Recording the man shaving at the window opposite and the woman in the kimono washing her hair. Some day, all this will have to be developed, carefully printed, fixed. (Isherwood, *Goodbye to Berlin*)

The door of Henry's lunch-room opened and two men came in. They sat down at the counter.

"What's yours?" George asked them.

"I don't know," one of the men said. "What do you want to eat, Al?"

"I don't know," said Al. "I don't know what I want to eat."

Outside it was getting dark. The street-light came on outside the window. The two men at the counter read the menu. Nick Adams watched them. He had been talking to George when they came in. (Hemingway, "The Killers")

The concluding sentences of the Hemingway passage make it easier to understand why Stanzel decided to subsume neutral narration under figural narration. For narratological approaches to the Hemingway story, see Fowler (1977: 48-55); Lanser (1981: 264-276); Rimmon-Kenan (1983); Chatman (1990).

3.3.12. Here come some problem cases, and they are largely due to the fact that a whole novel or a passage of a narrative text may exhibit features of more than one narrative situation, producing borderline cases, transitional passages, and mixed-mode narrative situations. The most common phenomenon is that of 'authorial-figural narration'.

- In **authorial-figural narration** there is both an authorial narrator and a figural medium (Stanzel 1984: 185-186). Examples: (1) Bradbury's "Composition" begins with an authorial exposition but has a middle section which is presented largely from the protagonist's point of view. The story ends with authorial summary and comment. (2) In Henry James's *What Maisie Knew*, the perceptions of a young heroine with a very limited knowledge basis are accompanied by overt authorial commentary. (3) A number of short stories in Joyce's *Dubliners* ("A Painful Case", "The Boarding House") begin with an authorial exposition and then continue as figural narrations.

3.3.13. As an exercise, analyze the following passages as mixed types of narration:

- Our story opens in the mind of Luther L. (L for LeRoy) Fliegler, who is lying in his bed, not thinking of anything, but just aware of sounds, conscious of his own breathing, and sensitive to his own heartbeats. Lying beside him is his wife, lying on her right side and enjoying her sleep. She has earned her sleep, for it is Christmas morning, strictly speaking, and all the day before she has worked like a dog, cleaning the turkey and baking things, and, until a few hours ago, trimming the tree. (O'Hara, *Appointment in Samarra* 7)
- According to the Buddhist belief, those who have done evil in their lives will spend the next incarnation in the shape of a rat, a frog or some other low animal. U Po Kyin was a good Buddhist and intended to provide against this danger. He would devote his closing years to good works, which would pile up enough merit to outweigh the rest of his life. Probably his good works would take the form of building pagodas. Four pagodas, five, six, seven – the priests would tell him how many – with carved stonework, gilt umbrellas, and little bells that tinkled in the wind, every tinkle a prayer. And he would return to the earth in male human shape – for a woman ranks at about the same level as a rat or a frog – or at best some dignified beast such as an elephant. All these thoughts flowed through U Po Kyin's mind swiftly and for the most part in pictures. His brain, though cunning, was quite barbaric, and it never worked except for some definite end; mere meditation was beyond him. (Orwell, *Burmese Days*) [already discussed in 3.2.29.1.]

3.3.14. A decidedly rarer type of mixed-mode narration is first-person/third-person narration as exemplified by, for instance, Donleavy's *The Beastly Beatitudes of Balthazar B*, John Barth's "Ambrose His Mark", and Fay Weldon's *The Heart of the Country*. In Jan Philipp Reemtsma's autobiographical story *Im Keller*, the episodes in the cellar, where the author was held hostage for 33 days, are narrated in the third person. As Reemtsma puts it, "there is no I-continuity that leads from my writing desk into that cellar" (p. 46).

3.3.15. Violations of standard schemes. The narrative situations have here been described as typicality models which capture standard narratorial characteristics (function, strategy, stance, limitation) and the corresponding readerly expectations in culturally learned 'cognitive frames'. Frequently, the conditions of these frames can also be made explicit by detailing the unwritten 'narrator-narratee contract'. Of course, sometimes a narrative has a surprise in store, either because its story takes an unexpected turn or because it becomes difficult to reconcile a present mode of presentation with the general frame or contract that we thought we could use in order to optimally read and understand. It is this second type of narrative effect which Genette terms 'transgression' or 'alteration' or 'infraction of code'.

- **alteration:** a (usually, temporary) shift into a mode of presentation which does not conform to the standard expectations associated with the current narrative situation. Genette specifically invokes the analogy of a musical composition which momentarily becomes dissonant or changes its tonality (Genette 1980 [1972]: 197).

Some of the problem cases mentioned above can clearly be analyzed as infractions/alterations in this sense. Genette further differentiates between the following two main types of alterations:

- **paralepsis:** an infraction caused by saying too much; a narrator assuming a competence he/she does not properly have; typically, a first-person narrator (or a historiographer) narrating what somebody else thought (Genette's 1980 [1972]: 208 example is Marcel's narration of Bergotte's dying thoughts), or what happened when s/he was not present (illicit assumption of authorial competence). (Note, para 3.2.21 item 3.)
- **paralipsis:** an infraction caused by omitting crucial information; saying too little; typically, an authorial narrator pretending "not to know" what happened in her/his characters' minds, or what went on at the same time in another place, or distortively censoring a character's thought, or generally pretending to be restricted to ordinary human limitations. (To remember this term, think of the rhetorical figure of ellipsis, omission.)

Paralepsis and paralipsis are instances of violations of Grice's (1975) famous principle of co-operation – the notion that speakers (narrators) are socially obliged to follow an established set of 'maxims': to give the right amount of information, to speak the truth, to speak to a purpose (tell something worth telling), to be relevant, etc. Cognitive strategies for handling alterations include (a) 'naturalizing' them so that they become acceptable data consistent (after all) with one's current frame of interpretation; (b) adapting the frame so that it allows for the alteration as an 'exception'; (c) treating it as a stylistic 'error'; (d) search for a replacement frame.

Frequently mentioned cases of alterations are Agatha Christie's *Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (a crime novel narrated by a first-person narrator who turns out to be the murderer himself), Richard Hughes's "The Ghost" (first-person narrator "lives" to tell the tale of her own death), Ambrose Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" and Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (containing un signaled shifts into a character's dream world). Fillmore, adding *one* word to the beginning of Joyce's "Eveline" succeeds in spoiling everything (spot it!):

She sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue. Her head was leaned against the window curtains and in her nostrils was the odour of dusty cretonne. She was probably tired.

What's that – she was *probably* tired?? Of course, in Joyce's original, the last sentence just reads "She was tired". Inserting the word "probably" produces "an absolutely jarring effect on the reader", Fillmore predicts (1981: 160) – and we can see that it creates an unexpected and illogical shift away from the story's reflector-mode that we, as readers, have already adopted. (But what about *She was probably just tired?*) See Genette (1980 [1972]: 194-197); Edmiston (1991) [paralepsis/paralipsis put

to excellent analytical use]; Jahn (1997) [narrative situations as cognitive frames; concept of replacement frames]; Lejeune (1989), Cohn (1999: ch2) [both on narrator-narratee contracts].

4. Action, story analysis, tellability

4.1. Although 'action' is a more or less self-explanatory term, let us try to give it a more precise and useful definition.

- **action:** a sequence of acts and events; the sum of events constituting a 'story line' on a narrative's level of action. An 'action unit' or 'narreme' (Dorfman 1969) is a distinct point (or small segment) on the story line.

Events in the 'primary story line' are often kept distinct from 'external' events that take place before the beginning or after the end of the primary story line (constituting a 'pre-history' and an 'after-history', respectively). According to Sternberg (1993 [1978]: 49-50), the primary story line begins with the first scenically and singulatively presented event ([5.3.1](#)), usually, the first dialogue. See Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 61-63).

When my first pay-night came I called for her and asked: "What about a walk up Snakey Wood?" (Sillitoe, "The Fishing-Boat Picture" 135)

4.2. What should count as a "minimal sequence of events"? If one permits the limit case of *one* event then "the quick brown fox jumped over the lazy cow" can count as a possible minimal narrative, as do "the king died", "Pierre has come" and "I walk" (Genette 1988 [1983]: 18-20). Another example used by Genette, "Marcel becomes a writer" wittily condenses Proust's 2000-page novel *A la recherche du temps perdu* into a single narrative sentence. Here are some additional examples of **minimal narratives**:

- Joan ate an egg and Peter drank a glass of milk, then they went to the theater. (Prince 1982: 76)
- The king died and then the queen died of grief. (Forster)
- Jack and Jill / Went up the hill / To fetch a pail of water; Jack fell down / And broke his crown, / And Jill came tumbling after.

Prince's example lists a bare sequence of action units; Forster's example illustrates the principle of causal connectivity between story units (see 'plot' in [4.6](#)); and the third is a nursery rhyme that lends itself to being enacted by gesture and physical contact. See also Culler (1975b [on narrative units]); Branigan (1992: 11-12; 222n29); Chatman (1978: 30-31; 45-48); Schmid (2010: 13-15) [change of state theory]. Propp (1969) is the first famous structuralist account of functional story units (in the Russian folktale).

4.3. None of the foregoing examples can boast of a high degree of **tellability** (Labov 1972; Ryan 1991: ch8). Normally, a story is required to have a point, to teach a lesson, to present an interesting experience (a high degree of 'experientiality', as Fludernik 1996 calls it, promoting this element to the central feature of all narrative texts), and to arrange its episodes in an interesting progression. Sketching his project, Branigan says:

I wish to examine how we come to know that something is a narrative and how a narrative is able to make intelligible our experiences and feelings. I will argue that it is more than a way of classifying texts: *narrative is a perceptual activity that organizes data into a special pattern which represents and explains experience.* (Branigan 1992: 3)

Jerome Bruner, too, considers tellability and experientiality as an essence of narrative:

[Narrative] deals in human or human-like intention and action and the vicissitudes and consequences that mark their course. It strives to put its timeless miracles into the particulars of experience, and to locate the experience in time and place. [...] [S]tory must construct two landscapes simultaneously. One is the

landscape of action, where the constituents are [...] agent, intention or goal, situation, instrument [...]. The other landscape is the landscape of consciousness: what those involved in the action know, think, or feel, or do not know, think or feel. [...] Indeed, it is an invention of modern novelists and playwrights to create a world made up entirely of the psychic realities of the protagonists, leaving knowledge of the "real" world in the realm of the implicit. (1986: 13-14)

For an attempt to relate universal story patterns to two prototypical narrative genres – romantic tragedy and heroic tragedy – see Hogan (2003).

S.I. Hayakawa relates tellability to offering the potential of identification and empathy. Hayakawa distinguishes **identification by self-recognition** and **identification for wish-fulfillment**:

There are two kinds of identification which a reader may make with characters in a story. First, he may recognize in the story-character a more or less realistic representation of himself. (For example, the story-character is shown misunderstood by his parents, while the reader, because of the vividness of the narrative, recognizes his own experiences in those of the story-character.) Secondly, the reader may find, by identifying himself with the story-character, the fulfillment of his own desires. (For example, the reader may be poor, not very handsome, and not popular with girls, but he may find symbolic satisfaction in identifying himself with a story-character who is represented as rich, handsome, and madly sought after by hundreds of beautiful women.) It is not easy to draw hard-and-fast lines between these two kinds of identification, but basically the former kind (which we may call "identification by self-recognition") rests upon the *similarity* of the reader's experiences with those of the story-character, while the latter kind ("identification for wish-fulfillment") rests upon the *dissimilarity* between the reader's dull life and the story-character's interesting life. Many (perhaps most) stories engage (or seek to engage) the reader's identification by *both* means. (Hayakawa 1964: 141)

For a more recent approach to empathy and identification see Keen (2007).

4.4. In the poetry script we described how elementary units often combine to form more complex units. Just like a number of syllables may form a metrical 'foot' so action units usually group into 'episodes':

- **episode:** a group of action units consisting of three parts: an exposition, a complication, and a resolution (Kintsch 1976). Hence a story can be described both as a sequence of action units (as above) and as a sequence of episodes.

This definition of episodes nicely dovetails with two graphic models of narrative trajectories that have become famous: Freytag's 1863 (!) 'triangle' and Bremond's 1970 'four-phase cycle'. Freytag's triangle originally describes the action and suspense structure of classical five-act tragedy; Bremond's model originally aims at the system of possible state changes in French folk tales. Obviously, however, both models have a far more general relevance.

