Gérard Genette's Conception of Voice and Mood, and an Accompanying Analysis of Alfred Hitchcock's *Frenzy*

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Abstract

Gerard Genette offered a comprehensive, structurally informed theory of narrative in his book *Narrative Discourse, An Essay in Method*. While the "grammatical" basis of his framework – he identified parts of narrative with parts of speech – is today less in vogue, many of his other concepts and terms remain highly useful in the analysis of a wide range of narrative, be they of literary, cinematic, or of other origin. Useful features of this work are that it drew on various traditions that preceded its publication, but was also discussed and refined in the years that followed. Indeed a number of his propositions seem in need of modification, and these modifications are here summarized and added to. A further advantage to his method, especially when compared to other modes of critical enquiry, is that they are firmly based in the texture and nature of the object being studied. That said, they also work well with other approaches which are less directly tied to the story. The work of Alfred Hitchcock provides a case study in the illustration of both the descriptive power of Genette's ideas, and their ability to merge well with other approaches.

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Introduction

A wide range of methods are available to someone who wishes to analyze the cinematic text. In many cases, the nature of the film or films in question will strongly suggest, almost dictate, a certain selection from among these possible methods. A relatively recent area of inquiry has been early cinema and, not surprisingly, many working within this new tradition rely on historical research and primary documents to help contextualize their work. Before this so-called historical turn, other approaches reigned. The application of ideas from psychoanalysis to a film and it's symptoms, when things were back in the psychoanalytic turn, lent itself especially well to the analysis of classical filmmakers whose plots were not always kind to women and whose techniques involved frequent use of devices such as the point of view shot. Hitchcock was singed out for scrutiny.

In many cases, however, the analyst, striving for the right approach, will mix and match methods so as to best elucidate – or violate, depending on your outlook – the text or texts in question. Such is the case with the two subjects mentioned above. The historical study of early cinema and the psychoanalytic approach may both rely on the analysis of narrative content, as can be seen by a quick look at two canonical works within each tradition. Laura Mulvey, in her classic 1975 article, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," shows how narrative design is determined by an aggressive male instinct to subjugate and control the female subject. Tom Gunning, in *D.W. Griffith and*

the Origins of the American Narrative Film (1991), outlines the rise of the American fiction film while also offering a theory of cinematic narration which explores the role of a cinematic narrator, who engages in a form of telling within in a medium that, based on it's photographic basis, deals with showing.

That narrative analysis can so easily work with such different methods speaks to its fundamental importance and versatility. While the writers above are highly cognizant of narrative, it's nevertheless easy to forget that, in addition to forming part of the object of study, it also constitutes a methodological orientation in and off itself. This may rest with the ubiquity of narrative as a factor in a wide range of analyses, both within film studies, proximate disciplines, and the wider world. Narrative can hide in plane sight, its ubiquity makes it easy to miss. It has been joked that no creature knows less about water than the fish. While not all enquiries need to factor narrative, it seems that, in a similar way and for similar reasons, too many theoretical frameworks have nevertheless neglected this most important element, or have approached it without much theoretical self-consciousness.

This is not to say, of course, that film studies has ignored the development of a cohesive theory of narrative, but rather that what efforts do exist do not seem proportionate to the importance of the subject. Indeed, some interesting contributions have been made from within the domain, and we will have occasion to meet with some of them. The problem is not that film studies ignores narrative, it is full of it, but that it seems to display a greater need for a common vocabulary to which people can contribute, build on, and argue over. The purpose of this thesis is to reintroduce some

of the terms that could form the bedrock of narrative analysis, based on the nature of narrative, and to offer an example of what a related piece of specific criticism might look like.

A useful starting point for this task is Gerard Genette's *Narrative Discourse*, *An Essay in Method,* originally published in 1972, and translated into English in 1980. There are three main reasons for this. First, it incorporates and refines many narrative related insights that precede its publication, but without getting too carried away with the fads of the day. Indeed, a major part of Genette's mission was to incorporate the best insights that brought the field up to his present. Secondly, the ideas put forth represent a cohesive theory, in which the various component elements fit together in ways that are often elegant, but also occasionally awkward. Indeed, the flaws contained in the work, some of which this thesis tries to sort out, can be as instructive as the more solid insights. Finally, it is a work that has sparked considerable debate and forms a good anchor point from which to examine some of the main issues and debates within narratology. Each of these three aspects is considered below, after which consideration will be given to the case study for the approach to narrative fiction he lays out.

The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure supplied many of the foundational principles used by Genette. More than this, his *Course in General Linguistics*, published in 1913 from his lecture notes, can be thought of as a fuzzy blueprint for developments in a range of humanities disciplines, which would treat linguistics as a kind of 'master discipline'. At the risk of vulgarity, his framework can be reduced to five principle

axioms. Virtually all these points will be mentioned in any general introduction to Saussure.

1) Linguistics can be studied from two temporal perspectives. It can be looked at synchronically, as a permanent structure, or diachronically, which considers how it changes over time. It should be studied synchronically if the goal is to study linguistics scientifically.

2) It follows from the first point that linguistics can be studied from two levels. There is 'la langue', which is the synchronic system of language, and the 'parole', which is how one person uses language. Linguistics as a science requires that one study 'la langue', or the total signifying system of language.

3) Linguistic signification requires signs that are composed of a signifier (for example, a word) and the signified (the idea, a concept without material basis). The relation between the signifier and signified is arbitrary.

