

Prose

Lecture 10

Narrators and Narrative Situation

Understand the who speaks (Narrator) and who sees (Focalization)

Narrative modes-Ability to explain Speech, Report, Description,
and comment as parts of narrative modes in narrative.

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Contents

- Narrators and Narrative Situation:
- The who speaks (Narrator)
- The who sees (Focalization)
- Narrative modes:
- Ability to explain Speech,
- Report,
- Description, and
- Comment as parts of narrative modes in narrative.

Equally important?

- Characterisation,
- Plot,
- Space,
- Narrator

Narrative Situation

- Who speaks (Narrator)
- Who sees (Focalization)

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003, p. 56)

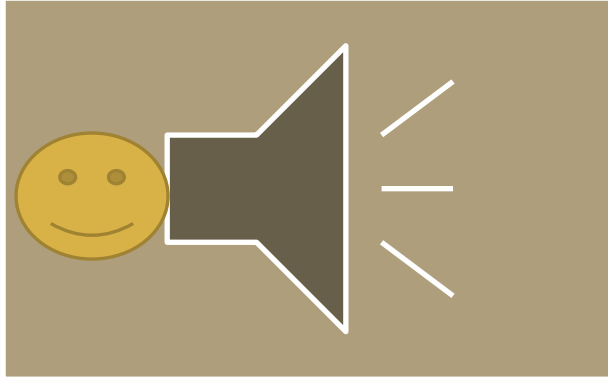
Narrative Voices

- The narrative situation describes HOW a story is told. It focuses on comprehending how the story unfolds and is presented to the audience. By evaluating narrative events, we can obtain insight into the approaches and strategies used by a writer or storyteller to effectively tell a story. This study allows us to appreciate the storytelling process on a deeper level by helping us grasp narrative structure, perspective, and style.

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003, p. 56)

