Narratorial and Narrative Voice

Week 3: MA Course on Narratology

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Narratorial and Narrative Voice

Narratological voice refers to who speaks in a narrative text. The answer to such question resides in typology of narrators (auto-, extra-, hetro-, homo-, intra-diegetic narrators). The voice can be discussed in terms of where the narrator speaks from (narrative level) and when the narrator speaks (time of narrating) (Genette, 1980)

Narrative voice refers to the speech or other overt means through which events and existents are communicated to the audience (Chatman, 1978).

Narration (voice)

In narratology, the basic voice question is "Who speaks?" (= who narrates this?). Voice is a characteristic vocal or tonal quality projected by a text.

A narrator is the speaker or 'voice' of the narrative discourse (Genette). 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.

Narrative Voice

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's Narrative Discourse; another is Chatman's Story and Discourse. 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.

Textual Elements of Narrative Voice: Textual Narrator

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

1. **Content matter:** voices for happy, sad, comic, or tragic subjects (exaggeration)
2. **Subjective expressions:** expressions about the narrator's education, beliefs, interests, values, emotions, political, ideological, orientations, attitudes towards people, events, and things.
3. **Pragmatic signals:** expressions that signal the narrator's awareness of an audience and the degree of his/her orientation towards it, communicative setting comprising a speaker and an audience, indication of the narrator's language and his/her emotional constitution.

-**PEN for 'personal experience narrative'.**

-**Ontologically distant narrator vs. real author:** **Holden belongs to a different world, a fictional one with the audience also.**

-**Fictional Address vs. real readers: (textual 'you')**

J.D. Salinger's Catcher in the Rye (first published 1951):

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 hemorrhages 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.

J.D. Salinger's Catcher in the Rye: Textual Elements

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. 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.

Covert and Overt Narrator

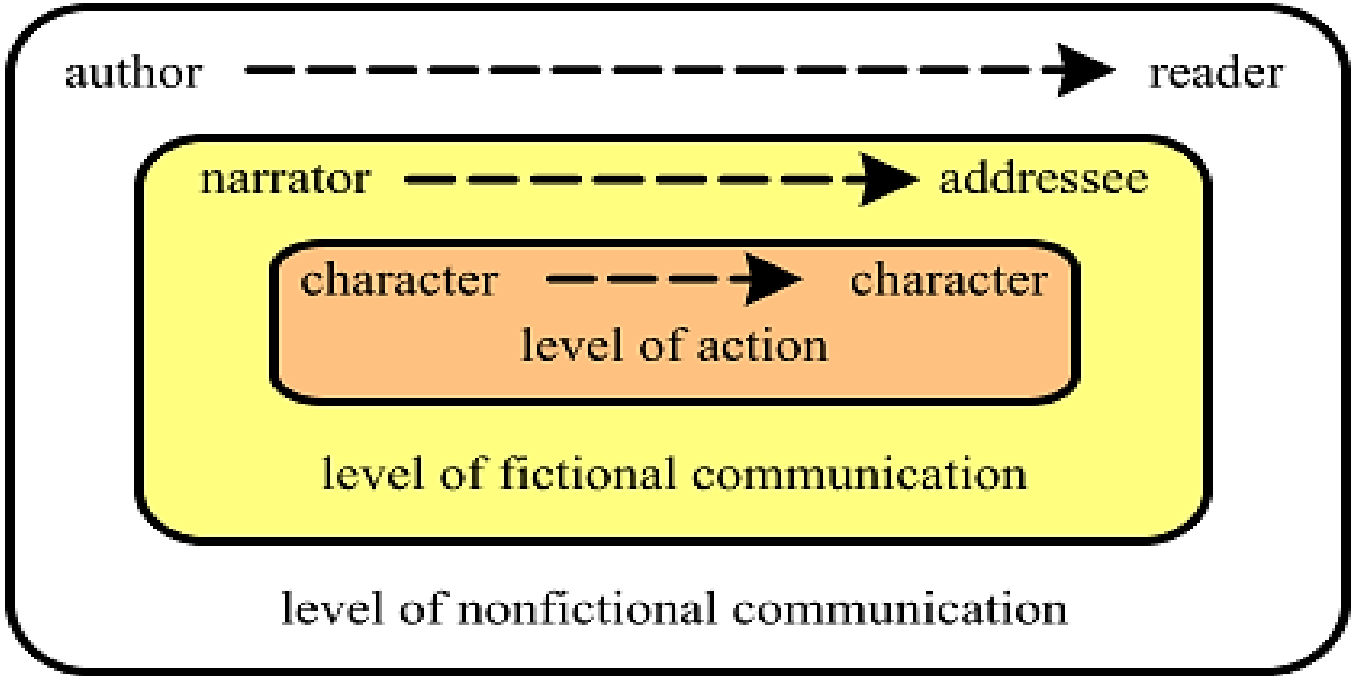
Covert narrator is a narrator presenting situations and events with a minimum amount of narratorial mediation. (Undramatized narrator, Booth)

Overt narrator presents situations and events with more than a minimum of narratorial mediation.