4) Meaning occurs within the closed linguistic system of language. Signs are defined as much by what word they are not or are, in other words, defined negatively.

5) Signs, indeed all linguistic units, enter into two kinds of relations. The paradigmatic relation is the selection of one linguistic unit from among many other possibilities, which could count as potential substitutes. The syntagmatic refers to how words relate along a horizontal axis, which functions as combination. It is worth noting that Saussure did not use these exact terms, but spoke of the axis of combination and selection.

Saussure did not think that his methods should be limited to the study of language. He saw these principles as fundamental to a wide range of topics. This was made explicit in his *General Course in Linguistics*, where he proposes this direction:

> A science that studies the life of signs within society is conceivable; it would be a part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology; I shall call it semiology (from Greek semeion 'sign'). Semiology would show what constitutes signs, what laws govern them. Since the science does not yet exist, no one can say what it would be; but it has a right to existence, a place staked out in advance." (16)

In many ways, Genette's theory of narrative was an answer to this call, and elaborated on the branch that would deal with narrative. Another critical source movement for what would become structural narratology in general, and Genette's theory in particular, came to be called Russian Formalism, which was getting it's start slightly after the time that Saussure was developing his ideas. Like that work, their approaches represented a challenge to the exiting order. It began with the formation of two groups, the members of which were trained as classical philologists and literary historians. One was the Moscow linguistic circle, founded in 1914 and led by Roman Jakobson, the other was the Society for the Study of Poetic Language (OPOJAZ), founded in 1915, in St. Petersburg, and whose main members were Boris Eikhenbaum, again Roman Jakobson, Victor Shklovsky, and Yury Tynianov. Despite a close relationship

among members, the movement would go though a number of transformations. In the late 1920s, the 'Bakhtin' school would challenge some of the formalists' ideas, and argue against the preceding, stridently scientific approach. It was also around this time that decampment to Czechoslovakia became necessary, as the Soviet political atmosphere was taking on a newly oppressive tone. This continuation movement would go by the name of the Prague Linguistic Circle.

While naturally cognizant of the humanistic elements of poetry, the formalists' approach leaned in a more analytical direction; they were more concerned with the search for general rules than the textures of individual works. Their starting point was to define 'literariness', beginning with poetic language, which they did by arguing that it consisted of the 'defamiliarization', or 'making strange' of ordinary language through the use of various devices that do not occur in common usage. These could be departures from the ordinary sounds of language, as with meter or rhyme, but also included ways thinking, such as metaphor and simile. An important effect of these devices was to draw the reader's attention to language as language, another factor that separates it from everyday usage. Over time, this position would shift away from a universal conception of 'making strange' and towards a conception of poetry as a dynamic system in which certain features were foregrounded within the system of the artwork and became dominants.

This formulation is well suited to poetry, but does not hold sturdy for fiction, the genre to which the formalists would next turn their attention. Their solution was nevertheless able to retain the broad principle of devices and defamiliarization. Drawing

on ideas put forth by many of his collaborators, notably a 1921 piece in which Viktor Shklovsky introduced the idea of the *fabula* (story) and the *syuzhet* (plot), in 1925 Boris Tomashevski offered an innovative solution to the problem by arguing that a presented plot may defamiliarize, with narrative devices such as the ordering of events, the underlying, complete story on which it is based.

Fabula can be translated as story, and *syuzhet* as plot. The fabula is the full sequence of events, presented in their original spatio-temporal totality. It is a construct that cannot be directly observed, but must instead be reconstructed from the syuzhet. The fabula does not have an observable material reality in the form of a certain medium. The syuzhet, on the other hand, is the manipulated document that, unlike the fabula, must be transmitted in some form of medium, by some form teller and, unlike the fabula, must bear a trace of this teller.

Genette was part of a movement known as structuralist narratology, and his book can be considered one of the founding documents of this movement, which could be conveniently dated with the publication of *Communications* 8, 1966, which included works by Roland Barthes, Gerard Genette, Tzvetan Todorov, and Claude Bremond.

A main concern during this period, which connected with previous lines of enquiry, discussed below in relation to Genette's work, was how structural linguistics related to narrative discourse. At one end, some theorists argued for a homological relation, stating that both were, despite obvious differences, essentially governed by the same underlying principles and procedures. Others pushed for a more metaphorical relation. It is instructive of this point to contrast Barthes with Genette, who occupy

different positions along this spectrum. This excerpt is from Barthes' classic piece, "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative":

> The general language [*langue*] of narrative is one (and clearly only one) of the idioms apt for consideration by the linguistics of discourse and it accordingly comes under the homological hypothesis. Structurally, narrative shares the character of the sentence without ever being reducible to the simple sum of its sentences: a narrative is a long sentence, just as every constative sentence is in a way the rough outline of a short narrative. Although there provided with different signifiers (often extremely complex), one does find in narrative, expanded and transformed, proportionately, the principle verbal categories: tenses, aspects, moods, persons. (86)

Genette also questions the relation between narrative and linguistics, and would also use the terms tense, mood, and person, something discussed below. However, he takes a different view of their relations. In the introduction of *Narrative Discourse*, he writes the following.