Narrative Voices

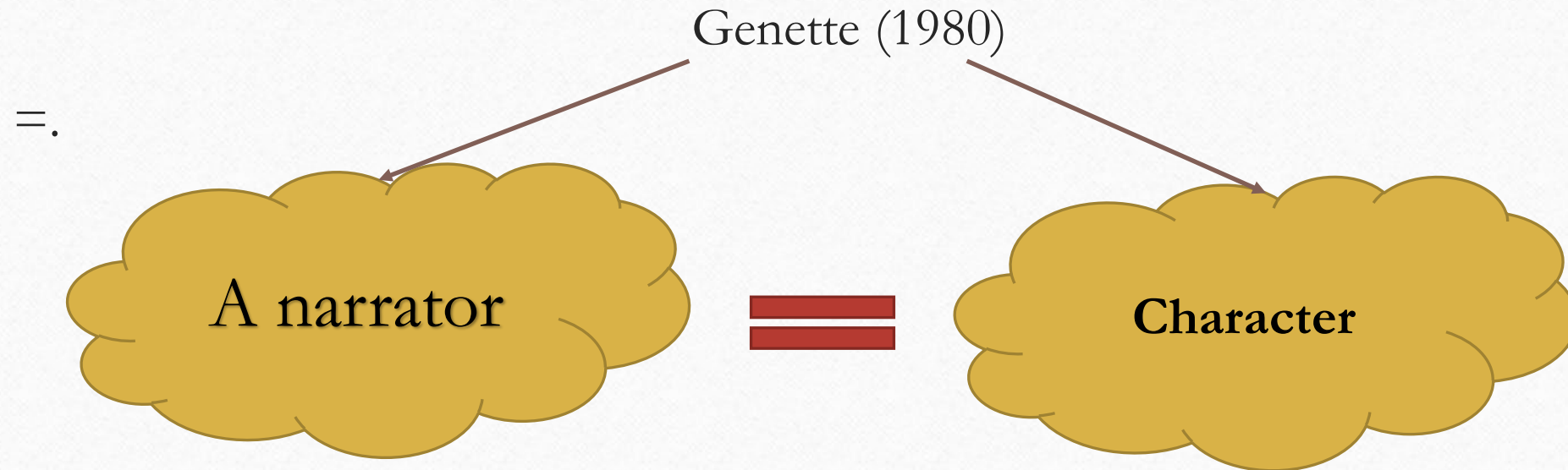
- Narrative prose
- Narrative poetry



Voice

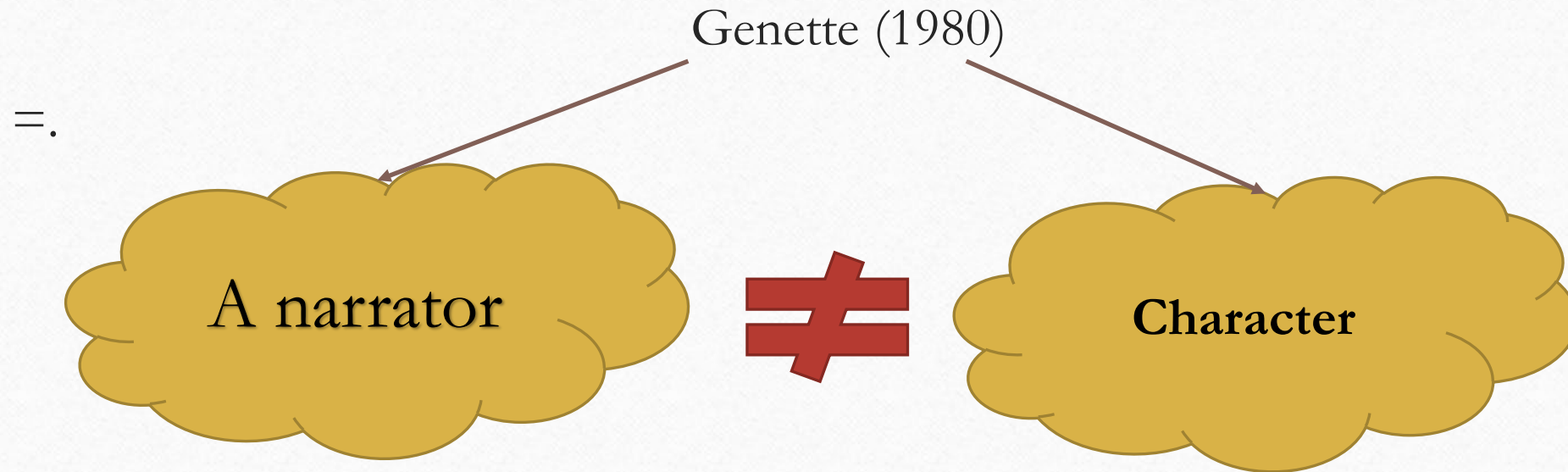
- Who speaks? Or who tells the story?

Homodiegetic Narrator



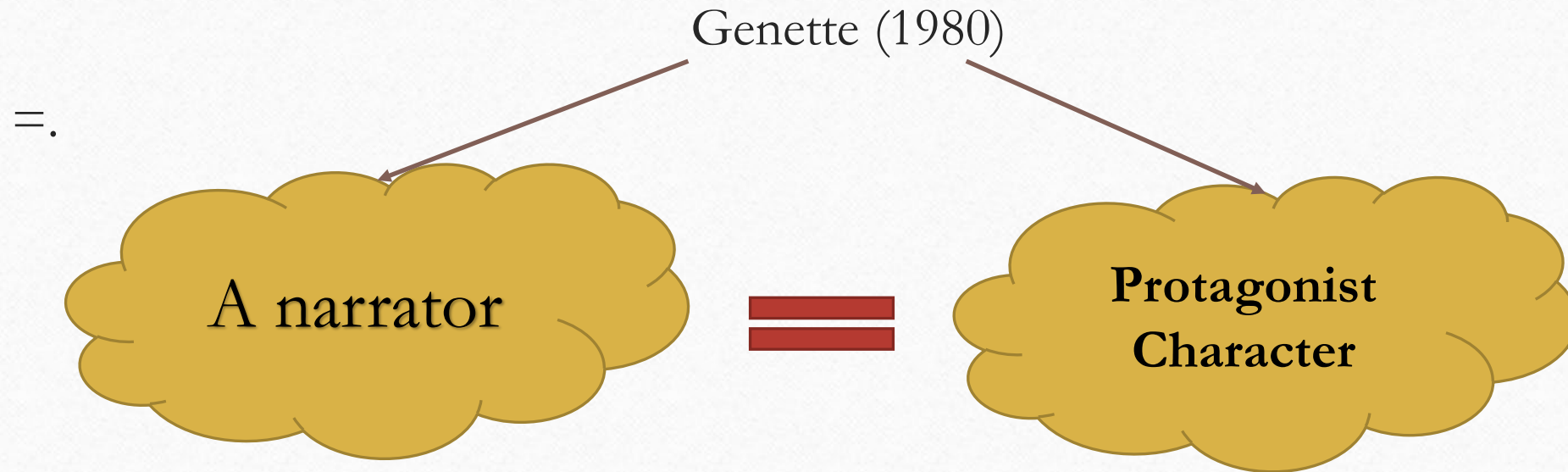
(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003, p. 56)