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. 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. One can also hide behind somebody.

Levels of Narrative Communication (Chines Box)

The standard structure of fictional narrative communication: participants and levels are usually shown in a 'Chinese boxes' model. The 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 **'extra-textual level**'; levels two and three are **'intra-textual'**.



Narrative Communication: James Gould Cozzens's A Cure of Flesh

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.

1. The narrator's reference to the self is never found in this text. He never uses 1st person pronoun.
2. He never directly addresses someone in the text.
3. He starts with the exposition of setting. He picks out a series of points both in time and space (a timeframe of Tuesday to Friday, four days).
4. The narrator's voice is more neutral, less emotional, slightly less distinctive.

Thus, a narrative voice is measured in terms of distinctiveness and audibility.

So, both Holden Caulfield and Cozzens' anonymous narrator are overt narrators, but Holden is the more overt or less covert one of the two.

The Narrator's Involvement in the Story

There are two basic options:

1. The narrator tells a story about himself or herself (a first-person narrative, also called story of personal experience).
2. The narrator tells a story about other people (a third-person narrative). These terms are substituted by two terms invented by Genette namely: **homodiegetic narrative** (= roughly, first-person narrative) and **heterodiegetic narrative** (= third-person narrative). **Diegetic** means 'pertaining to narrating'; **homo** means 'of the same nature', and **hetero** means 'of a different nature'.

Homo, Hetero- (Diegesis)

In **a homodiegetic narrative**, the (homodiegetic) narrator tells a story of personal experience. He or she is also one of story's acting characters. A homodiegetic narrator 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**.

Notes: a homodiegetic narrative must have an experiencing-I, whereas **a heterodiegetic narrative must not have an experiencing-I.**

Action vs. Non-action Sentences

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" (a comment and a description, respectively) are **not action sentences.**

- **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).**

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, 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, 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 (has or hasn't an experiencing-I).

Margaret Drabble's The Millstone

Highly overt, homo-diegetic, Standard First Person autobiography

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.

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].

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).**

Overt and Heterodiegetic Narrator: George Eliot's Adam Bede

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 [...].

Explanation of Eliot’s Passage: Highly Overt, Heterodiegetic and Authorial

You may be puzzled why this has been classified as a heterodiegetic text. Aren't there three first-person pronouns (two "I"s, one "my") in the first paragraph? True enough, 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“.

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.** 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.

Covert and Heterodiegetic Narrator: Hemingway's For Whom The Bell Tolls

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."

Hemingway’s Passage: Explanation

In the Hemingway passage, the narrator's voice is much harder to determine. 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.
2. The narrator is not a co-operative storyteller. He does not acknowledge any actual or hypothetical addressee(s); he conspicuously flouts the maxim of addressee-oriented (reader-friendly) exposition normally expected at the beginning of a novel. Setting and characters have to be introduced somehow. Thus far into the text 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. 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 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 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**.

Central Consciousness Character

Internal Focalization is the technique of presenting something from the point of view of a story-internal character.

The character through whose eyes the action is presented is called **an internal focalizer**, some theorists prefer the term **reflector.**

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 **'transposition to the phantasm'.**

Figural narrative is 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. **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.**

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.

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.

Free Indirect Discourse: Crome Yellow by Aldous Huxley

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

Crome Yellow by Aldous Huxley: Explanation

1. The only story-internal character present at all is somebody called Denis, and he is referred to by the third person singular pronoun.

2. Most likely this is a heterodiegetic narrative. Well then, in the first two sentences, at least, we seem to be getting some background information on setting and railway lines.

3. This passage 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.

4. The third sentence begins with the words "Denis knew". 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.

5. 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.

Crome Yellow by Aldous Huxley: Additional Explanation

6. 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". Take it as contextual evidence supporting the interpretation that he is now rehearsing them.

7. 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. It seems we can easily ascribe all judgments and expressivity markers in this passage to Denis, the internal focalizer. And, somewhat surprisingly, the FID works for the very first sentence, the sentence that may have looked like plain narratorial exposition at first glance: (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).