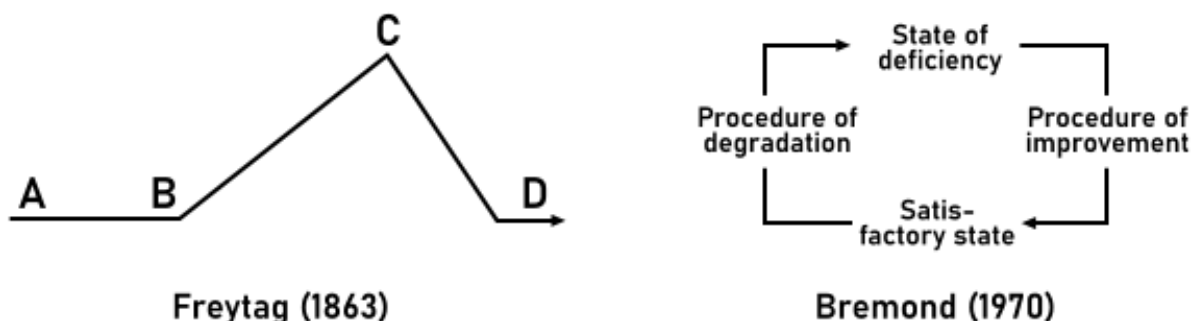


Fig. 13. Freytag's triangle and Bremond's cycle.

Regarding his corpus of fairy tales, Bremond notes that "the cycle starts from a state of deficiency or a satisfactory state" and "ends usually with the establishment of a satisfactory state" (1970: 251), ie, the "they lived happily ever after" pattern. For a more detailed account of Freytag's model look up [D7.5](#); for the present, however, Barth's explication is quite sufficient:

AB represents the exposition, *B* the introduction of conflict, *BC* the 'rising action', complication, or development of the conflict, *C* the climax, or turn of the action, *CD* the denouement, or resolution of the conflict. While there is no reason to regard this pattern as an absolute necessity, like many other conventions it became conventional because great numbers of people over many years learned by trial and error that it was effective [...]. (Barth 1968: 99)

4.5. Story grammars. Various attempts have been made to devise story grammars along the lines of Chomskyan generative grammar. Some of these grammars are still used or referred to today, especially in the context of folklore studies, empirical analysis (Stein 1982), cognitive studies and Artificial Intelligence (Ryan 1991). See also van Dijk (1972), Prince (1973), Rumelhart (1975), Mandler and Johnson (1977), Pavel (1985).

4.6. Exercise. Using the definition of 'episode' listed above as well as the two narrative progress models (Bremond and Freytag), show that the following (proto-)stories are likely to have a relatively high degree of tellability.

- Boy meets girl; boy loses girl; boy gets girl. (Benson's law of romantic comedy, cp [D7.9](#))
- A community is threatened by a dragon. A youthful hero rides out to find it. He meets the dragon in a forest and kills it. Returning home, he is richly rewarded. [The action frame of the dragon-slayer myth; for a fully realized version see Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky".]
- A young woman lives in stifling domestic circumstances. She falls in love with a sailor who promises her a new life in a far-away country. But, torn between love to her friend and duty to her family, she is unable to escape. [A synopsis of Joyce's "Eveline".]
- After the 4077th supply of hydrocortisone is hijacked by black marketeers, Hawkeye and Trapper concoct a deal with a local black marketeer (Jack Soo) to get some more. The catch: Henry's antique oak desk, which is whisked away by chopper as Henry watches in disbelief. [Unedited summary of M*A*S*H episode 2, "To Market, To Market", broadcast September 24, 1972; quoted from <http://www.fags.org/fags/tv/mash/guide/>. Note the type and amount of background information that needs to be supplied here to make this comprehensible to the uninitiated.]

4.7. The terms 'story' and 'plot' were originally introduced in E.M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel* (1976 [1927]). Ideally, one should distinguish *three* action-related aspects: (i) the sequence of events as ordered in the discourse; (ii) the action as it happened in its actual chronological sequence (= story); and (iii) the story's causal structure (= plot).

- **story:** the chronological sequence of events. Story analysis examines the chronological scale and coherence of the action sequence. The basic question concerning story structure is "What happens next?" (Forster's example: "The king died, and then the queen died"). Note that a narrative's discourse does not have to present the story in purely chronological fashion: a narrative may easily begin with action unit M, execute a flashback to G, jump forward to P, etc. (See flashforwards, flashbacks, anachrony in section 5.2, below).
- **plot:** the logical and causal structure of a story. The basic question concerning plot structure is "Why does this happen?" (Forster's example: "The king died, and then the queen died of grief"). Texts can have widely differing degrees of plot connectivity: some are tightly and linearly plotted (typically, every action unit is the causal consequence of something that happened before – the characters want to fulfill dreams, go on a quest, realize plans, overcome problems, pass tests etc); others make use of 'mosaic plots' (Scanlan 1988: ch7) whose causal coherence is not immediately obvious; others again are loosely plotted, episodic, accident-driven, and possibly avoid plotting altogether. To illustrate, fairy tales are usually linearly and tightly plotted following the pattern *A does X because B has done (or is) Y*. The Queen is jealous *because* Snow-White has become more beautiful than she is. *So* she orders a huntsman to kill her. But the huntsman does not do it *because* he takes pity on Snow-White (*because* she's so beautiful). . . etc. For a tightly-knit operatic plot see [9.3](#). Forster (1976 [1927]); Bremond (1970); Rimmon-Kenan (1983: ch1); Pavel (1985a); Ryan (1991); Gutenberg (2000).

4.8. General summaries or synopses normally present a plot-oriented content paraphrase. For a detailed story analysis, one usually works out a story's time line so that all main events can be

situated in proper sequence and extension. Generally, a time-line model is a good point of departure for surveying themes and action units; it also helps visualize events that are presented in scenic detail as opposed to events that are merely reported in, eg, a narrator's exposition. A time-line model can also show up significant discrepancies between story time and discourse time ([5.2.3](#), below). See Pfister (1977/1988: chs 6, 7.4.3); Genette (1980 [1972]: ch1-3).

Here is a time-line and action-unit model of Sillitoe's "The Fishing Boat Picture". For a more detailed analysis using this model see the case study in section [9.1](#).

Story	Unit	Textual detail
prehistory	A	various references to Harry's youth
primary story line	B	Harry's and Kathy's walk up Snakey Wood, Harry aged 24, Kathy 30
	C	married life (six years)
	D	book-burning incident; Kathy leaves Harry (Harry aged 30)
	E	10 years pass; very few references to Harry's single life
	F	Kathy comes back for occasional meetings; picture is pawned several times
	G	Kathy is run over by a lorry; Kathy's funeral
after-history	H	life after Kathy's death (six years)
discourse-NOW		1951: "Why had I lived, I wonder."

4.9. Beginnings and endings.

- **incipit:** the opening passage of a text. Bonheim (1982: ch6).
- **point of attack:** the event chosen to begin the primary action line. There are three main options: (1) a story beginning **ab ovo** typically begins with the birth of the protagonist and a state of equilibrium or non-conflict; (2) for a beginning **in medias res**, the point of attack is set close to the climax of the action; (3) for a beginning **in ultimas res**, the point of attack occurs after the climax and near the end. Modern short stories typically begin in medias res. (Schwarze 1989: 160 [on Latin terms])
- **closure:** the type of conclusion that ends a text. Formally, narratives often conclude with an epilogue or a scene (usually, a final dialogue). In traditional, plot-oriented texts, the main conflict is usually resolved by marriage, death, or some other aesthetically or morally satisfactory outcome producing a state of equilibrium. Many modern texts, however, lack closure; they may be open-ended (Weldon, "Weekend"), simply stop (Hemingway, "The Killers"), conclude enigmatically (Fowles, "The Enigma"), or ambiguously (Wells, "The Country of the Blind"), or even offer alternative endings (Bradbury, "Composition"). Kermode (1965); Bremond (1970); Torgovnick (1981); Bonheim (1982: chs 7-8); Abbott (2002: chs 5, 12).

5. Tense, Time, and Narrative Modes

5.1. Narrative Tenses

5.1.1. There are two major narrative tenses: the **narrative past** and the **narrative present**.

Normally, a text's use of tenses relates to and depends on the current point in time of the narrator's speech act. Naturally, the tense used in a character's discourse depends on the current point in time in the story's action. Hence,

- **discourse-NOW:** the current point in time in discourse time ([5.2.2](#)): the narrator's NOW.
- **story-NOW:** the current point in time in story time ([5.2.2](#)); usually, a character's NOW.

5.1.2. Here is how one determines a text's narrative tense:

- Pick a sentence presenting action and identify the tense of its full verb. If this is the past tense or a related tense like the past progressive, the narrative tense is the narrative past. If it is the present, the narrative tense is the narrative present (surprise). The narrative tense usually remains constant over long stretches or all of a text. Stanzel (1984: 23-28); Cohn (1993: 21).

"James," said [= *narrative past*] Aunt Emily harshly, "you must run off to bed Mother needs perfect quiet." (Dos Passos, *Manhattan Transfer*)

Shaking from head to foot, the man [...] at length rises [= *narrative present*], supports his trembling frame upon his arms, and looks around. (Dickens, *Edwin Drood*)

- **tense switch/tense shift:** a switch from the current narrative tense to the complementary narrative tense (ie, narrative past to narrative present and vice versa). A tense switch is normally used to produce an effect of intensification or distancing (moving into/out of focus), change of perspective, etc.

5.1.3. The present tense in a narrative text can have a number of functions (Casparis 1975):

- **narrative present:** one of the two narrative tenses (see above). The narrative present foregrounds the story-NOW and backgrounds the discourse-NOW.
- **historical present:** a local present tense in a past tense context, usually producing an effect of immediacy or signaling a climax (perhaps comparable to the use of slow motion in film?).
- The **gnomic present/generic present** presents (seemingly) common truths or statements claiming general validity, often in the form of a proverb. See Chatman (1978: 82); Stanzel (1984: 108); Wales (1989: 219, 375). Examples:

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife. [Ironic gnomic statement used at the beginning of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.]

Tizzie Dunn was dead, too, and the Waters had gone back to England. Everything changes [gnomic present]. Now she was going to go away like the others, to leave her home. (Joyce, "Eveline")

- **synoptic present:** the use of the present tense in a chapter summary, the title of a chapter, etc. "Mr. Pickwick journeys to Ipswich and meets with a romantic adventure" (Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers*, qtd. Stanzel 1982: 42).

5.1.4. Tense-categorized narratives. Depending on the anteriority or posteriority relationship between discourse-NOW and story-NOW, one can distinguish three major cases:

- **retrospective narration** produces a past-tense narrative whose events and action units have all happened in the past.
- **concurrent narration** produces a present-tense narrative whose action takes place at the same time as it is recounted (discourse-NOW and story-NOW are identical). Typical case: diaries, on-the-scene reporting; see simultaneous narration, [3.3.11](#), for examples.
- **prospective narration** produces a future-tense narrative which recounts events that have not yet occurred. Example: prophetic narrative.

See Margolin (1999) for a detailed comparative survey.

5.2. Time Analysis

Time analysis is concerned with three questions: When? How long? and How often? **Order** refers to the handling of the chronology of the story; **duration** covers the proportioning of story time and discourse time; and **frequency** refers to possible ways of presenting single or repetitive action units. Genette

(1980 [1972]: 33-85, 87-112, 113-160); Toolan (1988: 48-67); Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 43-58). For a more general account see Ricoeur (1983; 1988).

5.2.1. Order (When?). The basic question here is whether the presentation of the story follows the natural sequence of events. If it does, we have a **chronological order**. If not, we are facing a form of 'anachrony':

- **anachrony:** a deviation from strict chronology in a story. The two main types of anachrony are flashbacks and flashforwards. If the anachronically presented event is factual, it is an **objective anachrony**; a character's visions of future or memory of past events are **subjective anachronies**. **Repetitive anachronies** recall already narrated events; **completive anachronies** present events which are omitted in the primary story line. **External anachronies** present events which take place before the beginning or after the end of the primary story line; anachronies that fall within the range of the primary story line are **internal anachronies**. See Genette (1980 [1972]: 35-85); Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 46-51); Toolan (1988: 49-50); Ci (1988) [a critical account].

The first chapter of Lowry's *Under the Volcano* postdates the rest of the action by one year, making it either a flashforward or the rest of the action a flashback. The discourse of Graham Swift's *Waterland* deviates considerably from the chronology of the story. Martin Amis' *Time's Arrow* reverses the chronology of the story (tells the story backwards).

- **flashback/retrospection/analepsis:** the presentation of events that have occurred before the current story-NOW. An **external flashback** presents an event occurring before the beginning of the primary story line (ie, in the pre-history).
- **flashforward/anticipation/prolepsis:** the presentation of a future event before its proper time. An **external flashforward** involves an event happening after the end of the primary story line. An **objective flashforward** or **certain anticipation** presents an event that will actually occur; a **subjective flashforward** or **uncertain anticipation** is just a character's vision of a likely future event. Genette (1980 [1972]: 40, 48-79); Lintvelt 1981: 53-4; Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 46-51); Toolan (1988: 50-54); Ci (1988). Examples:

An hour later Fielding had still appeared neither at the party office nor Tetbury Hall. The faithful had been sent away, with apologies, little knowing that in three days' time the cause of their disappointment was to be the subject of headlines. (Fowles, "The Enigma" 190) [certain anticipation]

I see the lives for which I lay down my life, peaceful, useful, prosperous and happy, in that England which I shall see no more. I see Her with a child upon her bosom, who bears my name. I see her father, aged and bent, but otherwise restored, and faithful to all men in his healing office, and at peace. I see the good old man, so long their friend, in ten years' time enriching them with all he has, and passing tranquilly to his reward. (Dickens, *Tale of Two Cities* 404) [A subjective, external, and completive flashforward.]

