



## Textual Indications of the Narrator-Narratee in Mansfield's *The Doll's House* A Study in Discourse Narratology

Alaa Hussein Sharhan

Asst. Prof. / College of Education for Human Sciences  
/University of Basra

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#### Correspondence:

Alaa Hussein Sharhan  
[ala.sharhan@uobasrah.edu.iq](mailto:ala.sharhan@uobasrah.edu.iq)

### Abstract

Narrators practice a varying degree of perceptibility when narrating events and actions in their narratives. Narrative statements, whether static or process, can be concretized through a scale of narratorial mediation and overtness through a textual manipulation of a bunch of textual elements such as the use of descriptive and evaluative adjectives, summarizing techniques, character identification and definition, as well as delving into the characters' minds and hearts to expose their inner thoughts and passions. The narrator can also intrude through providing a set of commentaries on the characters' behaviour, on events or even on activities. Further, a narration may also imply a recounting narrator that a reader feels their narrating activity through references to the narratee either explicitly such as the use of 'you' or other textual-conceptual means. All such narrating issues are to be found in abundance in Katherine Mansfield's "The Doll's House", where the narrative voice is traced along six dimensions proposed by narratologists.

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## الدلائل النصية للراوي والمروي له في قصة "منزل الدمية" للكاتبة كاثرين مانسفيلد دراسة في علم سرد الخطاب

علاء حسين شرهان\*

### المستخلص

يمارس الرواة درجة متفاوتة من الإدراك عند سرد الأحداث والأفعال في رواياتهم. فيمكن تجسيد البيانات السردية، سواء كانت في هيئة حالة أو فعلية، من خلال مقياس من الوساطة السردية ومستوى وضوح الراوي من خلال التلاعب النصي بمجموعة من العناصر النصية مثل استخدام التعابير الوصفية والتقييمية، وتقنيات التلخيص، وتحديد الشخصية وتعريفها، وكذلك الخوض في عقول الشخصيات وقلوبها لفصح أفكارهم وعواطفهم الداخلية. يمكن للراوي أيضا الولوج نصيا من خلال تقديم مجموعة من التعليقات على سلوك الشخصيات أو الأحداث أو حتى على مستوى الفعاليات السردية. عن ذلك، قد يشير السرد أيضا إلى راوي السرد الذي يشعر القارئ بنشاطه السردية من خلال الإشارات إلى الراوي إما صراحة مثل استخدام "أنت" أو غيرها من الوسائل النصية المفاهيمية. يمكن العثور على كل هذه القضايا السردية بكثرة في "بيت الدمية" لكاترين مانسفيلد، حيث يتم تتبع الصوت السردية على طول ستة أبعاد اقترحها علماء السرد.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** حضور الراوي، الراوي، التعليق، الوصف، التقييم، بيت الدمية

\* استاذ مساعد / كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية / جامعة البصرة

## **1. Introduction**

Some of the fruitful narrative criticism in the twentieth century have been widely attributed to the language of the literary works. Narratologists, thus, could anchor a set of structural terminologies through a large presentation of commentaries that seek to evaluate and interpret specific linguistic forms, which a particular literary text embraces. Accordingly, there has been an increasing need to make sense of the values of language to serve as a prime focus on literary commentaries. One such narrative issue is held by the in-depth discussion of the linguistic manifestation of the presence of the narrator and the narratee.

Simply put, Herman et al (2005: 388) define the narrator as “*the agent or ... the agency or instance that tells or transmits everything- the existence, states, and events- in a narrative to a narratee*”. This means that in a narrative text, there is always a narrator that orients narrative information to a narratee “*at the same structural level*”, a matter that Onega and Landa (1996: 10) consider such narrator as textual authors and the narratee as textual readers. This results in forming a narratological process of communication through which information is collected when transmitted from the narrator and received by the narratee (Herman, 2009: 64). Therefore, there is, Bal (2017: 12) demonstrates, a form of association between the textual narrator and focalization where “the narrative situation” is necessary to be identified in a narrative. The focalizer and the textual narrator, further, cannot be easily differentiated if a narrative text holds two or more narrative agents, especially when their points of view linguistically denote their attitude towards the world of the events and actions (ibid).