> Since any narrative, even one as extensive and complex as the *Recherche du temps perdu*, is a linguistic production undertaking to tell of one or several events, it is perhaps legitimate to treat it as the development - monstrous, if you will – given to a *verbal* form, in the grammatical sense of the term: the expansion

> of a verb. *I walk, Pierre has come* are for me minimal forms of narrative, and inversely the *Odyssey* or the *Recherche* is only, in a certain way, an amplification (in the rhetorical sense) of statements such as *Ulysses come home to Ithaca* or *Marcel become a writer*. (30)

Rather than taking the grammatical aspects of narrative as homological to fiction, his more circumspect approach is to treat it as metaphor. In addition to suggesting a direct grammatical interpretation could be monstrous, and only perhaps legitimate, as Genette does above, he also clearly states, in the introduction as elsewhere, that he is proposing a "linguistic metaphor that should certainly not be taken too literally" (30). This cautiousness was one of Genette's great strengths. He did not get too carried away with the new linguistic approach to literature and, kept his focus grounded and, as a result, remains highly applicable to the study of linguistic and non-linguistic texts.

In addition to remaining circumspect about new developments, Genette also worked as a synthesizer, and incorporated approaches from anglo-american commentators into the more "system oriented" approach of structuralism. The most critical of these ideas was the role of the narrator and the act of narration. This component, when combined with the notion of fabula and syuzhet, gave rise to a three part model which remains, with minor variations, the standard model for a number of current theorists of narration. It should be said that the addition of the narrator was first proposed within structuralist thinking by Tzvetan Todorov, who used the terms

story (fabula), discourse (syuzhet), and narrating, in *Communications 8*, mentioned above. It was Genette, however who would give this three part relation a much fuller exploration and contributed the most in this regard. He outlines his ideas in the following terms, which bear an obvious debt to Saussure.

> I propose, without insisting on the obvious reasons for my choice of terms, to use the word story for the signified or narrative content (even if this turns out, in a given case, to be low in dramatic intensity or fullness of incident), to use the word narrative for the signifier, statement, discourse or narrative text itself, and to use the word narrating for the producing narrative action and, by extension, the whole for the real or fictional situation in which that action takes place. (27)

The interaction of these three terms comprises what Genette calls narrative discourse. There is, however, another side to this equation, and these are the categories, taken from grammar, which bind them. He concludes his introduction by outlining these relations. He wrote:

> As we have seen, the three classes proposed here, which designate fields of study and determine the arrangement of the chapters that follow, do not overlap with but sort out in a more complex way the three categories defined earlier designating the levels of definition of narrative: tense and mood both operate at the level of connections between story and narrative, while voice

designates the connections between both narrating and narrative and narrating and story. We will be careful, however, not to hypostatize these terms, not to convert into substance what is each time merely a matter of relationships. (32)

Just as the previous paragraph clearly marked terminological indebtedness to Saussure and the Russian Formalists, this passage reveals a typically structuralist concern with relationships. Comprehension of these relations is assisted with a diagram:

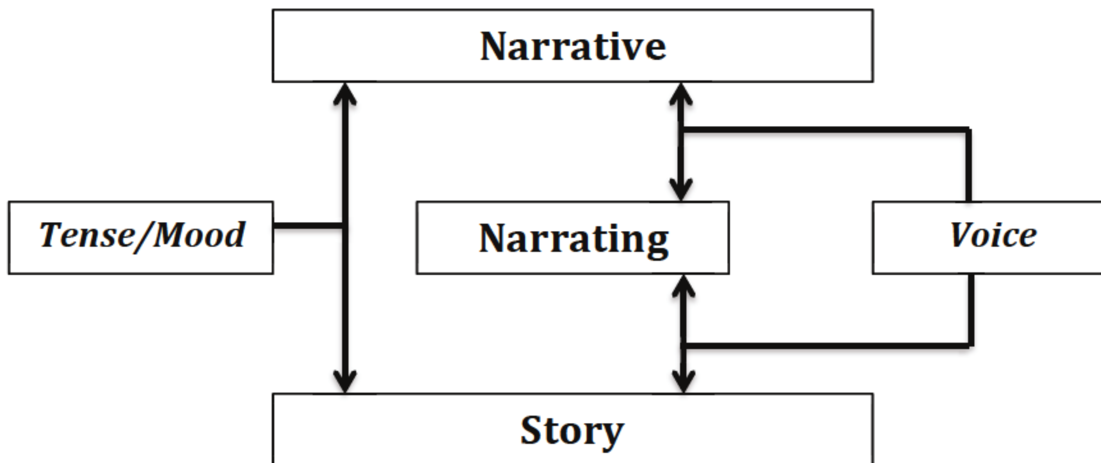


Fig 1. Summary of the parts and relations proposed by Genette.

This thesis is based on the categories of mood and voice, which Genette used for the headings of chapters 4 and 5, respectively, in *Narrative Discourse*.

Chapter one looks at Genette's conception of voice, which he divided into two categories. Level refers to the place of the narrator in relation to the narratives they deliver. Perhaps the most difficult question arising with narrative level concerns the location of the primary narrator, whose pride of place signals responsibility for the

presentation, if indirectly, of all other narrators within their tale. It was Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan who challenged Genette on this front, in her piece *Problems of Voice in Vladimir Nabokov's The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*, and triggered debate which helped refine the issue.

The second aspect of voice is involvement, which denotes the narrators' presence in the story they are telling as either same as or different to the world of the narrative, positions commonly referred to as 'first person' and 'third person', though as we shall see Genette greatly improved upon these potentially misleading terms. On this front, complications were not raised by other commentators, but rather by Genette, who in *Narrative Discourse Revisited* would propose a revised view of the relations between these two positions, arguing for a gradation between them rather than a strict demarcation. As will be seen, his original position remains the stronger.