Narrative Levels

Story-telling can occur on many different levels. As Barth (1984) puts it, there may be "tales within tales within tales". 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 **'hypo-narrative'** (Bal 1981)

A matrix narrative is a narrative containing an embedded hyponarrative. The term 'matrix' refers to "something within which something else originates". The transition to a hyponarrative, the termination of the hyponarrative, and the return to the matrix narrative are explicitly signaled in a text. However, a text may close on a hyponarrative without explicitly resuming the matrix narrative. One could call this **a dangling matrix narrative**. The somewhat rarer opposite to this would be an **uninitialized hyponarrative** (Example is The Notebook).

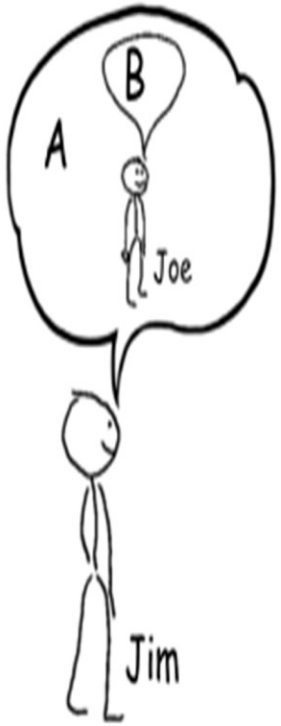
Remmon-Kinan's Classification of Embedded Narratives

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.

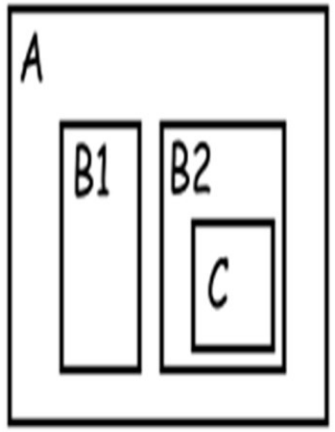
A first-order/first-degree narrator, by analogy, is the narrator of a first-order narrative, a second-order narrator is the narrator of a second-order narrative, etc, in exact correspondence

Embedded narrators and narratives

Illustration



a.



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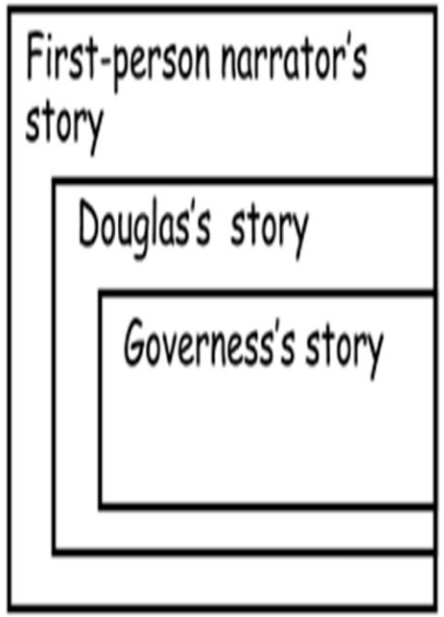

c.

Explanation

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 (Ryan 1991). 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. Other Examples are **The Arabian Nights, Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights.**

Comment on Levels of Narrators

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. 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 (1981) and Rimmon-Kenan (1983) 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.

Embedded narratives: functions:

1. **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 story-teller. Or think of a surprise witness in a crime or courtroom novel whose tale solves the case.

2. **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).

3. **Distraction**: "So tell us a story while we're waiting for the rain to stop" (Genette 1988).

4. **Obstruction/retardation:** the hyponarrative momentarily suspends the continuation of the matrix narrative, often creating an effect of heightened suspense.

5. **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).

6. Hyponarratives are also often used to create an effect of 'mise en abyme', a favorite feature of postmodernist narratives

Mise en abyme is 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).

Spence (1987) 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 . . .'"

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

Subordination of Narrative Levels

The highest level of narration is the one immediately superior to the first narrative, referred to as extradiegetic level (his diegesis). Immediately subordinate to this level is the diegetic level narrated by it (the events themselves).

Narration is always at a higher narrative level than the story it narrates. Thus the diegetic level is narrated by an extradiegetic narrator, the hypodiegetic level by a diegetoic (intradiegetic) one.

Hypodiegetic Narratives: Functions

Functions	Examples
1. Actional Function	1. A Thousand and One Nights
2. Explicative Function	2. The Prince's recount of his past happy life to the swallow.
3. Thematic Function (analogy and comparison).	3. The swallow's conditions in comparison with the prince's situation shows the latter's selfishness.