All in all, there are some textual signs that indicate the presence of the narrator and the narratee through which the narrating activity could be represented. Thus, the current research pursues those such signs in Katherine Mansfield’s “The Doll’s House” where the narrator and the narratee are designated in more or less explicit (textual) ways.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

In every narration, there is a set of stylistic choices that help to conceptualize the textual structure of that narrative. This is basically the job of *discourse narratology* which not only does this task but it also considers “*the pragmatic features that contextualize text or performance within the social and cultural framework of a narrative act*” (Jahn, 2021:19). A narrative voice is one of such textual-narrative issues that can be projected with varying degrees of distinctness. Through narrative voice, a narrator could provide his name, a description of his persona, his biography, or even his philosophical opinions about various life situations reflected in his narration (Schmidt, 2010: 57).

The textual indications of the narrator’s voice can be summed up into six narrative activities, as explained by Toolan (2001:69) who presents them from the least level of intrusiveness into the most visibility:

1. *Description of the settings;*
2. *Identification of characters;*
3. *Temporal summaries;*
4. *Definition of characters;*
5. *Reports of what characters did not think or say;*
6. *Commentary-interpretation, judgment, generalization.*

The scale above shows the downward movement into the narratorial mediation (covert/overtness) and knowledge of the story world. The first three types, further, spot no interpretational engagement on the part of the narrative activity (Toolan, 2001:69).

The descriptive level as a narration process indicates less overtness in that this phenomenon is present everywhere, not necessarily as a narrative activity. But if there is some sort of address from the narrator to the narratee through the descriptive panel, the narrator will make its identity felt enough to be considered explicitly overt. The identifying process also plays part in recognizing the narrator's stratum of explicitness or implicitness. If a character's name is offered without any type of personal qualities, the narrator hence adopts the covert mediation. On the contrary, the overt narrator intrudes in case of specifying some introductory statements about the existents. Further, an indefinite presentation of a character's identity spots the narrator as overt also. The borderline between covert and overt narration lies within the process of summary, especially in the temporal type of epitomizing events and existents. Further, it is seen positive to pass out a period of time or a location that the narrator finds it unessential to occupy a textual space in the overall narrative. Furthermore, a brief recounting "*presupposes a desire to account for time-passage, to satisfy questions in a narratee's mind about what happened in the interval*". In most narratives, *story-time* is not equal to *discourse-time*, the former is almost always longer than the latter. In spatial summary, the narratorial mediation is more explicit than it is in the temporal summary in that the narrator intrudes to "*depict panoramas, to evoke from a bird's-eye view vast terrain... he is calling attention to his exalted position*". The summing up of a character's trait or set of traits or any other existent is also a reference to the presence of the narrator's intrusion (Chatman, 1978: 219-225).

A narrator may adopt a position of being highly intrusive when reporting a set of generalized statements about a particular character. Such character is being defined in terms of personality traits or abstract qualities (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:101).

Towards more explicitness on the part of a narrative activity, a narrator intends to provide narrative information about character's opinions, attitudes, or even emotions that this character, in fact, did not pronounce or get in mind such issues. For instance, a narrator may vividly recount in detail some events or what happened to an existent, but the things reported by the narrator did not happen at all. Therefore, the narrator's revelation of part of the character's unconscious mind hints at the greater degree of narrative visibility (Chatman, 1978: 226).

Rimmon-Kenan (2002:101-2) simplified three basic types of commentary that every extradiegetic narrator may take over, namely: *interpretation, judgment, and generalization*. A narrator may practice an interpretational telling process for every situation through which a character behaves. Also, some narrators prefer to provide evaluative statements as part of their narrative judgments on events and existents. Finally, a narrator may find in some narrative situations a possibility to generalize about a group of people and their overall behavior. Further, some narrators report comments on their narrative activity not on the story world and its overarching events, actions and existents. The narrator, thus, who adopts any type of commentary, can be considered to be an intruder or *self-conscious* (ibid).

Bal (2017: 12) reports two dominant voices in almost every narration: *first-person* and *third-person*. But grammatically, there is an agent, who is always a first-person narrator, and the idea of thirdness looks not logical at all since the first agency can recount events and actions about others. Hence, two narrative concepts are presented by Bal: *external narrator* and *a character-bound narrator*. The first

type is a narrative activity where the narrator is not a character in the fabula; whereas the *character-bound narrator* refers to his/her identity as an explicit agent in the story. On the basis of truthfulness of recounting events and actions as well as existents, this type is to be considered adopting such narrative task (ibid).