- **achrony:** a sequence of temporally unordered events (Genette 1980 [1972]: 84).

5.2.2. Duration (How long?). The basic distinction that needs to be established first is that between 'story time' and 'discourse time' (see Müller 1968 [1948]).

- **discourse time:** the time it takes an average reader to read a passage, or, more globally, the whole text. Discourse time can be measured in the number of words, lines, or pages of a text. (A rule of thumb used by radio announcers is that one line of typewritten text equals 1.5 seconds.)

Typical discourse-time oriented questions are, "Can the text be read at one sitting?" (Poe's definition of a short story); "How does discourse time relate to story time?", ie, "How long does it take to tell/read this episode" versus "How long does its action last?". Müller (1968 [1948]); Genette (1980 [1972]: 33-34); Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 44-45).

- **story time:** the fictional time taken up by an action episode, or, more globally, by the whole action. To determine story time, one usually relies on aspects of textual pace, intuition, and text-internal clues. Note that story-time may have a highly subjective element to it, especially in figural and reflector-mode narration. If necessary, 'clock-time' needs to be distinguished from 'mind-time' (*durée*) (Smuda 1981, Stevenson 1998: ch3).

Some useful questions concerning story time are "What is the global time scale of the text?" (the 'amplitude' of story time) and "How does story time differ from discourse time?". For instance, while the discourse time of Joyce's *Ulysses* is 650 pages of text its story time is one day (eighteen hours, to be exact). By contrast, a single line of text such as "Ten years passed" compresses ten years of story time to less than a second of discourse time.

Have a look at the following picture which graphically correlates discourse time and story time in James Joyce's short story "A Painful Case":

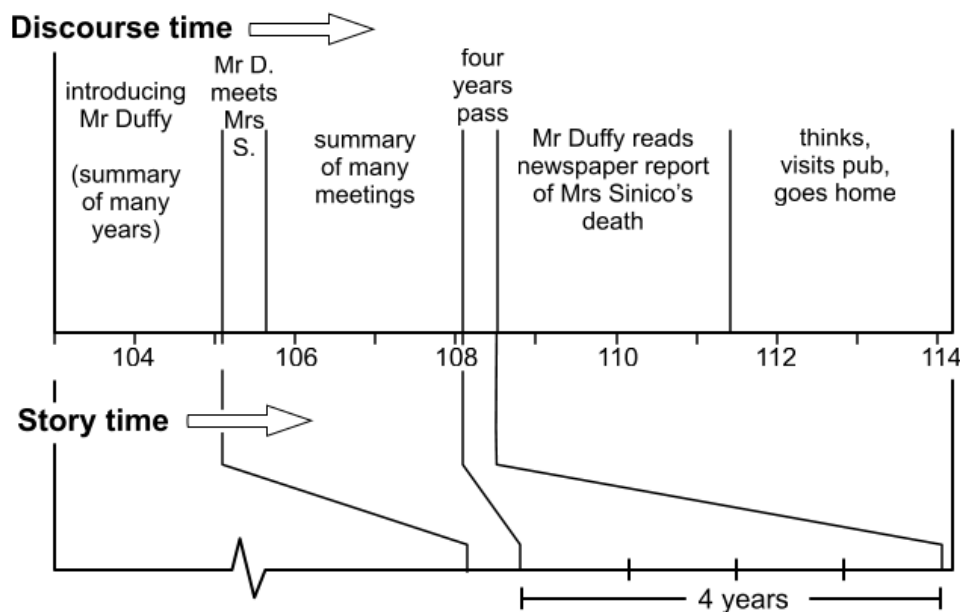


Fig. 14. Joyce's "A Painful Case".

Discourse time of the story is 11 pages, roughly equivalent to 20 minutes reading time (page numbers refer to the Penguin edition of *Dubliners*). The story is ordered chronologically but the discourse time for the narrative units varies depending on what the narrator presents as summary or as scene (5.3). The main character in the story is Mr. Duffy, a middle-aged intellectual who lives an intentionally solitary and celibate life. One day he makes the acquaintance of Mrs. Sinico, who is also middle-aged and imprisoned in a marriage gone stale. They become friends and spend time together, but the relationship stays platonic until one day Mrs. Sinico commits the unprecedented act of pressing his hand to her cheek. For Mr. Duffy this is going too far and he breaks off all further contact. After four years, Mr. Duffy happens to come across a newspaper article reporting Mrs. Sinico's death by accident. Included in the article is a doctor's statement alleging that she had become an alcoholic. For the remainder of the story we follow Mr. Duffy's troubled thoughts as he visits a pub and goes home. At first denying, then accepting his part in her fate, he finally realizes the utter emptiness of his own life. Note that the second half of the story's discourse time representing Mr. Duffy's perceptions and reflections, corresponds to a bare millimeter on the story time scale. (While this is a heterodiegetic story with Mr. Duffy as an internal focalizer, there are interesting thematic parallels to the homodiegetic "Fishing-Boat Picture" story by Alan Sillitoe, see section 9.1.)

5.2.3. In order to assess a narrative passage's **speed** or **tempo**, one compares story time and discourse time. The following major types of relationship occur:

- In **isochronous presentation** ('of equal duration'; also **congruent presentation**, **isochrony**), story time and discourse time are approximately equal or rhythmically mapped. This is normally the case in passages containing lots of dialogue or detailed action presentation.

Isochrony is a defining feature of the scenic narrative mode (5.3.1.). Genette (1980 [1972]: 94-95, 109-112); Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 54-55); Toolan (1988: 57-61).

"I have your call to New York now, Mrs. Glass," the operator said.

"Thank you," said the girl, and made room on the night table for the ashtray. A woman's voice came through. "Muriel? Is that you?" The girl turned the receiver slightly away from her ear. "Yes, Mother. How are you?" she said. (Salinger, "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" 7-8)

- In **speed-up/acceleration**, an episode's discourse time is considerably shorter than its story time. Speed-up typically characterizes a 'summary' or 'panoramic' mode of presentation. Genette (1980 [1972]: 94-95, 95-99); Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 53-54); Toolan (1988: 57-61).

Set loose, Sybil immediately ran down to the flat part of the beach and began to walk in the direction of Fisherman's Pavilion. Stopping only to sink a foot in a soggy collapsed castle, she was soon out of the area reserved for guests of the hotel.

She walked for about a quarter of a mile and then suddenly broke into an oblique run up the soft part of the beach. She stopped short when she reached the place where a young man was lying on his back. (Salinger, "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" 14)

- In **slow-down/deceleration**, an episode's discourse time is considerably longer than its story time. Slow-down is a rare phenomenon; many cases classified as slow-down are probably more properly interpreted as congruent presentations of subjective time. Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 53); Toolan (1988: 57).
- **ellipsis/cut/omission**: a stretch of story time which is not textually represented at all. "The discourse halts, though time continues to pass in the story" (Chatman 1978: 70). Some critics consider ellipsis a special case of speed-up. Genette (1980 [1972]: 93, 95, 106-109); Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 53); Toolan (1988: 56).

Roses, green grass, books and peace. [Martha's last thoughts before she falls asleep.]

Martha woke up with a start when they got to the cottage, and gave a little shriek which made them all laugh. Mummy's waking shriek, they called it. (Weldon, "Weekend" 314) [Story time has been cut during Martha's sleep.]

- **pause**: during a pause, discourse time elapses on description or comment, while story time stops and no action actually takes place. Genette (1980 [1972]: 95, 99-106); Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 53); Toolan (1988: 56).

5.2.4. Frequency (How often?). Frequency analysis investigates a narrator's strategies of summative or repetitive telling. There are three main frequential modes:

- **singulative telling**: recounting once what happened once.
- **repetitive telling**: recounting several times what happened once.
- **iterative telling**: recounting once what happened n times.

Genette (1980 [1972]: 113-160); Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 46, 56-58); Toolan (1988: 61-62). Consider also the humorous metanarrative comment given by the self-conscious authorial narrator of Lodge's *How Far Can You Go?*:

As a contemporary French critic has pointed out in a treatise on narrative [an allusion to Genette 1980 [1972]], a novelist can (a) narrate once what happened once or (b) narrate n times what happened once or (c) narrate n times what happened n times or (d) narrate once what happened n times. [The occasion for this comment is the narrator's problem of how to recount the sexual experiences of his characters.]

5.3. Narrative Modes

5.3.1. The main **narrative modes** (or ways in which an episode can be presented) basically follow from the frequential and durational relationships identified above. First, however, let us make the traditional distinction between 'showing' and 'telling':

- **showing:** in a showing mode of presentation, there is little or no narratorial mediation, overtness, or presence. The reader is basically cast in the role of a witness to the events.
- **telling:** in a telling mode of presentation, the narrator is in overt control (especially, durational control) of action presentation, description, characterization and point-of-view arrangement.

Only two major narrative modes are commonly distinguished – scene and summary:

- **scene/scenic presentation:** a 'showing' mode which presents a continuous stream of detailed action events. (Durational aspect: isochrony.) Bonheim (1982: 20-24); Genette (1980 [1972]: 94-95, 109-112); Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 54-55).

He glanced at the girl lying asleep on one of the twin beds. Then he went over to one of the pieces of luggage, opened it, and from under a pile of shorts and undershirts he took out an Ortgies caliber 7.65 automatic. He released the magazine, looked at it, then reinserted it. He cocked the piece. Then he went over and sat down on the unoccupied twin bed, looked at the girl, aimed the pistol, and fired a bullet through his right temple. (Salinger, "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" 21)

- **summary:** a 'telling' mode in which the narrator condenses a relatively long stretch of story time into a brief, summary report. (Durational aspect: speed-up.) Bonheim (1982: 22-24).

The years passed. The sun swept through its majestic cycles. The moon waxed and waned, and tides rushed back and forth across the surface of the world. Ice crept down from the north, and for ten thousand years covered the islands, its weight and power breaking down rocks and forming earth. (Michener, *Hawaii* 7)

5.3.2. Analyse speed, frequency, and narrative mode in the following excerpts:

- He goes to the McDonald Hamburger stand, and to graduate student parties to smoke pot, and to political meetings. He writes letters home to the girl with the abortion, and washes his clothes in the laundry down in the basement of the graduate dormitory, shown the way by Ting. He eats Fardiman's apple cake and grades many themes. He stands behind his desk in the Chemistry Building, three days a week, and tells his students about Carnaby Street and Portobello Road. He goes to the Teaching Round Table, where all the graduate assistants sit around a square table and discuss their problems. (Bradbury, "Composition" 293-294) [\[sped-up iterative summary\]](#)
- I gave my attention back to Dr Almore. He was on the telephone now, not talking, holding it to his ear, smoking and waiting. Then he leaned forward as you do when the voice comes back, listened, hung up and wrote something on a pad in front of him. Then a heavy book with yellow sides appeared on his desk and he opened it just about in the middle. While he was doing this he gave one quick look out of the window, straight at the Chrysler. (Chandler, *The Lady in the Lake*) [\[isochronous singulative scene\]](#)

5.3.3. In addition to the two major modes, there are two minor or supportive modes: description and comment. These modes are supportive rather than constitutive because no-one can tell a story using description and comment alone.

- **description:** a 'telling' mode in which the narrator introduces a character or describes the setting. Durational aspect: pause. As Chatman (1978: 43-44) points out, descriptive sentences are typically predicated on 'stative verbs' like *be* and *have* ("His hair was white. He had no friends or relatives"). See also block characterization ([7.4](#)). Examples:

He had numbered ninety years. His head was completely bald – his mouth was toothless – his long beard was white as snow – and his limbs were feeble and trembling. (G.W.M. Reynolds, *Wagner the Were-Wolf*)

In the centre of the square stands the courthouse itself, a Victorian building of no distinction, with defensive cannon at every corner. In front of the courthouse stands a statue, of a soldier, his rifle in a negative position, a Henry Fleming who has been perpetuated as he ducks out of the Civil War. (Bradbury, "Composition" 286)

- **comment/commentary:** a 'telling' mode in which the narrator comments on characters, the development of the action, the circumstances of the act of narrating, etc. Durational aspect:

pause. Comments are typical narratorial intrusions and often indicative of 'self-conscious narration'. See [3.2.20](#) and Bonheim (1982: 30-32). Example:

I've been a postman for twenty-eight years. Take that first sentence: because it's written in a simple way may make the fact of my having been a postman for so long seem important, but I realize that such a fact has no significance whatever. After all, it's my fault that it may seem as if it has to some people just because I wrote it down plain; I wouldn't know how to do it any other way. (Sillitoe, "The Fishing-Boat Picture" 135)

6. Setting and fictional space

6.1. Theoretical accounts of literary representations of space have been slow in coming, especially when compared to studies on time, tense, and chronology. For a long time, scholars simply followed Lessing's dictum that literature is a 'temporal art' as opposed to 'spatial' arts like painting and sculpture. Thus, for a long time, the general assumption was that a verbal narrative's setting simply is not as important as its temporal framework and chronology. In recent years, however, the balance seems to have been redressed, see Dennerlein (2009), Ryan (2014), Fludernik and Keen (2014), Weik von Mossner (2017).