The full definition of a given narrator requires the combination of level and involvement. As with the discussion of involvement, this unfolds with some criticisms of Genette's second, revised position and advocates for the more convincing, first formulations put forward in *Narrative Discourse*. In addition, his ideas are presented in a modified figure that helps highlight certain aspects that may go undetected in his chosen representation of these positions.

While both of Genette's books contain passing reference to specific films and the cinema in general, he is primarily writing about literature. Moving in a direction that was not part of his original framework then, chapter one also asks how his ideas relate to fiction films, specifically regarding the nature of the cinematic narrator. While some

commentators argue that films do have primary narrators, others feel the idea is overly literary in origin and is better left to literature. This paper attempts a synthesis between these two positions. The strategy here is to take look at film theorists that take opposite positions on the issue. Placing them side by side, we can better observe the strengths and weaknesses of each position. The theorists in question are David Bordwell, who denies the existence of an extradiegetic film narrator, and Peter Verstraten, who offers an involved theory of the narrator. Their opposing viewpoints are then synthesized with the help of a framework put forth by Sarah Kozloff. While others could certainly have been included here, this discussion primarily aims to capture the main contours of the debate surrounding the cinematic narrator and, for reasons of space, many important contributors have been left out.

Most of the material up until this point takes a descriptive-analytical approach to the subject of voice. That is, the concern is to outline and refine the description of the necessary parts of fiction and to determine how they fit together into a unified whole. Switching gears somewhat, chapter one concludes by outlining the sorts of rhetorical effects enabled by these parts. The discussion of level examines how Genette revised himself on this question and then concludes with what seems like a superior taxonomy of effects enabled though switches in narrative level. The approach to involvement relies less on Genette, and, while considering how the different kinds of narrator positions are well suited to certain narratives, cautions against prescriptive aesthetics masquerading as descriptive poetics.

Chapter two takes up questions that Genette placed under the heading of mood, which he further broke down into two categories. The first of these was distance, which was in turn divided into narrative of events and narrative of words, both of which were considered in light of mimesis and diegesis. As Genette himself notes, a narrative of events can only be considered mimetic in a metaphoric sense and that written discourse will always be a form of telling, or diegesis. There is, rather, only a produced effect of showing. The narrative of words works well with the concepts of mimesis and diegesis for the simple reason that the mode of imitation is the same as the form of the imitated. While Genette offered a typology for how the narrator's imitation (or not) of character speech, the discussion of this issue follows Brian McHale, who provides a much more nuanced scale.

Perspective, the second category of mood, has to do with character point of view and the amount of information available to the narrator vis-à-vis the narrative's characters. Genette famously described this aspect of narrative discourse with the term focalization, and divided the ways that this can unfold into a three part structure. Likely owing to the importance of the ideas and the controversial nature of Genette's formalization, of all the concepts found in *Narrative Discourse* this is the one that sparked the most debate. The problems with Genette's arrangement of terms are outlined, and a substitute terminology proposed. This adjustment borrows from concepts offered in David Bordwell's and Kristin Thompson's *Film Art* and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan's *Narrative Fiction*. While offering some new insight on the topic, the

goal here is primarily to rehabilitate Genette's framework into something more workable and less internally inconsistent.

So far, the discussion will have proceeded along fairly abstract lines. Incidental examples appear here and there, but the main concern will have been to present the theory and debates in the abstract. While it is possible and often advisable to be able to discuss a methodology independently of specific examples, at the end of the day methods are there to elucidate texts. Additionally, it is though the analysis of individual works that the strengths and weaknesses of a theory will come to the fore.

The thesis concludes with an analysis of Alfred Hitchcock's second last film, *Frenzy* (1972), selected because much of what is happening in terms of calculated regulation of narrative information is best understood with the aid of the ideas and concepts explored above. More specifically, chapter four looks how this film employs two types of focalization which Genette placed under one heading. These were how much each character knows about what is happening, vis-à-vis each other and the narrator (or viewer in this analysis), and how the subjectivity of a character is represented. As we will see, however, Hitchcock's innovative use of these devices, particularly in the case of evocation of the subjective, challenge notions of static categories.

Another advantage of Genette's system is that it is highly amenable to other methods by which we may analyze the cinematic text, be they themselves based in narrative analysis, or some other approach. To show how this is the case, this analysis also draws on ideas of suspense put forth by Susan Smith in her book, *Hitchcock;*

Suspense, Humour, and Tone, published in 2000 by the BFI. While many of the ideas in the thesis will have considered aspects of narrative in and of themselves, part of the purpose of the last chapter is to show how they can merge with and amplify thematic concerns. This section also picks up on an area which the more theoretical, preceding sections touches only in passing, which is the role of the spectator.

Chapter One, Voice

Level

Many tangible aspects of the world exist in such a way that one entity is contained within another. This can occur with cultural objects, such as Chinese boxes and Russian dolls. It can also occur with natural objects. The layers of an onion are a popular example. Less tangibly, something like this relationship can also arise with narrative, and most people have encountered the story within a story design. While writers of different schools have addressed this notion of embedding, it was the structuralist Gerard Genette who first explored the notion of level in an extensive, systematic manner. This project has resulted in a surprising amount of debate. Before looking at the points of contention, however, it is helpful to first summarize the names which Genette gave to the different narrator positions and to obtain a general feel for his proposed typology. A picture helps make the arrangement immediately clear. On page 85 of *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, he produced the following diagram to visually represent the notion of level.