There are textual and extra-textual signs of the narrator's persona. Prince (1982: 9-12) displays in detail such signs:

1. Indirect presence of "I": if the narrator uses "you" and does not address any character; this establishes the narrator's figure in the narration.
2. Direct presence of the narrator: the narrating activity is identified through the presence of "I". Sometimes the presence of "we" which excludes all other characters refers to the narrator's identity only.
3. Presence of "I" through deictic terms: spatial and temporal deictic terms sometimes designate the presence of the narrator's situation in terms of time and location only if such deictics are not part of any character's interactional production.
4. A class of attitudinal adverbs: such lexical items specify the narrator's position from some situation or behavior if the adverb is not within the scope of the character's dialogical interaction.
5. Knowledge of worlds: if that world is outside of the narrated world, the narrator here denotes his own identity.
6. Interpreting the recounted events.
7. Evaluating the recounted events.
8. Logical connectors between recounted events or situations are signs of the narrator's intrusion.

The narratee may not be signaled by the pronoun "you". Still there are other textual indications of the narratee. Prince (1982: 17-20) structurally details the presence of the narratee as follows:

1. The explicit presence of "I" or "we" establishes the sign of the narratee being addressed outside the narrative world.
2. Some parts of the narration may comprise a question or pseudo-questions that are not part of any character's dialogical interaction or a narrator's activity. Further, if such forms are produced by a narrator and they are not oriented to any character, such forms are supposed to be directed to a narratee.
3. A narration may sometimes feature a negative structure. If such negation is not to be considered part of the character's detailed statements or an answer to a question rendered by the narrator, hence the negative forms are employed to "*contradict the beliefs of a narratee; they correct his mistakes, they put an end to his questions*".
4. The narrator may try to affirm a statement, which is an attempt to refer to the narratee's opinion.
5. A narration may also produce a demonstrative item which does not perform any posterior or anterior textual reference; thus, such reference is extra-textual, signaling a world outside the narrative scope that both the narratee and the narrator are familiar with.
6. Meta-linguistic and meta-narrative signs: these signs explain what the narratee has as complicated narrative issues resulted from the process of narration. Thus, these structures play a role in showing the presence of the narratee.

Narrator’s activities may be presented explicitly or implicitly. However, a classification of the narrator’s identity is demonstrated in the following table on the basis of a number of narrative criteria:

Table 1: Typology of narrators according to narrative criteria (based on Schmidt, 2010: 66)

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Criteria Types of Narrator</i>
Mode of representation	explicit – implicit
Diegetic status	diegetic – non-diegetic
Hierarchy	primary – secondary – tertiary
Degree of markedness	strongly marked – weakly marked
Personality	personal – impersonal
Homogeneity of symptoms	compact – diffuse
Evaluative position	objective – subjective
Ability	omniscient – limited knowledge
Spatial fixing	omnipresent - fixed in a specific place
Access to characters’ consciousnesses	expressed – not expressed
Reliability	unreliable – reliable

Directly related to the idea of covertness and overtness is the concept of “distance”, which Prince (2003: 49) briefly explains as a constitutive principle for rendering “narrative information” along with “perspective”. The narratorial distance will be lesser if there are many narrative elaborations presented by the narrator (ibid). Booth (1983: 155) previously specifies certain types of distance, namely: “*value, moral, intellectual, aesthetic, and physical.*” Such types may be reflected through narration in terms of differences between the narrator and the characters and between the narrator and the “reader’s own norms” (ibid: 156).

Narrative voice has been undertaken extensively by Roger Flower (1986, 1996) on linguistic grounds. His approach focuses on how a psychological perspective can be textually exposed, and thus, producing two types of narrators (internal and external) with a variety of narrating activities (A, B, C, D) (Norgaard, et al., 2010: 126). By “*internal narration*”, Fowler (1986: 135) means that a narrative is rendered from a particular character’s realization and recognition of the situations, events and existents. The character may offer evaluations and judgments about other things in the story world. He refers to this narrator as A. Narrator B, as Fowler calls it, is someone “*external*” (outside) to the story world, but still offering judgements and descriptions. Such narrator experiences omniscience. Another type of internal narration is attributed to an entity relating details in the world of the story, but having no access to the existents’ thoughts and emotions. Fowler refers to this type as C. Fowler proposes a fourth type of narrator (D), with zero access to any of the existents’ interior world or providing no knowledge of the actions and events. Further, no evaluations and judgements are offered. Subjectivity, at the level of expressing interior presence in the story situations, is attributed to type A, who is mostly a first-person narrator and an experiencing character in the narrating instances. It could be a third-person narrator that projects subjective marks in narration (ibid). The narrator’s presence, Fowler (1996: 71) adds later, may be spotted out through some linguistic traces, such as “modality”. Through modal structures, the narrator’s judgments and evaluations are expressed. “*Verba Sentiendi*” are some language expressions of