A Heterodiegetic Narrator



(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003, p. 56)

Autodiegetic



(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003, p. 56)

Author X Narrator

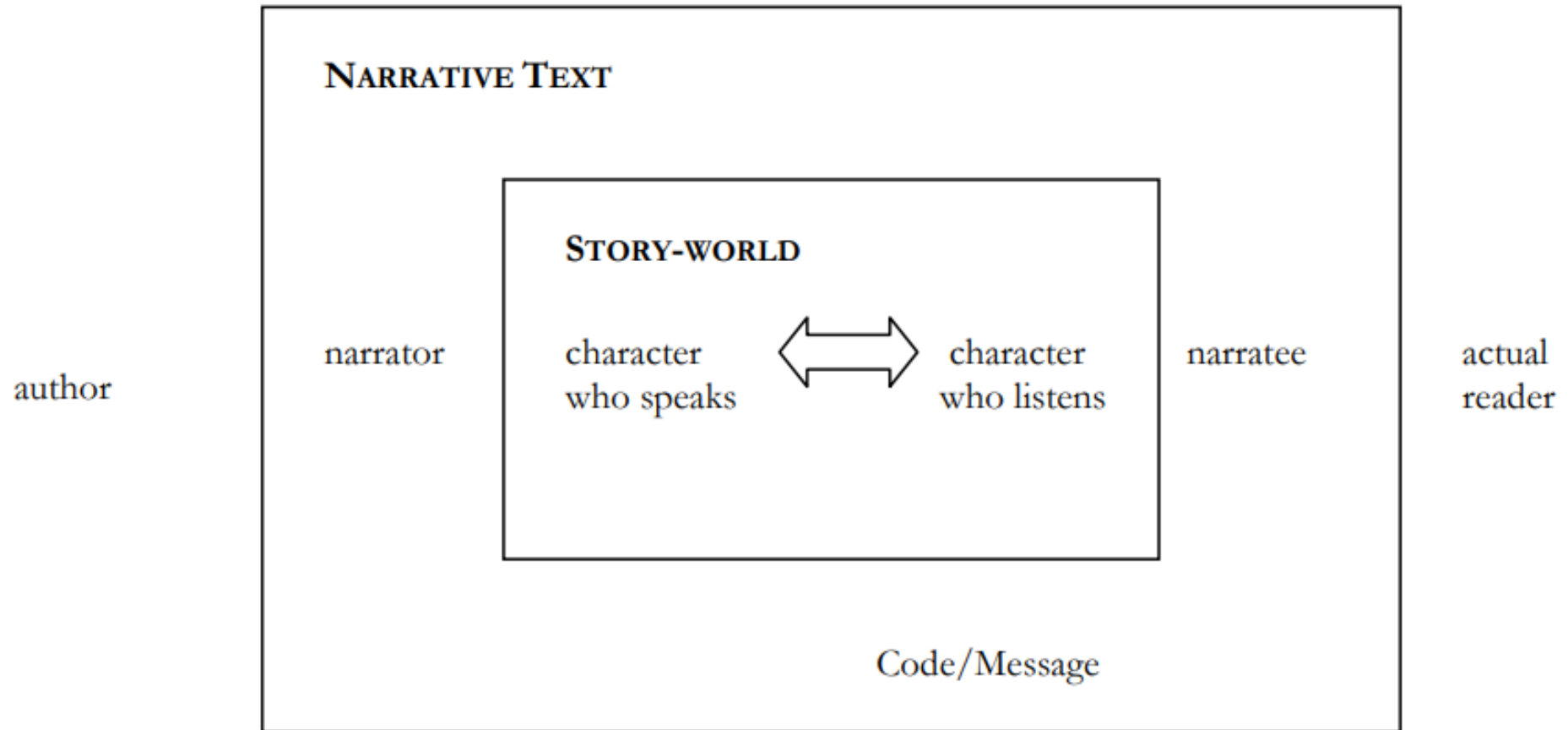
- Narrator is the imagined 'voice'.
- Author → a person who write a story, novel, etc.
- A male author can create a female narrator