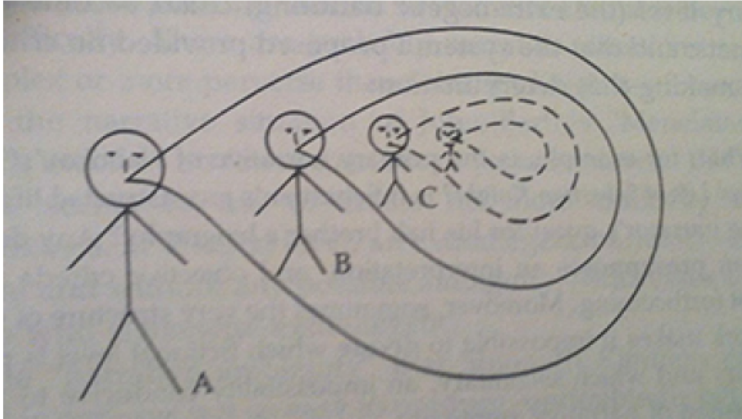


Fig 2. Illustration of level found in Narrative Discourse Revisited.

For a new narrative level to be created, it is necessary for a narrative agent (most commonly human) to launch a new story from their position in an already established story. Because of this, the notion of level involves both tale and teller. In this diagram, the stick figures represent the narrators and the dialogue bubbles the stories being told (which of course contain other narrators). As can be seen, a notable exception to this is the first narrator, represented by the letter A, who, Genette claimed, launches a story from outside the diegetic spheres. He referred to this narrator (and the space s/he occupies) as extradiegetic, or outside (-extra) the story world (diegesis). This narrator may seem to exist on the same plane as the reader who is similarly beyond or outside the relayed diegesis, although this is not to say the extradiegetic narrator must necessarily be aware of anything like an extradiegetic reader. An extradiegetic narrator may, for example, appear to be writing a personal diary not intended for anyone else. In many literary examples, however, this narrator does seem to be consciously addressing

a reader that is similarly not part of the story world, although neither the extradiegetic narrator or the extradiegetic narratee should be confused with the historically based author or reader.

The narrative communicated by the extradiegetic narrator comprises what Genette termed the intradiegetic level. A character residing on this level may also present a story, becoming an intradiegetic character-narrator and occupying position B in the above diagram. One peculiar aspect of Genette's terminology is that diegetic and intradiegetic refer to the same level. This double usage appears to arise because there are two vantage points from which this level can be considered. If looked at from the extradiegetic narrator's position, then intradiegetic helps mark the contrast between this first narrator and the story they tell. If, however, this level is considered in a less primary narrator-centric way, and more as the main story, then the simple term diegetic seems to suffice. Using two terms for the same level is an awkward aspect of Genette's typology, in part because all subsequent narratives are still "diegetic". The implication behind this double use is that the extradiegetic narrator can never be diegetic in nature, a proposition that will be examined more closely in a subsequent section.

In any case, the narrative communicated by the intradiegetic narrator comprises what Genette termed the metadiegetic level. A character residing on this level may also present a narrative, becoming a metadiegetic character-narrator, and occupying position C. However, while the presence of an intradiegetic character-narrator will necessitate a metadiegetic level, it does not follow that there will necessarily be a

further metadiegetic character-narrator as it's entirely possible none of the characters on this level will, in their turn, take up the role of narrator.

This conception of level is as relevant to film as it is to literature. It is an extremely common device for a diegetic character to begin a story and for the film, perhaps by way of a cross fade, to then show the events of this story unfolding. In some genres, such as film noir, the use of additional levels has become a staple. Having terms for the different levels is equally useful for both artforms, and will enable the practicing critic to identify a given level with greater precision.

The Extradiegetic Level

While Genette did not explicitly address the question in *Narrative Discourse*, a number of his comments on metalepsis reveal that he viewed the extradiegetic level as a logical necessity of narrative fiction. The term metalepsis, in the words of John Pier, refers to the “paradoxical contamination between the world of the telling and the world of the told” (insert ref), and it occurs when an extradiegtic narrator interacts directly with characters on the diegetic level. Genette wrote that such a transgression serves to “demonstrate the importance of the boundary they tax their ingenuity of overstep, in defiance of verisimilitude – a boundary that is precisely the narrating (or the performance) itself: a shifting but sacred frontier between two worlds, the world in which one tells, the world of which one tells” (13). He went on to further say that the device produced the “unacceptable and insistent hypothesis” that “the extradiegetic is perhaps always diegetic”.

Rimmon-Kenan questioned the necessity of the extradiegetic in her piece titled *Problems of Voice in Vladimir Nabokov’s The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*. In a footnote that resolves a previous problem she had with Genette, she says that “The problem still remains in novels where there is only an intradiegetic narrator. What will the diegetic level be in such cases?” (489). While this remains an important question, it was not an issue for Genette. He responded:

> At first glance, and for lack of examples, I have trouble seeing what she may have in mind and understanding the meaning of her question. A narrator can be