subjective emotions. Other formal features that characterize a narrator's presence are indicated by a lexical choice that help identify the narrator's psychological trait and his social belongingness (ibid).

Lots of novel writers attempt to adopt a consistent viewpoint: internal or external. But moving from one type into another inside a novel indicates the narrator's tangible presence. The mixing mode of narrative presentation becomes a novelistic technique attributed to that writer who can be described as "voluble". Some critics believe that such diegetic process is to be a good source of information to the reader since the switch provides a variety of descriptions from different angles (Fowler, 1977: 90).

The narrator's attitudinal print in the text belongs to the "the interpersonal" principle of language as a process of constructing a message. Thus, modality occupies a central position in this concern. Simpson (1993: 43-6) proposes types of modal categories through which the narrator's attitudes, knowledge, opinion, etc. are made explicit. "*Deontic modality*", the first type, is primarily concerned with the voice of committing a scale of obligation. This scale not only includes modal expressions, but it also comprises structures with a pattern of "Be" plus a participle or an adjective, each followed by "To" infinitive. This type of modal system is used as a persuasive and polite technique. The second modal group is called "Boulomaic" which expresses the voice of wishes and desires. A gain, the same structural pattern applied to the deontic system is applicable to this category with the addition of the modal adverb to the structural list. Most relevant to the narrative voice is the third type, which is "the Epistemic system". This category approaches the level of "confidence", which could be conveyed through a variety of linguistic means: "modal lexical verbs", adjectives with a similar pattern above-mentioned, and "epistemic modal adverbs". Finally, a modal system is attributed to how an individual perceives reality, especially the visual realization. This part also comprises verbs of "mental processes" (ibid).

### **3. Katherine Mansfield: Literary Craft and Style**

Katherine Mansfield gained an unrivalled experience of composing and developing short fiction that shed light on a variety of life happenings. Her short stories trace the maturity, development, change and growth of individual characters around whom a major incident is put to focus and advancement. The stories are presented with clarity, but behind this narrative style, a lot is to be dug up. Her lexical choices are carefully selected to reflect on her criticizing activities on the "*conventional relationships, together with a social critique of prejudice and small-mindedness*". In terms of narrative techniques, Mansfield adopted the *interior monologue* style to enable her secluded characters narrate their minds. Another narrative-textual procedure is to take on one of her story people through whom several psychological conflicts and philosophical visions are displayed. Almost every individual in her stories, there is a specified voice presented with a distinctive narrative process (Kimber, 2015: 10-11).

Hankin (1983: ix) comments on a further narrative procedure that Mansfield embraced, which is "confession". She presented such style into the twentieth century as a new prose tradition that the psychological literary figures would adopt in a new fashion. Through such practice, Mansfield endeavored to comprehend a human psychology and nature (ibid).

From her notes and drafts, Mansfield seemed to have revised many of her stories at the level of language and style before rendering the final version. She confessed that she lasted a long time before producing a complete narrative. Change, she declared, included the style of employing the punctuation marks, which she believes that the choice was determined for the sake of her language quality. She made

adjustments to dashes, commas, periods, apostrophes, and even to quotation marks that went with her consistent grammatical structures. Some of such changes were done by her editors (Martin, 2003: 3-4).

Mansfield, Sanders (1999: 519) explains, has distinctive feminine perspectives as reflected in her short stories, developed as “*the post-impressionist principle of suggestiveness*”. Her style, at the beginning of her narrative carrier, can be described as being indefinable and baffling though with precise purposeful intentions. Later works witnessed a set of formal and literary modifications where she restyled her narrative instances embracing several aspects of life with personal perceptions of the overall atmosphere. Thus, her stories were observed to hold more technical control and a wider world vision (ibid).