Let us quickly browse through some earlier accounts. Josef Frank (1963 [1948]) isolates a number of stylistic techniques that create an effect of what he terms 'spatial form'. Using the term 'chronotopes' (literally, 'time spaces'), Bakhtin (1981b [1973]) notes the fact that time and space in narrative texts can be closely correlated, and this is investigated in detail by Riffaterre (1996). Stanzel (1984: ch5.2) finds that space in fiction is distinct from space in the visual arts because space in fiction can never be presented *completely*. Describing the entire interior of a room, to the smallest visible detail, is an impossible (and probably boring) task, while the full *depiction* of a room in the medium of film poses no problem at all. In verbal narrative, a room can only be described by referring to a small selection of more or less 'graphic' detail – luckily, in the process of reading, readers will 'connect the dots' and complete the verbal picture by imagining the rest.

6.2. For a different general point of departure, let us remind ourselves that there is a close relationship between objects and spaces. A fishbowl is an object from our human point of view, but to the goldfish it is a space; similarly, a house is an object in a larger environment (a district, a city), but to its inhabitants it is a space to move or exist in. In other words, what's space and what's an object *in* space is a matter of adopted perspective and environmental embeddedness. Hence our definition of literary space:

- **literary space:** the environment which situates objects and characters; more specifically, the environment in which characters move or live in.

Literary space in this sense is more than a stable 'place' or 'setting' – it includes landscapes as well as climatic conditions, cities as well as gardens and rooms, indeed, it includes everything that can be conceived of as spatially located objects and persons. Along with characters, space belongs to the 'existents' of a narrative (Chatman 1978). [Bakhtin (1981b [1973]); Kahrman et al. (1977: ch4); Chatman (1978: 96-106, 138-145); Hoffmann (1978); Bronfen (1986); Ronen (1994: ch6); Würzbach (2001).]

6.3. Story space and discourse space

Paralleling the concepts 'story time' and 'discourse time' ([5.2.2](#)), Chatman proposes the pair 'story space' and 'discourse space':

- **story space:** the spatial environment or setting of any of the story's action episodes; or more globally, the ensemble or range of these environments.
- **discourse space:** the narrator's current spatial environment; more globally, the whole range of environments in which the narrative situation is located. For instance, hospitals and psychiatric wards are popular modern discourse spaces (J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, Günter Grass's *The Tin Drum*).

More specifically still, the terms 'story-HERE' and 'discourse-HERE' can be used to identify the current deictic 'point of origin' in story space and discourse space, respectively.

- **story-HERE:** the current point in space in story space; functionally, the deictic point of origin for deictic expressions such as *here, there, left, right*, etc, often used in register with the physical position of an internal focalizer ([3.2.10](#)).
- **discourse-HERE:** the current point in space in discourse space, equivalent to the physical position of the narrator. Example:

The solid wood desk, on which I am writing, formerly a jeweler's workbench, is equipped with four large drawers and a top whose surface, slightly sloping inwards from the edges (no doubt so that the pearls that were once sifted on it would run no risk of falling to the floor) is covered with black fabric of very tightly woven mesh. (Georges Perec, "Still Life/Style Leaf")

Story-HERE and discourse-HERE, in conjunction with story-NOW and discourse-NOW, identify the story's current **deictic center**, ie the origin or zero point of the text's spatio-temporal co-ordinate system. (Compare the general framework of focalizations sketched in 3.2.17.)

6.4. As Ronen (1986; 1994) has pointed out, any description of space invokes a perception of space: apart from the reader's imaginative perception, this is either a narrator's perception, or a character's perception; both can be either actual (online) perception or imaginary (offline) perception. For this reason, fictional space is evidently strongly correlated to focalization ([3.2](#)).

Most important among the linguistic clues to spatial perception are expressions that signal the 'deictic orientation' of a speaking or perceiving subject, representing the current deictic center. On the most basic level this concerns expressions like *near* and *far*, *here* and *there*, *left* and *right*, *up* and *down*, *come* and *go*, etc. Significant oppositional spaces are city vs. country, civilization vs. nature, house vs. garden, transitional space vs. permanent space, and public space vs. private space. All these spaces are culturally defined (Baak 1983: 37) and therefore variable; often, they are also very clearly associated with attitudinal stances and value judgments.

Methodologically, the most natural approach towards the semantics of fictional space is to gather the isotopies ([P3.6](#)) correlating deictic expressions, spatial opposites, and value judgments, and to identify the propositions that link the common semantic denominators involved. To practice this type of analysis, try your hand on some of the examples quoted below.

6.5. Semantically charged space

What makes an inquiry into the semantics of literary space so promising is the fact that spatial features can significantly influence characters and events. This is often referred to as the 'semanticization' or semantic charging of space. For instance, in Katherine Mansfield's "Miss Brill", Miss Brill's room is likened to a "cupboard", a simile that not only captures the dimensions of the room but also expresses its cramped atmosphere and the protagonist's isolation. Other examples:

I held a florin tightly in my hand as I strode down Buckingham Street towards the station. The sight of the streets thronged with buyers and glaring with gas recalled to me the purpose of my journey. I took my seat in the third-class carriage of a deserted train. After an intolerable delay the train moved out of the station slowly, crept onward among ruinous houses and over the twinkling river. At Westland Row Station a crowd of people pressed to the carriage doors; but the porters moved them back, saying that it was a special train for the bazaar. I remained alone in the bare carriage. In a few minutes the train drew up beside an improvised wooden platform. I passed out on to the road and saw by the lighted dial of a clock that it was ten minutes to ten. In front of me was a large building which displayed the magical name. (Joyce, "Araby")

Here the spatial details of the boy's journey to the bazaar named "Araby" (a name suggesting an exotic foreign space) foreshadow his frustrating experience there. The emotive connotations of the "magical name" are partly mirrored, and partly contrasted in the drab Dublin environment through which he passes. (Hint: consider also the initiation aspects of this story – [3.3.4](#)).

Finally, consider the famous introductory description of the "valley of ashes" in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (ch2), later the scene of a tragic car accident.

About half-way between West Egg and New York the motor road hastily joins the railroad and runs beside it for a quarter of a mile, so as to shrink away from a certain desolate area of land. This is a valley of ashes – a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens; where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and, finally, with a transcendent effort, of ash-grey men, who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air. Occasionally a line of grey cars crawls along an invisible track, gives out a ghastly creak, and comes to rest, and immediately the ash-grey men swarm up with leaden spades and stir up an impenetrable cloud, which screens their obscure operations from your sight.

6.6. Exercise: relate the following representations of space to the underlying narrative situations.

- (1) [Coketown] was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes would have allowed it; but as matters stood it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of building full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness. (Dickens, *Hard Times* chV)
- (2) [T]hey were clanking through a drive that cut through the garden like a whip-lash, looping suddenly an island of green, and behind the island, but out of sight until you came upon it, was the house. It was long and low built, with a pillared veranda and balcony all the way round. The soft white bulk of it lay stretched upon the green garden like a sleeping beast. And now one and now another window leaped into light. Someone was walking through the empty rooms carrying a lamp. (Mansfield, "Prelude" 17)

Answers. (1) is an authorial narrator's panoramic view – a highly critical one – of the novel's main setting. (2) is a figural narration presenting elements of space as seen from the moving point of view of an internal focalizer – significantly, some of the object only become visible as the cart gets closer to the house.

7. Characters and Characterization

Characterization analysis investigates the ways and means of creating the personality traits of fictional characters. The general template question is, Who (subject) characterizes whom (object), in which manner and in what social context, as having which properties. For a general introduction, see Chatman (1978: 107-133); Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 59-70); Pfister (1988: ch5); Margolin (1989); Bonheim (1990: ch17); Fokkema (1991); Nieragden (1995); Schneider (2000); Culpeper (2001) [the latter two are cognitive approaches]; Eder (2008).

7.1. For a survey of characterization techniques, we will add suitable options to the general template question. The result is the multi-part mind map shown in Figure 15, which is a much-simplified version of Pfister's dichotomy of characterization in drama (1988: 184).

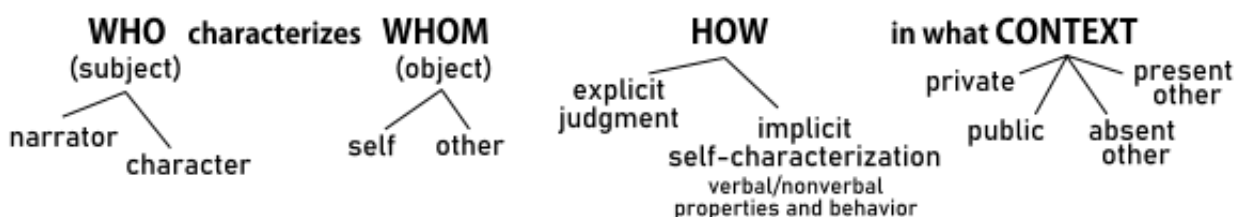


Fig. 15. WHO characterizes WHOM.

7.2. Characterization analysis relies on four basic questions. First we can ask whether the characterizing subject is the narrator or a character, so that we can set **narratorial** against **figural characterization**; second, we can ask whether the characterizing subject characterize himself/herself

or somebody else, which lets us distinguish between **self-characterization** and **other-characterization**;⁵ third, we can ask whether personality traits are attributed by a verbal statement or implied in somebody's behavior, which allows us to juxtapose **explicit** and **implicit characterization**; and fourth, we can check how a characterization may be conditioned by contextual factors such as a private or a public setting and the presence or absence of the characterized object.

7.3. Specifically, an explicit characterization is a verbal statement that attributes a trait or property to somebody, either oneself or somebody else. Usually, an explicit characterization is a descriptive statement which identifies, categorizes, individualizes, and evaluates a person. Characterizing judgments can refer to external, internal, or habitual traits as in "John has blue eyes, is a good-hearted fellow, and smokes a pipe".⁶ The traits attributed may only be vague, allusive, or even elliptical, as in A.E. Housman's famous "I was one-and-twenty,/No use to talk to me". See Srull and Wyer (1988) for a theory of character attribution in social cognition, especially their use of the concepts 'identification', 'categorization', and 'individualization'.

A *narrator's* explicit self- or other-characterization marks a narrative pause (5.2.3, also 5.3.3), where nothing happens on the level of action. A typical example is the so-called **block characterization**, ie the introductory description of a character, usually offered on the character's first appearance in the text (Souvage 1965: 34-36). Example:

He was personable and quick-minded, which might, with his middle-class manner and accent, have done him harm; but he was also a diplomat. [. . .] His name was Michael Jennings. (Fowles, "The Enigma")

In contrast, a *character's* explicit self- or other-characterization is a speech act that is part of the story's narrative action:

She [Katie] pecked Martha on the forehead. "Funny little Martha," she said. "She reminds me of Janet. I really do like Janet." (Weldon, "Weekend" 320)

In both cases, explicit characterization may be marked by face- or image-saving strategies, wishful thinking, or other "subjective distortions" (Pfister 1988: 184) – similar to what one finds in lonely hearts ads, letters of applications etc. Characterization statements usually also depend on contextual circumstances such as social setting, addressee-oriented pragmatics, and general "strategic aims and tactical considerations" (again Pfister 184). Moreover, explicit judgments can be uttered publicly or privately (in a dialogue or in an interior monologue [8.9]), and the target of an other-characterization may happen to be present or absent in the current scene. One can see the problem of truthfully characterizing a dictator to his face.

7.4. An implicit characterization is a self-characterization in which somebody's physical appearance or behavior is indicative of some characteristic trait. For instance, characters and narrators can characterize themselves by behaving or speaking in a certain manner. Nonverbal behavior may self-characterize somebody as, for instance, a skillful chess player, an alcoholic, a coward. Verbal behavior (eg use of jargon, slang, dialect, or sociolect), may self-characterize the speaker as having or lacking a certain educational background, belonging to a specific social class, and more generally as being truthful, evasive, or ill-mannered. Narrators, in particular, often characterize themselves by their verbal behavior.

Like explicit characterization, implicit characterization is usually affected by contextual circumstances such as a public or a private setting. Specifically, one should call to mind that the narrative act itself takes place in a public space involving the narrator and his/her audience.

⁵ 'Self-characterization' and 'other-characterization' here replace the terms 'auto-characterization' and 'altero-characterization' that were used in previous versions of this document.