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003, p. 56)

Three levels of the communication situation

- A character → another character;
- This is narrated by a narrator who sometimes addresses and imaginary or actual “dear reader” or listener in the narrative;
- The text has been composed by a real author and is read by an actual reader.

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003, p. 56)



(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003, p. 56)

[...] my Mother was convicted of Felony [...] and being found quick with Child, she was respited for about seven Months, in which time having brought me into the World, [...] she [...] obtain'd the Favour of being Transported to the Plantations, and left me about Half a Year old; and in bad Hands you may be sure. This is too near the first Hours of my Life for me to relate any thing of myself, but by hear say; 'tis enough to mention, that as I was born in such an unhappy Place [Newgate prison], I had no Parish to have Recourse to for my Nourishment in my Infancy, nor can I give the least Account how I was kept alive, other, than that as I have been told, some Relation of my Mothers took me away for a while as a Nurse, but at whose Exence or by whose Direction I know nothing at all of it. (Defoe, *Moll Flanders*) (in Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003, p. 57)

In the Second Year of his Retirement, the Marchioness brought him a Daughter, and died in Three Days after her Delivery. The Marquis [...] was extremely afflicted at her Death; but Time having produced its usual Effects, his great fondness for the little Arabella intirely engrossed his Attention and made up all the Happiness of his Life. [...] Nature had indeed given her a most charming Face, a Shape easy and delicate, a sweet and insinuating Voice, and an Air so full of Dignity and Grace, as drew the Admiration of all that saw her. [...] From her earliest Youth she had discovered a Fondness for Reading, which extremely delighted the Marquis; he permitted her therefore the Use of his Library, in which, unfortunately for her, were great Stores of Romances; [...]. (Lennox, *Female Quixote*, Bk. I, ch. 1)

(in Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003, p. 57)

Which one?

- Homodiegetic-autodiegetic narrator
- Heterodiegetic narrator

Overt and a Covert

- An **overt** narrator appears to have a separate personality, one who expresses opinions and either explicitly or implicitly evaluates others.
- A covert narrator, on the other hand, is hardly noticeable.

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003, p. 58)

Ernest Hemingway, The Snows of Kilimanjaro

'The marvellous thing is that it's painless,' he said. 'That's how you know when it starts.'

'Is it really?'

'Absolutely. I'm awfully sorry about the odour though. That must bother you.'

'Don't! Please don't.'

Look at them,' he said. 'Now is it sight or is it scent that brings them like that?'

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003, p. 58)