Before dying in 1923, Katherine Mansfield produced some last stories including “The Doll’s House”. It was composed in 1922. It reflects the story’s time of the social norms, which are rigid and how the wealthy families are aware and sensible to the class system. The story revolves around three sisters from the Burnells and two sisters from the Kelveys. The Burnells daughters entertain their gift brought to them by Mrs. Hay, the family friend. Then the conflict starts between the wealthy family and the poor one through a series of encounters and verbal combats in the school and outside. At each stage in the narrative, the narrator reports on all situations. Further, the narrator adopts a variety of perspectives. Thus, the following analysis is tracing and detecting the narrator-narratee’s presence (explicit or implicit) in “The Doll’s House” along the six narrating activities with references to the textual indicators.

#### 4. Findings and Explanations

“*The Doll’s House*” is going to be scanned according the six criteria proposed by Chatman (1878), textual issues presented by Prince (1982), and other indications explicated by Fowler (1886, 1996), Simpson (1993), Rimmon-Kenan (2002) and Bal (2017). The aim is to make a comprehensive analysis of the narrator-narratee as textually signaled.

##### 4.1 The Narrator-Narratee’s Visibility through Setting Description

It is a common opinion that the presentation of setting (exterior or interior) in descriptive terms indicates less narratorial mediation. However, the narrator in “The Doll’s House” makes itself visible from the very beginning through a description of the doll’s house as in the following extract:

*It was so big that the carter and Pat carried it into the courtyard, and there it stayed, propped up on two wooden boxes beside the feed-room door. No harm could come to it; it was summer. And perhaps the smell of paint would have gone off by the time it had to be taken in. For really the smell of paint coming from that doll’s house (“sweet of old Mrs. Hay, of course; most sweet and generous)... (The Doll’s House, p. 1)*

The incipit indicates textually abundant references to the presence of the narrating “I”. Here is a list of such indicators that the extract above implies:

1. The use of the positive evaluation (big) to describe the doll’s house.
2. “No harm could come to it” refers to the situation of the doll’s house in the courtyard; hence, this statement denotes the narrator’s knowledge of the world and designates the narrator’s self.

3. The attitudinal adverbs (perhaps, really) are presented to reflect the narrator's position from the place of the doll's house in the courtyard. Also, this statement is affirmed as an attempt to assure the narratee's belief concerning time (summer), and thus the smell is not so affecting. The narrator here addresses no one but a narratee outside the story world.
4. Logical connectors such as "And perhaps", "For really", "of course", and "but the smell", are textual explicit signs of the narratorial mediation that render the narrator's opinion of the doll's house.
5. The incomplete narrative at the end of the incipit (And when it was... .) is a marker of the narrator's deliberate process of the narrating activity, making itself felt enough of the act of narration.
6. The spatial deictic expression (*from that doll's house*) projects the narrator's intrusion in the story's spatial dimension; hence a sign of the "I" is signaled.

The narrator presents its identity more in the following paragraph, but now the narrative technique is different:

*For the fact was, the school the Burnell children went to was not at all the kind of place their parents would have chosen if there had been any choice. But there was none. It was the only school for miles. And the consequence was all the children in the neighborhood, the Judge's little girls, the doctor's daughters, the storekeeper's children, the milkman's, were forced to mix together. Not to speak of there being an equal number of rude, rough little boys as well (The Doll's House, p. 2)*

This extract indicates the narrator's address on behalf of the narratee for the narrator provides metanarrative explication concerning the existence of only one school in which all social classes of children attend.

The narrator's intrusiveness is to be traced through the presentation of a set of spatio-temporal deictic terms. These demonstratives help designate the narrator's temporal and spatial position in relation to the story world, projecting into that world:

1. *Days passed, and as more children saw the doll's house, the fame of it spread (The Doll's House, p. 3).*
2. *On that day the subject rather flagged (The Doll's House, p. 4).*
3. *And never did they skip so high, run in and out so fast, or do such things as on that morning (The Doll's House, p. 5).*
4. *In the afternoon Pat called for the Burnell children with the buggy and they drove home (The Doll's House, p. 5).*
5. *Now she could see that one was in front and one close behind (The Doll's House, p. 5).*
6. *But now she had forgotten the cross lady (The Doll's House, p. 6)*
7. *But now that she had frightened those little rats of the Kelveys (The Doll's House, p. 6).*

#### **4.2 The Narrator's Overtness through Identifying Characters**

The narrator's degree of overtness can be proved through the style of presenting characters. The majority of the characters in this story are identified and qualified with immediate qualifications. Such traits can be classified into certain categories: physical attributes, age reference, and indefinite references, as indicated in the following table. Accordingly, the narrator could be textually spotted out through such type of narratorial intrusion.