⁶ There may be some confusion potential here. "John is a smoker" alludes to a behavioral feature, but it remains an explicit characterization because it is made in a verbal statement. In contrast, when John is presented as smoking in the story's narrative action he is characterizing himself implicitly.

7.5. Here are some questions testing our understanding of Pfister's model. Read carefully; the questions may look simple, but they are really loaded and require circumspect answers.

1. Can a character characterize the narrator?
2. Suppose a narrating-I explicitly characterizes an experiencing-I – would this be self-characterization or other-characterization?
3. Can a narrator implicitly characterize a character?
4. Can a narrator explicitly characterize a member of the narrative audience?
5. Can a character insult a dictator to his face?

1. No. Characters are not aware of narrators, at least in principle. However, should the narrator allow 'metalepses' then the answer would be Yes. See [2.3.5](#) for the logic of this (or lack of it).

2. This really needs to be decided on a case-by-case basis. If the experiencing-I is distanced in time and mindset s/he is probably best understood to be 'an other' ([3.3.2](#)). On the other hand, if the narrative distance happens to be small, and the difference between narrating and experiencing-I negligible (as in simultaneous narration, for instance, [3.3.11](#)) then self-characterization would be plausible. Obviously, the narrator's own view and handling of the matter should be considered as well.

3. No: there is no such thing as an implicit other-characterization in Pfister's system (see [7.4](#)). All implicit characterizations are self-characterizations. What a narrator can and does do is select and arrange situations in which characters implicitly characterize themselves.

4. Yes; indeed, the narrator of *Tristram Shandy* is famous for doing so.

5. That is possible, of course, and it would at the same time amount to a powerful implicit self-characterization indicating the character's courage, desperation, or foolhardiness. (The scenario does occur in Nabokov's *Bend Sinister*.)

7.6. The implicit self-characterization of a narrator is always of major importance: is the narrator overt? covert? omniscient? competent? opinionated? self-conscious? well-read? ironic? reliable? Ever since Booth (1961: chs 8, 10, 12) offered his account of narratorial reliability and trustworthiness, the topic has been discussed extensively – see Genette (1980: 182-185); Lanser (1981); Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 59-67, 100-103); Stanzel (1984: 150-52); Wall (1994); Nünning (1997; 1998; 1999); Yacobi (2000), D'hoker and Martens (2008), V. Nünning, ed (2015); Vogt (2018); Jacke (2020) [the latter two are German language doctoral theses].

- **reliable narrator:** a narrator "whose rendering of the story and commentary on it the reader is supposed to take as an authoritative account of the fictional truth" (Rimmon-Kenan 1983: 100).
- **unreliable narrator:** a narrator "whose rendering of the story and/or commentary on it the reader has reasons to suspect. [...] The main sources of unreliability are the narrator's limited knowledge, his personal involvement, and his problematic value-scheme" (Rimmon-Kenan 1983: 100). Many first-person narrators are unreliable.

True! – nervous – very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am! but why *will* you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses – not destroyed – not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily – how calmly I can tell you the whole story. (Poe, beginning of "The Tell-Tale Heart") [*Not at all a "healthy and calm" way of beginning a story!*]

Some theorists make a distinction between 'factual' or 'mimetic' (un)reliability and 'evaluative' or 'normative' (un)reliability: "a narrator may be quite trustworthy in reporting events but not competent in interpreting them, or may confuse certain facts but have a good understanding of their implications" (Lanser 1981: 171). According to Cohn (1999: ch8), Thomas Mann's *Tod in Venedig* is told by a mimetically reliable but normatively unreliable narrator.

7.7. E.M. Forster's distinction between flat characters and round characters concerns the psychological depth or sophistication of a person's perceived character traits:

- **flat character/static character:** a one-dimensional figure characterized by a very restricted range of speech and action patterns. A flat character does not develop in the course of the action and can often be reduced to a type or even a caricature (eg, "a typical Cockney housewife", "a bureaucrat" etc). Flat characters are often used for comic effect – Mrs. Micawber in Dickens's *David Copperfield* is characterized by keeping on saying "I never will desert Mr. Micawber".
- **round character/dynamic character:** a three-dimensional figure characterized by many, often conflicting, properties. A round character tends to develop in the course of the action and is not reducible to a type. Forster (1976 [1927]); Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 40-42); Pfister (1988: 177-179). Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 41) identifies Stephen in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Strether in James's *The Ambassadors* as round characters.

7.8. Here is a selective list of functionally determined character types (to be expanded):

- **confidant** (fem., **confidante**): somebody the protagonist can speak to, exchange views with, confide in – usually a close friend. – Dr. Watson is Sherlock Holmes' confidant (and also his 'foil', see below). Sam is Frodo's confidant in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*.
- **foil character:** a foil is, literally, "a sheet of bright metal that is placed under a piece of jewelry to increase its brilliancy" (Holman 1972); one meaning of *to foil* is 'to enhance by contrast'. In literature, a minor character highlighting certain features of a major character, usually through contrast. – In Weldon's "Weekend", Janet is a foil for Katie and Katie is a foil for Martha. Sherlock Holmes's cleverness is highlighted by Dr. Watson's dullness.
- **chorus character:** originally a convention in drama, an uninvolved character ("man in the street") commenting on characters or events, typically speaking philosophically, sententiously, or in clichés.

"One time we had a mayor of Chicago punched your King George right in the snoot [...]. Don't forget now," says the cabbie, "It's better here, so if you don't like it go back where you came from." (Bradbury, "Composition" 289) [The American taxi driver who takes William, a British student, to the campus.]

7.9. A text's **system of denomination/appellations/naming conventions** is the specific set of naming strategies used to identify and subsequently to refer to its characters. Since naming patterns often dovetail with characterization, point of view or focalization, they merit close stylistic analysis. Key questions are:

- How (with what sequence of expressions) does a text establish a character's identity? (Cf. block characterization, [7.4](#), above.)
- Are the characters mainly referred to by first name, nickname, last name, with or without a (honorific) form of address (Mr, Mrs, Dr, Father, Senator, Colonel, ...), or by a descriptive referring expression? (For instance, in Joyce's *Ulysses*, the younger protagonist is "Stephen", while the older protagonist is "Mr Bloom"; Dickens often uses descriptive expressions such as "his eminently practical friend" etc)
- When and with what implications or presuppositions does the text use personal pronouns? (Cf. use of referentless pronoun', [3.3.10](#)).

See Uspensky (1973) [first close analysis of point-of-view aspects of naming]; Genette (1988 [1983]) [discussion of character identification in 19C and 20C story incipits]; Moore (1989) [naming conventions in James's *What Maisie Knew*]; Fludernik (1996: 246-48); Emmott (1997) [major study mainly focusing on pronouns]; Collier (1999) [naming conventions in Patrick White].

8. Discourses: quoting speech, thought, and writing

8.1. A verbal narrative is the oral or written text produced by a narrator through an act of narrating. In the narrative itself we encounter passages presenting the speeches, thoughts, and writings of characters. Very simply put, according to Genette:

- the **narrator's discourse** tells the 'narrative of events'
- the **characters' discourses** tell the 'narrative of words'

In the following paras we will be concerned with looking at the various interactions between these two types of discourses. Basically, narrators can quote a character directly or indirectly, or they can summarize a character's discourse, or they can mix the character's discourse into their own. Dolezel (1973: Introduction) describes a narrative text as a "concatenation and alternation" of the narrator's and the characters' discourses. See also Genette (1980 [1972]: 164-169; 1988 [1983]: 18, 43, 61-63, 130); Lintvelt (1981: ch4.6.2); Schmid (2005: 4.3).

8.2. In order to get a grasp on basic concepts we will make use of quotation theory as developed by Meir Sternberg (1982b).

- **quotation theory:** the theory of the narrative options of embedding a character's words. The primary relationship is one between **narratorial frame** and **quoted inset**.

Narratorial **tone** can range from 'wholly consonant' (approvement) via 'neutral' to 'wholly dissonant' (critical, ironical). The inset can represent actual words or virtual words (hypothetical utterances as well as verbalized mental events). The inset's authenticity or accuracy can range from verbatim reproduction to rough approximation to misquotation. See Cohn (1978); Sternberg (1982b) [frame and inset]; Genette (1988 [1983]: ch9); Plett (1988).

- An **attributive reporting clause** or **tag** is part of a quotation's narratorial frame. It usually consists of a phrase identifying speaker and discourse act. There are two main forms:
- an **introductory tag** is a discourse tag in initial position (*Jane said (that)*)
- a **parenthetical tag** is a discourse tag in medial or final position (*That, she thought, was it; "That is it", she thought*).

Usually, tags are constructions using (a) 'verba dicendi' or **inquit** (she said, asked, replied, muttered, confessed, claimed, remarked, promised, announced, ...), (b) 'verba cogitandi' or **cogitans** (she said to herself, thought, realized, felt, ...), and (c) 'verba scribendi' or **scribitis** (she wrote, read, noted, ...). Naturally, attributive tags come in many forms, for instance, items like "the notion struck him that", "he promised us to", or "According to John" etc also count as tags. Quoted discourse comes in either free or tagged form:

- A **free** rendering of a character's discourse is one that is not accompanied by an attributive tag.
- A **tagged** rendering is one that *is* accompanied by an attributive tag.

See Page (1973: ch2); Prince (1978); Bonheim (1982: ch5 [historical and stylistic features of inquit]); Banfield (1982: ch1.3.1, 2.2, 2.3); Neumann (1986 [ambiguous forms in Austen]); Collier (1992b: ch11 [comprehensive survey, but restricted to direct discourse inquit]); Fludernik (1993a: ch5.2 [tag phrases and free indirect discourse]).

8.3. The following tree diagram lists the main forms of quoted discourse:

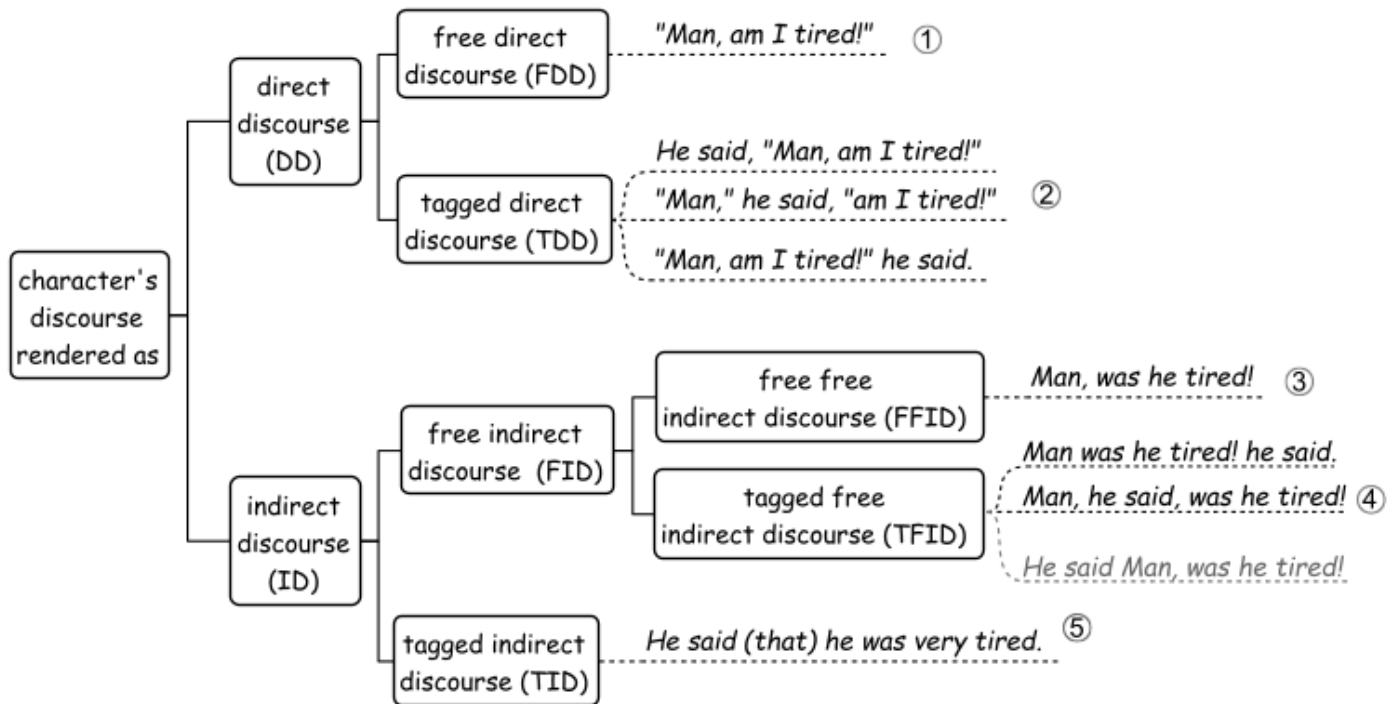


Fig. 16. Quoted discourse.