Covert Narrator

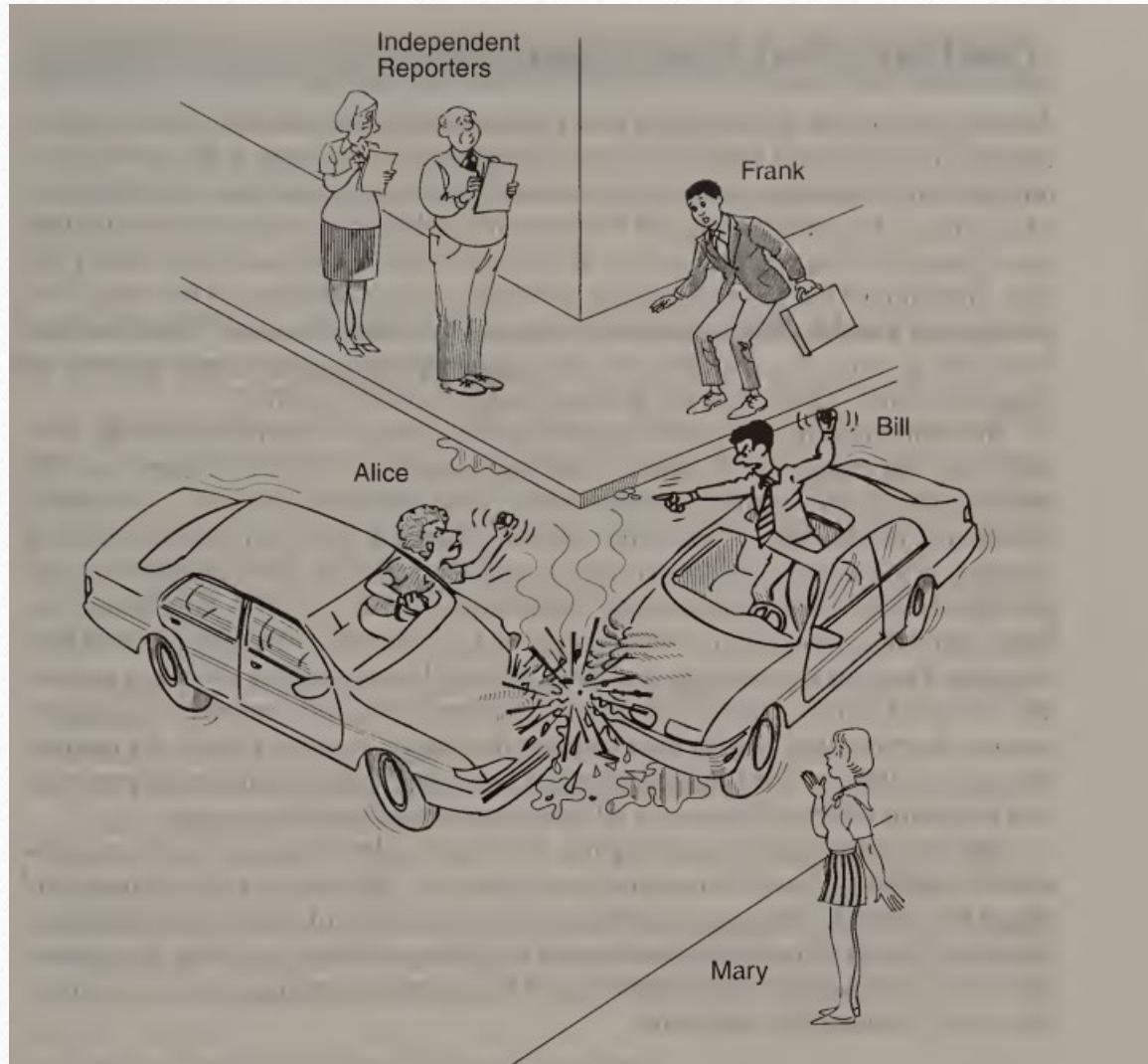
- The narrator is a stealthy figure who prioritizes illustration over description, Showing over Telling.

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003, p. 58)

Point of View

- Point of view is associated with the **speaker, narrator, persona, or voice**.
- Our interpretation of artistic concepts is influenced by the way reality is portrayed in every picture. Just as in other literary works, our reading, understanding, and response are all influenced by the author's point of view.

(Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012, p. 119)



Unreliable Narrator?

(Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012, p. 120-121)

People's Point of View

- First Person
- The narrative is being told by one of the characters. I, mine, my, and us are a few of the often used personal pronouns.

(Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012, p. 122-125)

People's Point of View

- Second Person
- In the Second-Person Point of View, the Narrator Is Speaking to Someone Else Who Is Addressed as “You”

(Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012, p. 122-125)

People's Point of View

- Third Person
- If events in the work are described in the third person (he, she, it, they), the author is using the third-person point of view.

(Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012, p. 122-125)

Focalization

When conveying a story's events and entities orally, the narrator is an essential player. They can narrate events from a point of view distinct from the narrative itself. This enables them to take on an omniscient point of view, knowing details about the narrative that the characters might not know. By offering insightful commentary and directing the reader through the narrative, the narrator acts as a liaison between the reader and the story.