> perceived as intradiegetic only if he is presented as such by a narrative in which he appears, which constitutes precisely the level she claims to be seeking. But it is true that the frame narrative, at least in modern literature, can very well be resolved into a complete ellipsis. An example is *La Chute*, where Clamence's monologue in the presence of his silent listener can be "embedded" only implicitly in a frame narrative that is understood – that is clearly implied by all the statements in the monologue that relate not to the story it tells but to the circumstance of the narrating. Without its recourse to this implicit embedding, *La Chute* would escape the narrative mode, since it consists wholly of one character's monologue or, more exactly (since that character is not alone but addresses a silent listener), of a long "tirade" without a rejoinder – a text in the dramatic mode, therefore, which one could, if not one has yet done it, bring to the stage without changing a word. (89)

Genette is right to express confusion at her question, which asks about the location of the diegetic level when there is only an intradiegetic narrator. As mentioned above, diegetic and intradiegetic refer to the same level, and the ambiguity of her sentence seems an example of how using two separate words for the same thing can make the intention of the question unclear. Her question appears to concern the extradiegetic level when there is only an intradiegetic/diegetic narrator. This is the question Genette seems to be answering. He writes that "a narrator can be perceived as intradiegetic only if he is presented as such", and the last three words of this seem to

imply the presence of another, in this case extradiegetic, narrator. To prove that the extradiegetic is a necessity, he cites *The Fall (La Chute)*, a novel by Albert Camus. To see the difficulty with the claim that the story's "monologue in the presence of his silent listener can be 'embedded' only implicitly in a frame narrative…", consider the following few lines, taken from the book's opening:

> May I, monsieur, offer my services without running the risk of intruding? I fear you may not be able to make yourself understood by the worthy ape who presides over the fate of this establishment. In fact, he speaks nothing but Dutch. Unless you authorize me to plead your case, he will not guess that you want gin. (3)

Part of the irony in Genette's selection of *The Fall* as an example is that it meets the two conditions necessary for a narrative to contain only an intradiegetic narrator. These are spatial and temporal simultaneity of narrating and narrative. If these two conditions are met, there is no reason to insist on an extradiegetic narrator. The best that can be said about the extradiegetic level is that it creates the impression of existing in most examples of narrative fiction, but is by no means a necessary feature of all works. In these cases, the extradiegetic narrator becomes either a purely "theoretical" being, perhaps something closer to the implied author, or a tautology in the sense that its presence or absence makes no difference to the story at hand.

Narrator Involvement

In addition to level, the narrator can also be classified by their involvement in the story they tell. As with level, this was not an area of study first identified or explored by Genette. Other commentators had distinguished between 'first person' and 'third person' narrators, and the difference between these is well sensed by consumers of stories; the former tells a story in which they appear, the latter tells one in which they don't. Genette's main contribution to this area was to refine these terms, making them more precise, and to integrate them with other areas, making them part of a larger narratological system. He voiced this criticism against first and third person, and proposed substitute terminology, in the following, often reproduced way:

> Insofar as the narrator can at any instant intervene as such in the narrative, every narrating is, by definition, to all intents and purposes presented in the first person (even if in the editorial plural, as when Stendhal writes, "We will confess that...we have begun the story or our hero...") The real question is whether or not the narrator can use the first person to designate one of his characters. We will therefore distinguish here two types of narrative: one with the narrator absent from the story he tells (example: Homer in the *Iliad*, or Flaubert in *L'Education sentimentale*), the other with the narrator present as a character in the story he tells (example: *Gil Blas*, or *Wuthering Heights*). I call the first type, for obvious reasons, heterodiegetic, and the second type homodiegetic. (245)

In his first consideration of person, in *Narrative Discourse*, Genette characterized the difference between these two states by saying that “absence is absence, but presence has degrees” (245). By this he meant that while all heterodiegetic narrators are equally and totally absent from their discourse, homodiegetic narrators exist on a sliding scale of participation, given that a character narrator can vary from central to marginal, from driver of events to virtually unnoticed bystander. Searching for greater terminological precision, Genette proposed the term *autodiegetic*, as a subcategory of homodiegetic, for those narrators which play a central role in their own discourse. The prefix auto- generally indicates a relation to self, which seems appropriate for stories where the narrator is also the main protagonist. Genette did not introduce a separate term for the more passive variety of homodiegetic narrator, but Herman and Vervaeck, in their *Handbook of Narrative Analysis*, cite and accept *allodiegetic*, a term introduced by German scholar Van der Voort. This is a more awkward label because the prefix allo- indicates ‘different from’, but this kind of narrator, while participating less in the unfolding events, is still directly involved in the narrative. In any case, in his first theorization of the topic Genette proposed a strict border between homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narrators, arguing the former could vary in their degree of participation, while the latter could not.

In a writing style that suggested extemporaneous thoughts unfolding, he would reverse this position in *Narrative Discourse Revisited* by suggesting that both types of narrators exist along a single continuous spectrum. There was at first some mild

hesitation when he wrote that "I am not sure whether I would adhere today to the idea of an impassable boundary between the two types, hetero- and homodiegetic. Franz Stanzel, on the contrary and in a way I often find convincing, insists on allowing for the possibility of a progressive gradation..." (103). Gaining momentum, he went on to consider the example of epilogues told in the present tense, something which introduces a "touch of homodiegeticity", and therefore serves, he argued, to collapse the distinction between the two narrator positions. Arriving at a final courage and referencing this present tense epilogue, he went on to declare that "Today, therefore, I would instead be inclined to concede the borderline to Stanzel's gradualism..." (104). While the previous section looked at how Rimmon-Kenan revised Genette's original positions, this is an example where he has reserved such a presumably ambivalent pleasure for himself.