1. **Free direct discourse (FDD)** is a direct quotation of a character's discourse without any attributive tag phrase. Sometimes the quotation marks are replaced by other typographical markers, and sometimes they are left off entirely.
2. **Tagged direct discourse (TDD)** is a stretch of direct discourse accompanied by an attributive tag.
3. **Free free [sic] indirect discourse (FFID)** generally retains the quoted speaker's subjective syntax and expressions but uses the narrator's tense and person reference. (Because there is no reporting tag FFID may occasionally look like plain narratorial report. For instance, "She was tired" could be a narrator's report or a character's FFID rendering of saying (to herself) "I am tired".)
4. **Tagged free indirect discourse (TFID)** Generally, the tag is a parenthetical tag standing in medial or final position as in the first two items, but we are also allowing a tag in initial position as a legitimate variant (third item). I am graying this third item because its status is controversial in the literature: Banfield (1982) condemns it as "ungrammatical", while McHale (1983) and Leech and Short (2007) stress its acceptability and wide use in natural and literary texts. I side with these latter commentators but have nudged the item's branch towards the TID node to highlight the fact that the two styles can, on occasion, result in very similar or even identical sentences, especially when the original utterance does not contain any character-specific speech elements such as deictic pronouns or subjective expressions. Other than that, a TFID inset exhibits the same characteristics as a FFID inset.
For a selection of the massive literature on FID see: Pascal (1977 ['dual voice' theory]); McHale (1978 [succinct overview]); Banfield (1982 [generative-grammar account]); Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 110-16); Cohn (1978: 99-140 [consonant and dissonant tones]); Toolan (2001) [FID test]; Fludernik (1993a) [comprehensive account]; Schmid (2010: ch4.3) [cultural and historical variants of FID].
5. **Tagged indirect discourse (TID)** is basically equivalent to the school-grammar category of indirect speech. The tag is an introductory tag (initial position), followed by a subordinate clause of quoted discourse. Pronouns, tenses, and referring expression are adjusted to the point of view of the narrator, and expressive elements are usually mentioned in the tag – as in *she cried out loudly*. Often the narrator also summarizes and grammatically straightens the character's discourse. For this reason, TID can markedly deviate from any presumptive original DD.

Note, on the other hand, that it is sometimes difficult or even impossible to decide whether a sentence belongs to one category of rendered discourse or another, or indeed neither. We have already mentioned possible identical renderings in the case of TID and TFID (see comment on TID above). For

another example, take Chatman's tag-less sentence "The room was dark". If the character actually thinks "The room was dark" it is a case of DT; if s/he thinks "The room is dark" it is a case of FFIT; if s/he doesn't think or say anything at all it could be a matter-of-fact narratorial description; if it is a nonverbal perception it is also not a case of quoted discourse but of 'narrated non-reflective perception' (see 8.11 below). Usually, consideration of context disambiguates such cases pretty quickly, see the discussion of this case in [3.2.21.1](#). However, the ambiguity may also be intentional and unresolvable. Simple and clear-cut as these techniques may appear at first glance, narrators often use them to create very subtle effects.

8.4. Let us quickly refine the foregoing general categories by associating them with specific acts of speech, thought, and writing. All we have to do is to replace 'D' for discourse by 'S' for speech, 'T' for thought, and 'W' for writing, respectively. As a result, we get 3 times 8 = 24 specific terms, including **DS** (direct speech), **IS** (indirect speech), **TDS** (tagged direct speech), **FFIS** (free free indirect speech), ..., **DT** (direct thought), **IT** (indirect thought), **FDT** (free direct thought), **TFIT** (tagged free indirect thought), ..., **DW** (direct writing), **IW** (indirect writing), **FDW** (free direct writing), **FFIW** (free free indirect writing), etc.

8.5. Time to check out some examples from real texts and do an exercise.

- Only I myself am novel, he thinks, the experience is not ... But what, he thinks, next? (Bradbury, "Composition")
[tagged direct thought: TDT]
- Wonderful! The best husband in the world: look into his crinkly, merry, gentle eyes; see it there. So the mouth slopes away into something of a pout. Never mind. Gaze into the eyes. Love. It must be love. You married him. (Weldon, "Weekend" 313)
[FDT. As Banfield (1982) points out, it is not possible to convert an imperative construction and forms of address into FID (feel free to try, it won't work!).]
- Mrs Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself (Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*).
[TIS. Possible DS: I will buy the flowers myself.]
- Maisie Johnson positively felt she must cry Oh! (*Mrs. Dalloway*)
[TFIT (variant 3); DS: I must cry 'Oh']
- This was a lonesome post to occupy (I said) (Dickens, "The Signalman")
[TFIS (variant 1). DS: This is a lonesome post to occupy.]
- He will write to her?
He will write to her every alternate day, and tell her all his adventures. (Dickens, *Edwin Drood*)
[A dialogue rendered as FFIS. DS: You will write to me? I will write to you tell you all my adventures ...]

Analyze the following passages yourself, and for any instance of ID specify a likely underlying DD.

1. Let me alone! screamed Anthony silently. Let go of me! (Metalious, *The Tight White Collar*)
2. Would it bore you to come with me, Mr. Tansley? (Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*)
3. Have I heard, she wants to know, from poor Blanche? (Delafield, *Diary of a Provincial Lady*)
4. The Chairman said that the Air Officer Commanding regarded the question of heating as of utmost importance. In view of the small coal ration, was it possible or desirable to convert to oil heating? [non-fictional example]
5. "When do you leave?" she asked.
"Tomorrow night."
She said nothing more. Strangely enough, a tinge of melancholy had settled over her spirits. No doubt the proximity of the town was the cause of this. (Orczy, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*)

Answers: **1** TDT, followed by FDT; **2** FDS (possibly FDT); **3** TFIS (DS: Have you heard from ...); **4** TIS > FFIS (DS: He regards the question ... is it possible or desirable ...); **5** TDS > FDS > FFIT (DS: ...proximity of the town is the cause for this; note, interpretation needed to recognize this as FFIT). [Some of these items discussed in Jahn (1992a).]

8.6. Our terms mainly follow Semino and Short's (2004) popular 'revised model of speech, writing and thought presentation', a model that is frequently used in corpus analysis projects. Corpus analysis preferably needs an exhaustive classification of text elements, so Semino and Short also define terms like N (narrative), NI (internal narration), NRSA (narrator's report of speech act) etc. In our approach, such elements are discussed as narrative modes (5.3). Pursuing an earlier intuition, Semino and Short persist in arranging their categories on a scale of freedom from narratorial dominance, while here they are left intentionally nominal. In order to address more general features, Semino and Short resort to abbreviations like '(F)DS', '(F)DT', and '(F)DW', at the same time claiming that FDS, FDT, and FDW are "subtypes" of DS, DT, and DW (2004: 198). In our taxonomy, by contrast, superordinate and subordinate categories are terminologically distinct. For '(F)DS' we have just 'DS', for "(F)DS, (F)DT, and (F)DW" collectively we have just DD, which seems quite an advantage.

Well, our model has negatives as well as positives. Terminologically, the "double free" FFID is a hard pill to swallow and I don't expect it to become very popular in the narratological community. Admittedly, too, a taxonomy is never fully comfortable with borderline cases and mixed types, yet many of these – often the most intriguing ones – do occur in narrative texts, as amply documented by Semino and Short. Schmid (2010), in particular, analyzes discourse presentations by drawing up 'stylistic profiles', based on eight features pointing to either the narrator's or the character's text ('NT' and 'CT' in Figure 17, below). For instance, standard English and German FID in heterodiegetic past-tense narrative is defined as follows (Schmid 2010: 147).

	1. Theme	2. Evalu- ation	3. Person	4. Tense	5. Orienta- tion syst.	6. Lang. function	7. Lexis	8. Syntax
NT			x	x				
CT	x	x			x	x	x	x

Fig. 17. Past-tense heterodiegetic FID (Schmid).

Note that the FID profile of, for instance, homodiegetic present-tense narrative would place the x's differently for features Tense and Person. Exploring possible feature combinations, Schmid isolates many interesting variants both diachronically and across languages such as German, Russian, and English.

8.7. Let us briefly turn to some less clear-cut cases. To begin with, we may note that a dominant narrator can easily reduce a character's discourse to almost nothing. Among such forms of **narrative report of discourse** McHale (1978: 258-60) discerns three main types.

- **diegetic summary:** the narrator mentions a discourse event without further specification.
- **summary report:** the narrator names the general topic only.
- **indirect content-paraphrase:** the narrator summarily reports propositional content.

Discussion very active indeed [diegetic summary]. I talk to plain young man with horn-rimmed glasses, sitting at my left hand, about Jamaica, where neither of us has ever been [summary report] [...] Go into the drawing room, and all exclaim how nice it is to see the fire [indirect content-paraphrase]. (Delafield, *Diary of a Provincial Lady*)

8.8. Presenting the mental processes of characters, their thoughts and perceptions, their memories, dreams, and emotions became a prime point of interest as well as a challenge for late 19C and early 20C novelists such as D.H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, William Faulkner, Dorothy

Richardson, Patrick White, and many others. Critics began to speak of 'literary impressionism', 'the novel of consciousness', and 'stream of consciousness art'.

- **stream of consciousness:** originally, a term coined by the American psychologist William James (the brother of Henry James) to denote the disjointed character of mental processes and the layering and merging of central and peripheral levels of awareness. Appropriated into literary criticism by May Sinclair in 1918, stream of consciousness is often used as a general term for the textual rendering of mental processes, especially any attempt to capture the random, irregular, disjointed, associative and incoherent character of these processes.

See Cohn (1978) for an excellent introduction, also W. James (1950 [1890]: ch9), Sinclair (1990 [1918]); Humphrey (1954); Steinberg (1973); Chatman (1978: 186-195); Smuda (1981); Toolan (1988: 128).

8.9. The main technique of representing the rhythm and voice (?) of a character's stream of consciousness is the interior monologue:

- **interior monologue:** an extended passage of FDT (free direct thought), sometimes also considered an independent text type (**autonomous monologue**), eg by Cohn (1978). Examples are chapter 18 of *Ulysses* (Molly's monologue), Schnitzler's stories "Leutnant Gustl" and "Fräulein Else", Dujardin's novella *The Bays Are Sere* (orig. *Les lauriers sont coupés* [1887]). As Edouard Dujardin, often identified as the inventor of the style, puts it, "The essential innovation introduced by interior monologue consists in the fact that its aim is to invoke the uninterrupted flow of thoughts going through the character's being, as they are born, and in the order they are born, without any explanation of logical sequence and giving the impression of 'raw' experience (Dujardin 1931: 118). Examples:

The waiter. The table. My hat on the stand. Let's take our gloves off; drop them casually on the table; these little things show a man's style. My coat on the stand; I sit down; ouf! I was weary. I'll put my gloves in my coat pockets. Blazing with light, golden, red, with its mirrors, this glitter, what? the restaurant; the restaurant where I am. I was tired. (Dujardin, *The Bays Are Sere*) [Interior monologue representing the thoughts of a man entering a restaurant.]

I think Ill get a bit of fish tomorrow or today is it Friday yes I will with some blancmange with black currant jam like long ago not those 2 lb pots of mixed plum and apple from the London and Newcastle Williams and Woods goes twice as far only for the bones . . . (Joyce, *Ulysses*). [Thoughts of Molly Bloom lying in bed thinking about tomorrow's supper. The text continues in this manner, without a single full stop or comma for over 40 pages.]

See Humphrey (1954); Steinberg (1973); Chatman (1978: 178-195); Cohn (1978: 58-98); Cohn and Genette (1992 [1985]); Schmid (2010: ch4) locates the earliest instance of interior monologue in Dostoevsky's *The Double* (1866).