9 Fowler's Classification (internal and external)

Fowler (1986, 1996) proposes an alternative classification of narrators. His typology is much more grounded on the linguistic features displayed by the telling voice on each occasion and is directly connected to how psychological point of view is projected in texts. Fowler presents two initial types, in turn also subcategorized further: internal and external narration on the one hand, and narration types A, B, C, and D, on the other. Internal narration presents the perspective of an element from within the story, be it a character's consciousness (type A narration) or an omniscient narrator with access to characters' feelings, attitudes and emotions (type B). External narration avoids claiming access to the characters' thoughts or feelings, nor does it make the narrator's thoughts and feelings explicit either (type C narration); the narrator's persona, however, might be underscored in relation to his/her knowledge of the actions and events of the story (type D), although still avoiding any evaluation or thought presentation.

Fowler's Classification: Cont.

Linguistically, the four types can be clearly identified; for instance, Fowler claims that type A, b being the most subjective, 'consists of either first-person narration by a participating character, o third-person narration which is strongly coloured with personal markers of the character's world view, or which includes free indirect discourse or internal monologue'. Instances of modality an verba sentiendi ('words of feeling') are also typical of this type. Type B is consistently characterize by third-person narration of the omniscient kind, with total access to the characters consciousness: 'to a greater or lesser degree, the author gives an account of the mental processes feelings, and perceptions of the characters, so the chief linguistic marker of this variant of interna narration is the presence of verba sentiendi detailing intentions, emotion, and thoughts'. Type C i associated with the most impersonal and detached form of narration so verba sentiendi or an type of moral judgement would be suppressed. Type D, despite emerging from an externa perspective, allows the narrator's persona to have some kind of saying about the actions an events of the story, if not about their feelings, emotions and thoughts. That persona might b highlighted by first-person pronouns and perhaps some modality but the impossibility of accessing the inner consciousness of the characters is marked by the presence of 'words of estrangement metaphors and comparisons: 'These expressions pretend that the author – or often one characte observing another – does not have access to the feelings or thoughts of the characters'.

10 Simpson's Classification key terms in stylistics p.12

Simpson combines narratological aspects and linguistic indicators. Simpson proposes two broad categories of narration ('Category A' and 'Category B') decided on the basis of who the teller of the story is, thus, very close in nature to Fowler's internal and external perspectives. 'Category A' corresponds to first-person narratives in which a participating character in the story is also the one who tells. 'Category B' is primarily characterized by a non-participating third-person teller, but a crucial further subdivision is established: 'Category B narratives in Narratorial Mode' and 'Category B narratives in Reflector Mode'. If the teller of the story is totally disembodied in as much as he/she does not intrude in the characters' consciousness, but narrates from a floating position instead, then the story is using a Category B in the Narratorial mode. If the story is narrated in the third person but from the point of view of one of the participants made focalizer or reflector, then that narrative falls within Category B in the Reflector mode. Although Simpson's model owes a lot to its immediate predecessor, Fowler's, the dual nature of his Category B also acknowledges the classical narratological dichotomy of the 'seer' versus the 'teller'.

Simpson’s Classification: Cont.

Simpson expands the linguistic indicators identified by Fowler in what he calls ‘shadings’, distinguished as positive, negative and neutral shading. Each narration type can, consequently, be coloured further depending on the most prevalent linguistic indicators. For instance, Category A positive (+ve) narratives will most likely display a concentration of verba sentiendi, evaluative adjectives and adverbs, deontic and boulomaic modalities (see modality) and, sometimes, also some instances of generic sentences. Category A with negative shading (–ve), on the other hand, will highlight epistemic and perception modalities, epistemic modal auxiliaries, modal adverbs and modal lexical verbs, as well as perception adverbs. The effect of such shift is one of bewilderment, uncertainty or self-questioning in the negative category. The neutral shading allows texts to be free from narratorial modality as the story is told through categorical assertions alone; sequences of straightforward physical description with little attempt at psychological development are also characteristic. Category B in both modes is also capable of displaying the three kinds of shading although the effects are, naturally, different. For instance, category B (N) neutral achieves the highest level of impersonality by underscoring an absence of direct description or analysis of thoughts and feelings of characters, so it feels virtually journalistic in style. Conversely, B(R)+ve can contain not only occurrences of deontic and boulomaic modality and evaluative adjectives and adverbs, but also free indirect discourse. If the free indirect discourse particularly emphasizes the inner working of the reflector’s mind via thought presentation, then stream of consciousness is used.