Table (2): The narrator’s overtness at the level of character identification in “The Doll’s House”

Trait Category	Character name/ Reference	Evidence from the text
Physical Attributes	Some school girls	<i>The little girls pressed up close (p. 2).</i>
	The Kelvey’s daughters	<i>And the only two who stayed outside the ring were the two who were always outside, the little Kelveys (p.2).</i>
	Lil Kelvey	<i>Lil, for instance, who was stout, plain child with big freckles... (p.3).</i>
	Else Kelvey	<i>She was a tiny wishbone of a child, with cropped hair and enormous solemn eyes-a little while owl (p. 3).</i>
Age	Mrs. Hay	<i>When dear old Mrs. Hay.... (p.1). And her little sister.... (p. 3).</i>
	Else Kelvey	
Indefinite Reference	Miss Lecky	<i>... was a grown-up woman’s hat, once the property of Miss Lecky.</i>
	School children	<i>And the consequence was all children of the neighbourhood, the Judge’s little girls, the doctor’s daughters, the store-keeper’s children, the milkman’s were forced to mix together (p.2).</i>
	School children	<i>Many of the children, including the Burnells, were not allowed to speak to them (p.2). So, they were the daughters of a washerwoman and a gaolbird (p.3).</i>
	The Kelveys (mother and father)	<i>They were the daughters of a spry, hardworking little washerwoman (p.3).</i>
	The Kelveys (mother)	

### 4.3 Narratorial Prominence through Temporal Summaries

“The Doll’s House” abounds in explicit references to temporal summarizing statements. Such summaries are helpful in setting aside those moments, which according to the narrator are unnecessary to stand on. Thus, the temporal manipulation of the narrative in this story is to be considered a sufficient mark of the prominent narrating activity. A narratee may raise questions about what has happened in those moments passed by without being elaborated by the narrator. The narrator, further, produces a chronological sequence of speech events through which a new topic is introduced directly after each summarizing phase. Equally important, the narrative tempo accelerates especially after the detailed presentation and description of the doll’s house and the Kelveys. Before this, the narrator delivers a minute elaboration of the doll’s house and a prolonged background of the Kelveys. Hence two moments of deceleration results. Accordingly, such narrative process makes “discourse time” shorter than the

“story time” and vice versa other times. Below are the major findings of those explicit temporal summaries:

1. *“When dear old Mrs. Hay went back to town after staying with the Burnells, she sent the children a doll’s house” (The Doll’s House, p. 1).*
2. *“The Burnell children could hardly walk to school fast enough the next morning” (The Doll’s House, p. 2).*
3. *“Get something to tell you at play time”  
Play time came and Isabel was surrounded” (The Doll’s House, p. 2).*
4. *“Days passed, and as more children saw the doll’s house, the fame of it spread” (The Doll’s House, p. 3).*
5. *“At last, everybody had seen it except them. On that day the subject rather fagged. It was the dinner house” (The Doll’s House, p. 4).*
6. *“In the afternoon Pat called for the Burnell children with the buggy and they drove home” (The Doll’s House, p. 6).*

#### **4.4 The Narrator’s Intrusiveness through Defining Characters**

Not all characters are defined according to their personality traits of abstract qualities in *The Doll’s House*. But the interpersonal principle of language is mostly constructed through the narrator’s opinion as indicated by the epistemic structures of predicative adjectives as in describing Isabel:

*“Isabel was bossy, but she was always right” (The Doll’s House, p.1).*

The same system is applied to present the school boys, but now with a structural pattern of existential process:

*“Not to speak of there being an equal number of rude, rough little boys as well” (The Doll’s House, p. 2).*

The narrator elsewhere in the narrative adds some extra narrative information about Isabel and Lottie, now in terms of boulomaic structure:

*“Isabel and Lottie, who liked visitors, went upstairs to change their pinafores” (The Doll’s House, P. 5).*

All such external observations on those characters’ appearance prove the personal presence of the narrating activity; hence a higher level of narratorial mediation results.