8.10. Earlier forms of long passages of free direct thought are occasionally identified by the term 'soliloquy' (originally a term in drama theory, meaning a monologue uttered aloud in solitude, [D3.4](#)):

- **soliloquy:** an early style of presenting a character's thoughts. Unlike the modern stream-of-consciousness type of interior monologue, the older soliloquy is characterized "both by a dialogical structure and by a highly rhetorical language" (Orth 2000; cf Fludernik 1996: 147-148). Schmid (2017) traces such rhetorically laundered FDT back to 13C epics such as *Tristan* and *Parzival*. Here is an example quoted by Orth (2000: 441):

I had thought that women had bene as we men, that is true, faithfull, zealous, constant, but I perceiue they be rather woe vnto men, by their falshood, gelousie, inconstancie. I was halfe perswaded that they were made of the perfection of men, & would be comforters, but now I see they haue tasted of the infection of the Serpent [...]. The Phisition saythe it is daungerous to minister Phisicke vnto the patient that hath a colde stomacke and a hotte lyuer. least in giuing warmth to the one he inflame the other, so verely it is harde to deale with a

woman whose wordes seeme feruent, whose heart is congealed into harde yce, least trusting their outward talke, he be betrayed with their inward trechery. (Lyly, *Euphues* [1578])

8.11. Psychological states are usually rendered by narratorial report, especially the two forms known as 'psycho-narration' and 'narrated perception':

- **psycho-narration:** the textual representation of a character's conscious or unconscious mental states and processes, mainly by using forms of 'narrative report of discourse' or 'narrated perception'. A special case is the **report of what characters do not know, think, or say** (Chatman). See Cohn (1978: 21-57); Chatman (1978: 225-226 [report of what characters do not think or say]); Stanzel (1984: ch7.1.8 [on "not knowing that" vs. "not knowing why"]); Palmer 2004 [book-length study on 'fictional minds' with a special focus on psycho-narration]. Examples:

They had married in 1905, almost a quarter of a century before, and were childless because Pilgram had always thought [*iterative summary, in the following supplemented by indirect content-paraphrase*] that children would be merely a hindrance to the realization of what had been in his youth a delightfully exciting plan but had now gradually become a dark, passionate obsession. (Nabokov, "The Aurelian")

All this Gudrun knew in her subconsciousness, not in her mind. (Lawrence, *Women in Love*, qtd Cohn 1978: 49).

The youth might have taken Baglioni's opinions with many grains of allowance had he known that there was a professional warfare of long continuance between him and Dr. Rappacini (Hawthorne, "Rappacini's Daughter", qtd Chatman 1978: 226) [report of what a character does not know].

- **narrated perception:** the textual representation of a character's perception, often using a form of psycho-narration, or a rendering in indirect discourse or free indirect discourse. See Fehr (1938); Chatman (1978: 203-205).

8.12. 'Mind style' is a general term for a character's or a narrator's typical patterns of mentation:

- **mind style:** the textual evocation, especially by typical diction, rhetoric, and syntax, of a narrator's or a character's mindset and typical patterns of thinking. See Fowler (1977: 76); Leech and Short (2007: ch6); Nischik (1991).

"*Corto y derecho*," he thought, furling the *muleta*. Short and straight. *Corto y derecho*. (Hemingway, "The Undeafened" 201) [A bullfighter thinking in bullfighting terms.]

Ah, to be all things to all people: children, husband, employer, friends! It can be done: yes, it can: super woman. (Weldon, "Weekend" 312) [The weary exclamation, the enumeration of stress factors, and the ironical allusion are typical features of Martha's mind style.]

8.13. Following Hough (1970), the term **coloring** is used to refer to the local coloring (also 'tainting' or 'contamination') of the narrator's style by a character's diction, dialect, sociolect, or idiolect, often serving a comic or ironical purpose. Coloring is most functional when the narrator's and the character's voices are equally distinctive (typically, in the fiction of Austen, Dickens, James, Lawrence, and Mansfield). Hough 1970; Page 1973: ch2; Kenner (1978); McHale 1978: 260-262; Stanzel 1984: 168-184; Fludernik 1993: 334-338; Ferriss 2008. Three examples ('colored' phrases underlined):

- (1) Uncle Charles repaired to the outhouse. (Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist*) [The original example used by Kenner (1978: ch2) to illustrate what he termed the **Uncle Charles Principle**. The word "repaired" is typical of Uncle Charles's diction.]
- (2) At this foreshadowing of a desolate decease, the wicked old boy would whine and whimper, and would sit shaking himself into the lowest of low spirits, until such time as he could shake himself out of the house and shake another threepennyworth [of rum] into himself. (Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*)

(3) Ol Abe always felt relaxed and great in his Cadillac and today he felt betteranever (Selby, *Last Exit to Brooklyn*).

9. Case Studies

9.1. Homodiegetic dialogue in Alan Sillitoe's "The Fishing Boat Picture"

(In the following, all page number references are to the reprint of Sillitoe's story in *The Penguin Book of Modern British Short Stories*, ed. Malcolm Bradbury, London: Penguin, 1988, 135-149. The story was originally published in 1959.)

Like many first-person narratives, Sillitoe's "Fishing-Boat Picture" is a fictional autobiography. Harry is a mature narrator who looks back on his past life. Although he is only fifty-two at the time of writing the story, he feels his life is all but over. Like many first-person narrators, he has become not only older but also wiser. Looking back on his life, he realizes that he made many mistakes, especially in his behavior towards his wife Kathy. The story's first-person narrative situation is uniquely suited for presenting Harry's insights about his wasted life.

The story is told in a straightforwardly chronological manner, and its timeline can be established quite accurately (see 4.8). The story's action begins with Harry's and Kathy's "walk up Snakey Wood" (135). Kathy leaves Harry after six years, when he is thirty (136); so, at the beginning he must be twenty-four. Since "it's [...] twenty-eight years since I got married" (135), the narrating-I's current age must be fifty-two. Kathy's weekly visits begin after a ten-year interval (139), when Harry is forty. Kathy's visits continue for six years (147), and when she dies, terminating the primary story line, the experiencing I is forty-six. A number of historical allusions indicate that Harry's and Kathy's final six years are co-extensive with World War II (140, 147). The narrative act itself takes place in 1951, six years after Kathy's death.

The story's action episodes focus on Kathy, picking out their first sexual encounter, the violent quarrel that makes her run away, her return ten years later, her ensuing weekly visits, the repeated pawning of the fishing-boat picture, and her death and funeral. Throughout their relationship, Harry "doesn't get ruffled at anything" (136), and he remains unemotional and indifferent to the point of lethargy. To the younger Harry, marriage means "only that I changed one house and one mother for a different house and a different mother" (136). Although he never sets foot from Nottingham (139), his main idea of a good time is reading books about far-away countries like India (137) and Brazil (139). He cannot even cry at Kathy's funeral ("No such luck", 148). And yet, her ignoble death – in a state of drunkenness she is run over by a lorry – causes a change in him. Now he cannot forget her as he did after she left him (139-140); the only thing he can do is obsessively review the mistakes he made. In the final retrospective epiphany, he realizes three things with devastating clarity: that he loved Kathy but never showed it, that he was insensitive to her need for emotional involvement and communication, and that her death robbed him of a purpose in life.

The theme of becoming aware of one's own flaws can be treated well in a first-person narrative situation. Unlike the ordinary well-spoken authorial narrator, who cannot himself be present as a character in the story, Harry's working-class voice and diction is a functional and characteristic feature in Sillitoe's story. His self-consciousness in telling the story ("I'd rather not make what I'm going to write look foolish by using dictionary words" 135) and his involvement in the story support the theme of developing self-recognition. In fact, it is the very process of telling his own story that helps Harry to re-evaluate his past life and thoughts. And it is important to Harry not only to tell his story to an anonymous audience but in a sense also to himself. The text's dialogic quality comes out in one of its key passages:

I was born dead; I keep telling myself. Everybody's dead, I answer. So they are, I maintain, but then most of them never know it like I'm beginning to do, and it's a bloody shame that this has come to me at last when I could least do with it, and when it's too bloody late to get anything but bad from it. (149)

Here Harry explicitly "keeps telling himself", "answer[s]" his own indictment, and "maintain[s]" a position, stressing the self-reflective and auto-therapeutic function of his narrative. In fact, the

devastating judgment "I was born dead" takes up Kathy's calling him a "dead-'ed" (137) in the quarrel that leads to their separation. Unfortunately, now that he has learned his lesson, it is "too bloody late".

As a working-class story with occasional snippets of slang and dialect, its references to the characters' ordinary lives, their brief bouts of passion, aggression and violence ("this annoyed me, so I clocked her one" 137), Sillitoe's story is neither sentimental nor overly didactic, nor does it offer an idealized portrayal of working-class characters; it certainly does not allow the reader to feel superior. On the contrary, the protagonist's matter-of-fact account creates a strong sense of empathy, and his reflections on a wasted past and a meaningless future clearly express a general human condition.

9.2. Heterodiegetic multiple focalization in Patrick White's *The Solid Mandala*

The following edited extract from Jahn (2007) analyses the focalization structure of Patrick White's novel. Multiple focalization (3.2.5) is a technique that allows the narrator to juxtapose the colored percepts of the novel's two main characters. Readers, in turn, must continuously assess the evidence using their own mindsets and ultimately come to an overall evaluation and synthesis. Note, the term apperception as used in the following is a synonym for what we are here preferring to call 'seeing X as Y' (3.2.9). Page numbers refer to the Penguin edition of 1969.

White's third-person (heterodiegetic) novel, first published in 1966, is set in Sarsaparilla, near Sidney, Australia. It tells the story of two unmarried twin brothers, Waldo and Arthur Brown, who never parted company in their lives. There are four chapters. Chapter 1 is a prologue in which the two twins, now in their late sixties, slovenly in appearance and failing in health, are seen on their customary morning walk by two ladies on a bus. The narrator's recording device is located very close to the two ladies, registering what they say, perceive, and think. The result is an opportunistic mix of narratorial and internal focalization, often poking fun at the characters:

The eyes of the two women followed the tunnel which led inward, through the ragged greenery and sudden stench of crushed weeds. You could hide behind a bush if necessary. (14)

Both focalization and tone stand in sharp contrast to what follows in the next two chapters, entitled "Waldo" and "Arthur," respectively. Chapter 2, by far the longest chapter in the book (sixty-three percent of the text), is focalized exclusively through Waldo, while Chapter 3 (twenty-six percent) is focalized exclusively through Arthur. Chapter 4 is a brief epilogue that uses three reflectors for the resolution of the plot.

In chapters 2 and 3 perception and apperception vary with the different mindsets of the respective reflector characters. Conscious of having descended from upper-class English forebears on his mother's side, Waldo tends to be critical of everything – the Australian environment, the small-town inhabitants, and his brother, whom he considers a half-wit. Entering Waldo's apperceptions and thoughts, the reader soon notices that Waldo's mind is only tangentially concerned with the present because everything he sees in the present reminds him of events that happened in the past – his life with his parents (now long dead), his relations to professional and private acquaintances (among them the girl Dulcie, whom he had once proposed to but was rejected), and growing up and getting old with his brother Arthur. In fact, around eighty percent of Waldo's chapter is concerned with the offline perception produced by his spontaneous recollections. These passages of retrospection constitute what Genette calls 'subjective analepses' – reflector flashbacks – and although they get to us in the associative order of Waldo's consciousness, they cumulatively supply the pieces that make up this reflector's biography and personality.

As the psychonarratologists Marisa Bortolussi and Peter Dixon have pointed out, when readers negotiate a reflector-mode text and become privy to the working of a reflector's mind, they have a natural inclination to empathize and identify with the character concerned. True as this may be in general terms and under experimental conditions, in White's novel the reader's relationship to Waldo does not remain harmonious or 'consonant' for long. Waldo may be intelligent and erudite, but he is also egoistic, narcissistic – at one point we can observe him kissing a mirror – and entirely lacking in humor. His life, as it plays back in his recollections, is a relentless series of professional and personal failures. Symptomatically, the loved girl's features change chameleon-like from attractiveness to ugliness depending on whether Waldo believes she appreciates or scorns him. Because Waldo's outlook

on life is so plainly warped and self-deceptive, the reader tends to laugh, with the narrator, at Waldo's unlikely representations and overblown literary aspirations. Referring to one of his "literary notes," Waldo reflects that "[n]ot even Goethe, a disagreeable, egotistical man and overrated writer, whom he had always detested, could have equalled Waldo's *dazzled morning moon*" (130). At the same time the reader is also liminally aware that beneath the text's dissonant humor there lies a serious personality disorder which poses a gathering threat to the character's environment in general, and to his brother in particular. As Waldo's apperceptions become ever more schizoid and addled with hate, a minor frustration finally precipitates an explosive outburst. Turning to his brother with the intention to strangle him, Waldo perceives Arthur's face as "Opening. Coming apart. Falling" (214). Abruptly, Chapter 2 terminates at this point.

By this time, the reader has long suspected that Arthur is not the idiot Waldo takes him to be, and Chapter 3, now focalized entirely through Arthur, gives us an opportunity to see what he is really like. Arthur's mind now serves as the balancing filter through which many of the episodes earlier remembered by Waldo are revisited, and this produces the juxtaposition of contrary apperceptions characteristic of multiple focalization. In a sense, Arthur's outlook on life is as exotic as Waldo's because Arthur is indeed retarded intellectually and deviant behaviorally. But unlike Waldo, Arthur has many redeeming qualities: he has a head for figures, he is practical-minded and entrusted with taking care of everyday chores, and most of the time he has a just sense of what not to do. Above all, what makes him deviant also makes him endearing: a "man and child" (311), he retains a child-like simple-mindedness, inquisitiveness, impulsiveness, perceptiveness, and creativeness. In the storyworld itself, sensitive people are as attracted to Arthur as they are repelled by Waldo. And while one laughs at Waldo's distortions, Arthur's strange visions are often oddly appropriate:

Suddenly Arthur burst into tears because he saw that Waldo was what the books referred to as a lost soul. He, too, for that matter, was lost. Although he might hold Waldo in his arms, he could never give out from his soul enough of that love which was there to give. So his brother remained cold and dry. (284)

Significantly, it is Arthur who sees the mystic pattern of the mandala, which symbolizes the harmonious union or mingling of opposites, in the speckled "taws" (marbles) which he likes to give to people he is fond of. Naturally, critics have also found the mandala pattern in the novel's bonding of the two unlike brothers.