Genette's two positions regarding narrator involvement can be visually represented in diagram form. The first (figure three) represents Genette's original idea, stated in *Narrative Discourse*. The heterodiegetic section has been greyed out because, in the first formulation, it was an absolute state which did not contain any internal gradations. The homodiegetic section contains a horizontal band to represent the degrees of participation. Here the line between these two states is solid and suggests the absolute nature of the switch between these two positions. In his second, revised position (figure four) the gradation originally limited to the homodiegetic has been expanded to cover the full spectrum of narrator positions and the border between the two states, no longer finite, has become porous. Representing the two positions visually

helps to illustrate a false assumption which the first position may engender. This is the notion that allodiegetic narrators are somehow closer to heterodiegtic narrators. While this is the case in a visual, literal way, all positions on the homodiegetic spectrum are equally homodiegetic. They share different degrees of participation, but also the fact of involvement. This assumption about the subdivisions of homodiegetic narrators may have been part of what led to the revised position which extended the gradation across both forms of narrator involvement.

Fig. 3. Summary of Genette's first position on the relation between Heterodiegetic and Homodiegetic narrators.

Fig. 4. Summary of Genette's second position on the relation between Heterodiegetic and Homodiegetic narrators.

The first of these two positions is the stronger. This is because homodiegeticity, as mentioned above, is not determined by degree of perceived participation, but by fact of involvement. For involvement to be considered homodiegetic, a narrator must, at some point in time, have been both temporally and spatially at one with the narrative they recount (even if the recounting happens as a first person retrospective, from a position both temporally and spatially removed). Based on this, Genette's 'touch 'of homodiegeticy could be crudely quantified as half. Perhaps a narrator who occupied the same space in which events unfolded would similarly offer this impressionistic touch of direct involvement. But a narrator must meet both criteria to be considered homodiegetic. And because it is a yes or no proposition, the situation as depicted in figure three is the most plausible option.

Still, it is easy to sense what Genette meant by this increased sense of homodiegeticty, and it would not be surprising if such use of the present tense epilogue resulted in readers having a greater sense of a narrator's participation. However, the problem with arguing for an all encompassing gradation is that it confuses the effects of a text with categorical distinctions. That a narrator may seem more homodiegetic is not a reliable indication of their involvement in the story. It is as if Genette, looking at two images, the first of which was one dimensional and the other three dimensional, suggested that the three dimensional image was somehow closer to actual objects. Certainly it may appear that way, but both images exist on a flat surface and are equally different from objects existing in space. In a similar way, an extreme form of allodiegetic narrator may create effects which seem more typical of the heterodiegetic variety (for

example, emotional distance from the events). Indeed, without a narrator's explicit confirmation that they were or were not part of the narrative, it may be impossible in practice to state with absolute certainty the involvement status of a given narrator.

But this does not mean that theory should posit a gradual difference. It only means that an individual text may render the line difficult to identify. Part of the confusion in distinguishing between the different kinds of narrators comes from the difference between theory construction, which happens at an abstract level, and unique story criticism, which always trades in particulars. That said, theory will remain inadequate if it does not also account for empirically verifiable effects of a text, even if they do not conform to the underlying foundation of the situation. For example, a theory of the mechanics of cinema must account for the fact that the screen is actually blank for a significant amount of time while also admitting that the individual viewer will perceive uninterrupted images.

The diagram below attempts to embody this dual focus by showing both the underlying structure and the possible effects of a text. The bottom, or base, is the same as Genette's original position on the relation between the two narrator positions. Above this, however, has been added another set of relations which represents the effects of a text. The solid black line, which indicates the absolute nature of the barrier, has been extended to the effects level. While this is to indicate that it remains absolute, the grey band overlapping the extremities of the two gradations serves to indicate how individual texts may blur this boundary. The underlying type of involvement was placed on the bottom level to reflect its status as a base structure.

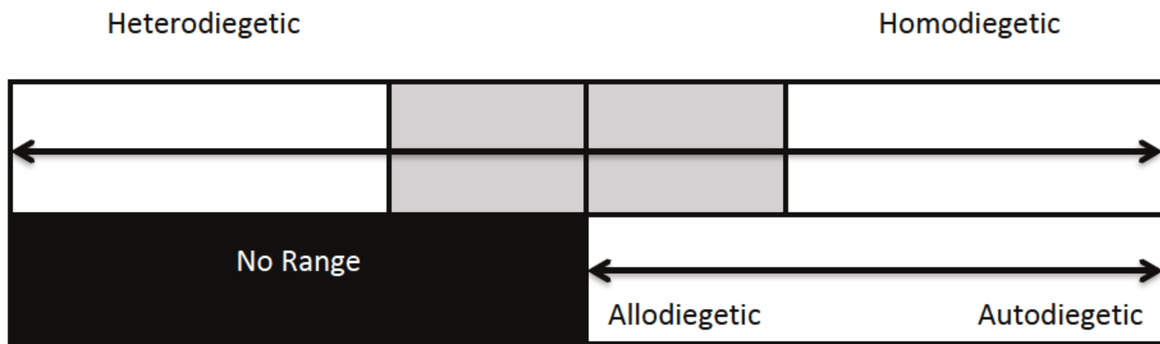


Fig. 5. Combined view of Genette's first and second positions. The top row represents the reader's experience of a text, the bottom row the logical relations between the two narrators.