#### **4.5 Mediated Narration through Reporting Characters’ Opinions**

The narrating self is also practiced at a higher level of overtness through reporting what is going on inside a character’s mind or heart. The narrator is present through the process of recounting with or sometimes without a *tag clause* that accompanies the narrator’s discourse. The narrator’s mediation is made more explicit when there is a *tagged indirect discourse* as in:

1. *But the smell of paint was quite enough to make anyone seriously ill in Aunt Beryl’s opinion (The Doll’s House, p.1).*

The phrase (*in Aunt Beryl's opinion*) is the tag clause which adds extra sign of the narrator's overtness in reporting what is inside her. There are two situations where such clauses do not appear. The characters' thoughts, utterances and feelings are represented in *free indirect discourse*:

2. *The Burnell children sounded as though they were in despair* (*The Doll's House*, p.1).
3. *But what Kezia liked more than anything, what she liked frightfully, was the lamp* (*The Doll's House*, p.1).

Some linguistic indicators in the above-two extracts show the narrator's intrusion such as the employment of *as though*, *in despair*, *like*, and *frightfully*. Such structures suggest the free movement of the narrator into the interior world of the characters.

#### 4.6 Narratorial Overtness through Commentary

In terms of the three classifications of commentary (interpretation, judgement, and generalization), the text comprises all such kinds resulting in the highest level of explicitness of narratorial intrusion. The narrator is textually at the extreme level of narratorial mediation to comment, in a variety of ways, on characters' actions, interactions, and situations. Generalization occupies the highest occurrence in the text. The narrator generalizes about characters' situations and events through the employment of some grammatical categories such as the occurrence of universal and partitive pronouns and determiners, especially in the compound forms that have general references. The negative and non-assertive forms serve to establish markers of the narrator's views concerning the things being referred to as in the following extracts:

1. *They had never seen **anything** like it in their life* (*The Doll's House*, p.1).
2. *For the fact was, the school the Burnell children went to was not at all the kind of place their parents would have chosen if there had been any choice. But there was **none*** (*The Doll's House*, p.3).
3. *And the consequence was **all** the children in the neighborhood, the judge's little girls, the doctor's daughters, the store-keeper's children, the milkman's, were forced to mix together* (*The Doll's House*, p.3).
4. *... the Kelveys were shunned by everybody* (*The Doll's House*, p.3).
5. ***Nobody** knew for certain. But **everybody** said he was in prison* (*The Doll's House*, p.3).
6. ***Nobody** had ever seen her smile; she scarcely ever spoke* (*The Doll's House*, p.3).
7. *...there was **nothing** more for them to hear* (*The Doll's House*, p.4).
8. *But **nobody** paid any attention* (*The Doll's House*, p.4).
9. *At last **everybody** had seen it except them* (*The Doll's House*, p.4).

The narrator's extreme level of self-presence can also be felt through the narrative practice of interpretation. In some situations, the narrative features textual interpretational indications. Some linguistic markers indicate the process of interpretation such as the use of "as though" and "seemed" as in the following extract:

1. *The father and mother dolls, who sprawled very stiff **as though** they had fainted in the drawing-room, and their two little children asleep upstairs, were really too big for the doll's house. They didn't look as though they belonged. But the lamp was perfect. It **seemed** to smile to Kezia, to say, "I live here." The lamp was real* (*The Doll's House*, p. 2).

Other linguistic signs of such narratorial mediation are marked through the employment of possibility modal verb “could be”, a moment of being inside the other character’s minds:

1. *But when the others knew they were all to have a chance, they **couldn't be** nice enough to Isabel (The Doll's House, p.4).*

Further, interpretation may be based on the narrator’s previous experience of background world of the characters as part of omniscience:

2. *Emmie swallowed in a very meaning way and nodded to Isabel as she'd seen her **mother do on those occasions** (The Doll's House, p.5).*

The narrator’s presence can also be practiced through a variety of judgments on characters’ behaviour and situations. This type of commentary is explicit. Hence, the narratorial mediation is highly felt and recognized. At the incipit, the narrator presents two confusing states of minds in terms of certainty when rendering a type of judgment that reflects unreliability indicated by two consecutive adverbs “perhaps” and “really” to present her opinion of the doll’s house:

1. *And perhaps the smell of the paint would have gone off by the time it had been taken in. For really, the smell of paint coming from that doll's house ... (The Doll's House, p.1).*

The narrator’s explicit opposition to all those who do not like the doll’s house to be inside the mansion is presented through the coordinator (but) followed by a direct judgment in terms of evaluative adjectives:

2. *But perfect, perfect little house... . (The Doll's House, p.1).*

A direct address to the readers (narratees) followed by rhetorical questions are enough to mark out the narrator’s mediation before the conflict emerges between the school children:

3. *That is the way for a house to open! Why don't all houses open like that? How much more exciting than peering through the slit of a door into a mean little hall with a hat stand and two umbrellas! That is— isn't it? —what you long to know about a house when you put your hand on the knocker. . (The Doll's House, p.1).*

An aspect of the narrator’s judgment is produced as a result of her omniscience. She can recite the background of all characters; thus, evaluation is part of such prior knowledge:

4. *There was nothing to answer. Isabel was bossy, but she was always right, and Lottie and Kezia knew too well the powers that went with being eldest. (The Doll's House, p.2).*

#### **4.7 Other Signs of the Narrator/narratee’s Explicit Presence**

There are some other textual signs of the narrator’s explicit presence. Such signs can be tackled through the narrator’s manipulation of the incomplete narration, rhetorical questions, figurative style and negation. In the process of incomplete narration, the narrator’s voice vanishes for a certain reason such as moving far from the narratorial focus of presenting narrative information or to avoid providing unnecessary details as in the following situations:

1. *Even before the sacking was taken off. And it was ... . (The Doll's House, p. 1)*
2. *He is taking a quite turn with an angel... . (The Doll's House, p. 1)*
3. *... and Lottie and Kesia looked pleased... . The Doll's House, p. 2)*

Rhetorical questions serve direct intrusiveness of the narrator and also the presence of the narratee for whom the address is oriented. Such questions are not produced by any of the characters. Accordingly, the production of this type of question form establishes the presence of explicit “you”:

1. *Who could possibly mind the smell? I was part of the joy, part of the newness. The (Doll’s House, p.1)*

The answer provided here is part of the narratorial commentary as an evaluative type. The narrator then makes extensive consecutive questions produced to judge the doll’s house:

2. *That’s the way for a house to open! Why don’t all houses open like this! How much more exciting than peering through the slit of a door into a mean little hall with a hat stand and two umbrellas! That is—isn’t it? —what you long to know about a house when you put your hand on the knocker. (Doll’s House, p.1)*

Another type of questions rendered by the mediated narrator is oriented towards addressing the narratee as a process of drawing the narratee’s attention:

1. *But where was Mr. Kelvey? (Doll’s House, p.3)*
2. *Why Mrs. Kelvey made them so conspicuous was hard to understand. (Doll’s House, p.3)*

The narrator’s overtness is highly indicated when the second person pronoun is several times present in this text (“*there you were, gazing ... (Doll’s House, p. 1)*”, “*... of course, you couldn’t light it (Doll’s House, p.2)*”, ... “*that moved when you shook it (Doll’s House, p.2)*”. Such “you” is not addressed to any of the characters; thus, the narratorial intrusiveness is to involve readers into the world of the story. Such involving invitation gets textually evident when the narrator now and then refers to Else with a possessive pronoun ‘our’.

#### 4. Conclusion

The narrative discourse of Katherine Mansfield’s “*The Doll’s House*” comprises varied linguistic elements that signify the presence (implicit and explicit) of the narrator and the narratee. Most of the *process statements* recounted by the narrator results in a manifestation of such narrator textually with a scale of narratorial intrusion. Sometimes, the narrator makes the self-narratorial mediation overt through structural manipulation of the narrative presentation. The repeated employment of ‘you’ indicates not only the narratee presence, but also an explicit presence of the narrator. The narrator’s overt mediation is also felt through the narrative practice of *statis statements*. Through such statements, the narrator was able to present a set of evaluations and judgements; hence, narratorial self-revelation can be witnessed. Further, the description of existents, who are indexed in the text through the projection of events, could also signal the identified narrator, particularly, when such existents are associated with their produced actions through recounting rather than enacting. All in all, events and actions are commented upon in terms of temporal summaries, and existents are elaborated and defined by the many narratorial commentaries and a set of prominent descriptive statements.

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