Waldo's and Arthur's chapters differ in one important technical detail. While Waldo's flashbacks are linked to the current here and now, Arthur's chapter represents a single long stretch of subjective analepsis without any clue as to when or in what situation it unfolds. Compelled to fill in the gap, the reader is likely to fall back on the not entirely unusual motif of a dying (or possibly even dead) man's summary recollection of his life (as used, for instance, in the film *American Beauty* or in Stevie Smith's poem "Not waving but drowning"; see Haller 2019 on the topic of "postmortal narration"). Naturally, it is an assumption that charges the text with emotion and tragedy – and leads to a considerable surprise when it turns out to be false. As the chapter recounts Waldo's mortal attack from Arthur's point of view we learn that it is *Waldo* who dies – of a stroke brought on by the exertion of trying to kill his brother. In Chapter 4, after Waldo's body has been found by a neighbor, Arthur accuses himself of having killed Waldo, but it is clear that what he means is that he was unable to prevent Waldo from killing himself. At the end of the novel, as Arthur is sent to a mental home, we have a double tragedy on our hands, pitying Arthur for failing to save Waldo, and finally also pitying Waldo because Arthur has taught us how to do so.

The foregoing thumbnail sketch of *The Solid Mandala* illustrates how strategic choices in focalization determine this novel's structure especially in its two contrapuntal chapters, characterization (opening up several viewpoints on the characters), and its surprise outcome. Above all, the novel's multiple focalization motivates the reader to re-read the text in order to compare the many twice-told events, to reconstrue the personalities of the characters, and to appreciate the many leitmotifs and contrasts. Any reader interested in an in-depth unraveling of these features might wish to consult Gordon Collier's 500-page study of the novel, which is a masterpiece of scholarly analysis and narratological criticism (Collier 1992b). Collier excellently demonstrates the breadth and variety of reflector-mode narration, especially when grounded in oppositional focalizers such as Waldo and Arthur.

9.3. Immersion with a vengeance: Siegfried's last tale

The following (edited) extract has been copied from a [2003](#) essay entitled "'Awake! Open your eyes!' The Cognitive Logic of External and Internal Stories". In it, I investigated how past events and stories are stored as 'internal' stories in memory and recalled, rearranged, and 'externalized' again for public telling. Siegfried's last tale highlights a rather unique first-person focalization scenario. Ostensibly telling a story of personal experience Siegfried's past story-here-and-now suddenly becomes the teller's present here-and-now – a lucky find for the narratologist, but a fatal turn for the hero.

All of Richard Wagner's operas run on elaborate plots, and the *Ring* tetralogy, which weaves and binds the fates of generations, races, and worlds, has the most tightly knitted plot of all. Anything worth mentioning is directly or indirectly related to everything else. Tightly knitted plots encourage storytelling, and story-telling takes up much of the opera's time and action. Often, the second-order stories told by the characters merely serve the standard function of exposition and reminder, sometimes they trigger major courses of action, and occasionally they stand as central moments of action itself. Act III, Scene 2 of *Götterdämmerung* is one the latter cases, but it begins harmlessly enough with a story told for the manifest purpose of entertaining and distracting King Gunther, who is going through a marital crisis. Here is the twist: in a moment, the story will get out of hand, and its teller will be killed for telling it. These are storytelling circumstances of a special nature, and they are compounded by the fact that the teller will never return to the original level of online mentation from which he set out.

Though not a born storyteller, Siegfried's heroic standing assures access to a rich store of tellable stories of personal experience, and it needs only a little priming to set him off. "People say you understand the language of birds", Hagen, his secret enemy, prompts him, and, like many storytellers, Siegfried begins not *in medias res* but by going back a bit, knowing well enough that while one thing leads to another it is, in turn, caused by something that happened earlier. He therefore begins by relating how he once forged himself a sword; how he used it to kill a dragon; how he found the dragon's hoard, taking from it an invisibility hood and, of course, the one magical ring that gives you the power to rule the world, but always only at a cost (why does this sound familiar?); how, bathing in the dragon's blood he became invulnerable (almost!) to external weapons; how, tasting the dragon's blood, he began to comprehend the language of birds, and how, understanding what a little bird told him, he was able to dispose of an evil dwarf who was out to poison him. Yet there is a complication to Siegfried's storytelling, a complication of which the audience knows all and the character knows nothing. Despite the fact that everything is tied up with everything else, Siegfried's recall is not total because he has earlier been tricked into consuming a magic drink that made him forget one particular episode, namely, how our beamish boy met a girl. Now he is offered another drink, and this time it is the counterpotion "to refresh your memory", as Hagen duplicitously puts it, already anticipating the likely consequence. Music pauses dramatically; potion takes effect. Suddenly, Siegfried finds himself narrating a sequel which he, only a moment ago, had not known to have existed – how the little bird led him to a mountain encircled by a wall of fire. How, overcoming the wall of fire he found a sleeping warrior woman going by the name of Brünnhilde. How he kissed her, as the rules of folklore demand that he do, and how she woke up and smiled at him.

What makes the story gripping at this point is the fact that the sudden re-experience of the forgotten incident entirely floods the narrator's consciousness, blocking out all real-world circumstances – particularly the fact that he is at present engaged to be married to another woman, has indeed sworn that there never was another woman in his life. In a word, telling this story perjures the teller and gives Hagen the political legitimacy to run a spear through the one chink in the hero's armor. Mortally wounded, and already beyond reaction or defense, Siegfried continues telling the story, transposing to an offline wish-fulfillment fantasy that replays the sleeping-beauty scene. These are his final words (translation L. Salter):

Brünnhilde,
 heilige Braut!
 Wach auf! Öffne dein Auge!
 Wer verschloß dich
wieder in Schlaf?
 Wer band dich in Schlummer so bang?
 Der Wecker kam;
 er **küßt** dich wach,
 und **aber** der Braut
bricht er die Bande
 da **lacht** ihm Brünnhildes Lust!
 Ach, dieses Auge,
 ewig nun offen!
 Ach, dieses Atems
 wonniges Wehen!
 Süßes Vergehen,
 seliges Grauen -
 Brünnhild' **bietet** mir - Gruß!

Brünnhilde,
 holy bride!
 Awake! Open your eyes!
 Who sank you
again in sleep?
 Who shackled you in uneasy slumber?
 Your wakener came
 and **kissed** you awake,
 and **again broke**
 the bride's bondage:
 Brünnhilde **laughed** in delight at him!
 Ah, her eyes,
 forever open!
 Ah, the blissful stirring
 of her breath!
 Sweet passing,
 blessed terror -
 Brünnhilde **bids** me welcome!

Climaxing in lustful oxymorons, Siegfried meets his fate. It is a strange end to a none-too-bright character, a hero who was never more than a pawn in the power games played by agents of superior knowledge, and a figure absurdly defenseless against the malice of magic potions. Still, one must grant there are worse things than to die remembering the best moment of your life, *and* believing it to have come round a second time, *and* telling the story of it, too. Not to mention the fact that the composer salutes his hero's exitus with a grand funeral march and a triumphant recall of his personal leitmotif [[Georg Solti video clip](#)]. Clinging to the detail of the scene, the speaker's language reverberates with waves of emotion. Although manifestly engaged in the mode of retrospective first-person narration, the teller makes the striking mistake of counting the re-lived experience as a second occurrence of the event. "Who sank you *again* in sleep", he asks (both himself and his imaginatively present bride), and then continues to tell himself and his audience that he must *again* break "the bride's bondage" (actually "the bride" is now Gunther's wife, but no matter). The discourse's conflicting impulses now not only affect the deictics of pronouns and referring expressions but also the tenses. The shift from past to present (line 8 of the original text; line 18 in the translation) can be understood as a perfectly regular shift into the historical present, used in the standard function of foregrounding a significant moment. On the other hand, the present tense is clearly also the natural mode of directly reported experience, of what Cohn has called 'simultaneous narration' (3.3.11). Aware as he is of continuing his tale, the speaker's discourse attempts to negotiate a twofold orientation: of directly *addressing* Brünnhilde in the second person and *telling about* her in the third. The speaker himself is past being able to tell the difference between what is real and what is imaginary, nor, indeed, does he care, whereas the audience, supposing it gets the deictic signals right, knows that Brünnhilde's second awakening is a perception produced and reinforced by the teller's own narrative. Baffling as it is, Siegfried's last speech teaches us a prime lesson about the nature and machinery of immersive storytelling.

9.4. Conversational storytelling in Billy Wilder's *The Apartment*

Here is another case analysis, also copied from the [2003](#) essay. In it, I made an attempt to analyze the dialogic relationship between two second-order stories ([2.4.2](#)) as told in a movie.

In *Tell Me a Story*, Roger Schank presents a fine example of intelligent conversational storytelling. Schank is mainly interested in how a story told by speaker A reminds hearer B of a story of his or her own, and how speaker B's subsequent narrative response pursues certain pragmatic goals. In the scene from Wilder's film, Bud Baxter (Jack Lemmon) has barely managed to save Fran Kubelik (Shirley McLaine) from committing suicide. Earlier, she had told him the story of her "talent for falling in love with the wrong guy in the wrong place at the wrong time". This reminds Bud of a story in which *he* is the protagonist:

I know how you feel, Miss Kubelik. You think it's the end of the world – but it's not, really. I went through exactly the same thing myself. Well maybe not exactly – I tried to do it with a gun. She was the wife of my

best friend, and I was mad for her. But I knew it was hopeless – so I decided to end it all. I went to a pawnshop and bought a .45 automatic, and drove up to Eden Park – do you know Cincinnati? Anyway, I parked the car and loaded the gun – well, you read in the papers all the time that people shoot themselves, but believe me, it's not that easy – I mean, how do you do it? Here or here or here [with cocked finger, he points to his temple, mouth, and chest]. You know where I finally shot myself? [Indicates knee.] Here. While I was sitting there, trying to make my mind up, a cop stuck his head in the car, because I was illegally parked – so I started to hide the gun under the seat and it went off – pow! Took me a year before I could bend my knee – but I got over the girl in three weeks. She still lives in Cincinnati, has four kids, gained twenty pounds – she – Here's the fruitcake. [Shows it to her under Christmas tree.] And you want to see my knee? (qtd Schank 1995: 42-43)

Being reminded of something, Schank argues, is like searching a database of indexes to stories in memory. Whether something reminds one of a story partly depends on the quality of the index which was generated when the story was originally prepared for possible recall. However, as Schank points out, being able to access an efficient relational database is only one aspect of intelligent storytelling. Equally important is how a speaker manages to adapt a story to the pragmatic needs of the situation. Bud Baxter excels in this area. One of his main 'YOU-goals' is to get across a piece of sensible advice – namely, that drastic action isn't always the proper cure. In addition to this, Bud also pursues a number of less obvious 'ME-goals' – from the simple goal of 'getting attention', which usually attends all storytelling (Schank 1995: 43), to the more specific goals of establishing himself as a humorous person, an ideal confidant, and a better candidate than the married men in Ms. Kubelik's life.

Ms. Kubelik's own story, which precedes Bud's story and in which she confesses to her fatal attraction to married men, is just as significant an example of conversational storytelling because it lets her hearer get a glimpse of the psychological dilemma she is caught up in. While Schank mainly focuses on the cathartic intention of her confession, the story also presents a 'life script' (this is Eric Berne's term, not to be confused with Schank's own script concept). This script contains a sequence of roles and action patterns which Fran Kubelik feels compelled to enact and repeat until it either works out in a happy ending or climaxes in a catastrophe (the latter is the more likely outcome). The existential plight created by malign scripts is well understood in Bernean transactional psychology, and it is no coincidence, perhaps, that it frequently reoccurs as a trait of character in Wilder's films. To bring out the scripted nature of obsessive behavior it is standard procedure for the transactional therapist to inquire after the patient's favorite fairy tale (Berne 1973: 435). To which Ms. Kubelik might well reply, *Beauty and the Beast* (cp Berne's note on the tale, 1973: 47). The tale's script, as internalized by Ms. Kubelik, might instruct her to look out for, and have an affair with, a disguised Prince. Sooner or later, the Prince transforms into a married beast and abandons her, happy endings being less frequent in real life than in fairy tales. Eventually, not having the strength to repeat the familiar moves of the script, she will try to commit suicide, as she does in the film. Potent as Ms. Kubelik's script is, it is the perfect cue for Bud Baxter's intelligent narrative response, which reveals the script's flaws and at the same time suggests a viable alternative.

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