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003, p. 58)

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- A story's narrator may have a **limited point of view**, in which they only know what one character knows, or an **omniscient point of view**, in which they are aware of all that occurs. The narrator's choice of perspective is unrelated to whether or not they are a character in the narrative. For the purpose of preventing confusion, Genette (1980: 189-194) has introduced the term "**focalisation**" to distinguish between the perspective (who sees or perceives) and the narrative voice (who speaks). By avoiding ambiguity, this term serves to distinguish between it and earlier usages of "point of view" or "perspective."

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003, p. 58)

(Rimmon-Kennan 1983: 74)

- External focaliser → narrator-focaliser → Perception of Narrator
- Internal focaliser → character-focaliser → perception of a character



- BBC film version of Oliver Twist (1982)

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003, p. 59)

Figural Narrative Situation

[...] what a variety of smells interwoven in subtlest combination thrilled his nostrils; strong smells of earth, sweet smells of flowers; nameless smells of leaf and bramble; sour smells as they crossed the road; pungent smells as they entered bean-fields. But suddenly down the wind came tearing a smell sharper, stronger, more lacerating than any – a smell that ripped across his brain stirring a thousand instincts, releasing a million memories – the smell of hare, the smell of fox. Off he flashed like a fish drawn in a rush through water further and further. [...] And once at least the call was even more imperious; the hunting horn roused deeper instincts, summoned wilder and stronger emotions that transcended memory and obliterated grass, trees, hare, rabbit, fox in one wild shout of ecstasy. Love blazed her torch in his eyes; he heard the hunting horn of Venus. Before he was well out of his puppyhood, Flush was a father.

The narrator, a heterodiegetic, attempts to replicate the dog's perceptions through internal focalization.

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003, p. 59 - 60)

Narrative Modes

- Narrative modes → Utterance's style
- Diegesis, or the verbal portrayal of events, and mimesis, or the direct presentation of speech and action. Aristotle adopted this distinction, and Henry James, much later, continued it when he distinguished between telling and showing.

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003, p. 63)

Modes

mimesis	showing	direct presentation
diegesis	telling	mediated presentation

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003, p. 63)

Drama (and film) is the most mimetic literary genre because it primarily consists of the direct presentation of voice and action—that is, the spectator truly observes people speak and act. One must inevitably be restricted to verbal representation while writing narrative prose or poetry.

Speech

- Direct speech → unmediated representation.
- Indirect (or reported) speech → mediated

Original utterance: They said: “I am not coming to the party.”

Indirect speech: They said that he was not coming to the party.

Report

- Report → inform the reader about . . . (events and actions. . .).

“Earlier today, Mocca and Cello visited the market. To last them a week, they purchase meat. They are carrying big bags that they are going to fill with food and fruit”.

Description

- Description → represents objects in space including place, time, and character.

Place

- Hills encircle two intelligent buildings in Cikarang, Indonesia, where people congregate to grow up. There are almost any structures visible on the other end because the hills nearly completely enclose the area.

Time

- Both mental and physical wounds are left behind by the traumatic experience of war. But in the middle of chaos that evening, patriotism provides comfort to the soul. Fighting demands a tremendous deal of courage, and courage develops inner strength.

Character

- Encircled by hills are two intelligent structures where humans congregated to grow up. The location is almost entirely surrounded by hills, allowing all of the buildings to be seen from the opposite side. All that's left is inevitable ruin. Bodily and psychological wounds from the horrible combat experiences. But a sense of patriotism calmed the soul even in the midst of the chaos that night. Fighting requires a great deal of courage, and courage fortifies the soul. He is himself, propelled to burst forth among the bushes, maturing, growing sicker yet sturdier. Light not only follows him, but it also heals his wounds and gives him hope. He stayed by himself, while the other person did not.

Comment

- Evaluation
- Story's events and characters
- General observations or judgements.

What is the point of being here if the future is unknown? Was he too daring, or too foolish to realize? Joy's opinion was against them; for a limited mind and a frail heart, the corner gives no agreement to achieve it. That he didn't know, he believed much more in his idiotic false optimism. In reality, this will most likely affect the poor. This isn't about mistrust, but about cultivating a wise attitude.

Let's conclude

- What have we learnt?
- Why do we need this?

References

- Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J. (2003). *Basics of English Studies: An introductory course for students of literary studies in English*. Freiburg University, Freiburg im Breisgau.
- Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R. (2012). *Literature: An introduction to reading and writing*. Longman.

Thank you

See you in the next meeting!