Level and Involvement Combined

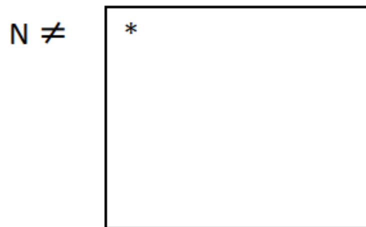
If involvement and level are each placed along different axes, the resulting matrix provides a fairly complete picture of the different possible narrator positions. As a minimal starting point, it would be necessary to include heterodiegetic and homodiegetic for involvement, and extradiegetic for level. Such a minimal model might suffice for many individual stories, but not for a general typology. In *Narrative Discourse*, Genette chose to expand level to also include the intradiegetic narrator, which produces four categories, shown below, in figure five. For a more complete picture, it would be possible to add hypodiegetic to level, and to split homodiegetic into autodiegetic and allodiegetic. This would yield nine narrator categories (to do only one of these two operations would yield six). For more detail than this, it would be necessary to add additional levels. While a story does not need to have additional levels, if they do occur they will need to have a degree of involvement because while additional levels are an option, the narrator's involvement with them is not. Rimmon-Kenan wrote that both "extradiegetic and intradiegetic narrators can be either absent from or present in the story they narrate" (96). Without implying that she did not understand it this way, a better wording is to say that narrators of any level must be either present or absent. In any case, below is Genette's matrix and his brief description of each position:

LEVEL: RELATIONSHIP:	*Extradiegetic*	*Intradiegetic*
Heterodiegetic	Homer	Scheherazade C.
Homodiegetic	Gil Blas Marcel	Ulysses

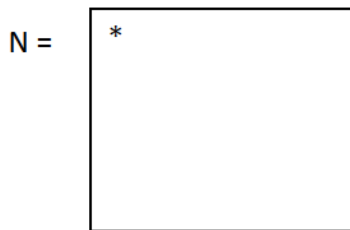
Genette summarized these positions in the following way:

> If in every narrative we define the narrator's status both by its narrative level (extra- or intradiegetic) and by its relationship to the story (hetero- or homodiegetic), we can represent the four basic types of narrator's status as follows: (1) *extradiegetic-heterodiegetic* – paradigm: Homer, a narrator in the first degree who tells a story he is absent from; (2) *extradiegetic-homodiegetic* – paradigm: Gil Blas, a narrator in the first degree who tells his own story; (3) *intradiegetic-heterodiegetic* – paradigm: Scheherazade, a narrator in the second degree who tells stories she is on the whole absent from; (4) *intradiegetic-homodiegetic* – paradigm: Ulysses in Books IX-XII, a narrator in the second degree who tells his own story. (248)

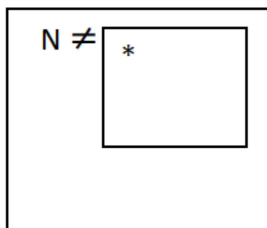
Below is a different way of representing the same four positions. The dots (*) and N sign represent narrators, the boxes their stories, and the equal or not equal signs their involvement with the stories they tell. Showing the combination this way has two advantages. First, it makes clear how definitions of the intradiegetic narrators do not indicate anything about their relation to the extradiegetic narrator. Secondly, it helps make clear how an intradiegetic narrator must be homodiegetic to the level from which they are launching their discourse, a level one down from the extradiegetic.



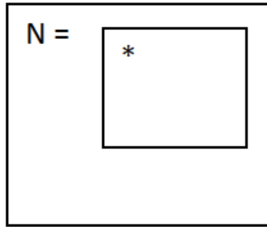
(1) *Extradiegetic-heterodiegetic*



(2) *Extradiegetic-homodiegetic*



(3) *Intradiegetic-heterodiegetic*



(4) *Intradiegetic-homodiegetic*

Fig. 6. Visual representation of level and voice combined.

In *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, Genette wrote critically of his matrix, shown above:

> But perhaps the most substantial criticism one could direct at this section on *level* would be that its very presence exaggerates the relative importance of this category with respect to the category of *person*, and the table on page 248 certainly has the defect of showing the intersection of two oppositions that are not equally interesting. Just as a scene in dialogue is narrative or dramatic depending on the mere presence or absence of some declarative statements, so the intradiegetic nature of a narrative is very often, as we see clearly in Maupassant and again in *Jean Santeuil*, only a stratagem of presentation, a conventionality that, in many respects, is insignificant. And reciprocally, all that is needed to convert an extradiegetic narration into an embedded narration is a sentence of presentation (or, as in *Portnoy*, of conclusion), without any other modification. (95)

This does not seem a warranted revision. From an analytic perspective, level and involvement are both fundamental to narrative and any writer, and/or theorist, must decide how many levels to include and what kind of involvement should hold for each narrator's relation to their recounted narrative. The question of which is more powerful in its application is a task for individual critics looking at specific works and not the proper goal of theory.

Another problem arises with how Genette differentiates between level and involvement. He states that only a 'sentence of presentation' is needed to convert an extradiegetic narrator into an embedded one. This may be true, but it is in no way unique to level. The same reorientation can just as easily be made with involvement. This is because homodiegetic narrators are not obliged to implicate themselves and can choose to present events as though they were absent from them up until some rhetorically opportune moment where the revelation will create some desired effect. The ease of sudden shifts is not between level and involvement, but rather between the directionality of the revelation in each case. Turning an assumed extradiegetic narrator into an intradiegetic one is fairly easy, as is converting a heterodiegetic narrator into a homodiegetic one. But difficulty arises if the shift is attempted in opposite directions. Having a character who only seems intradiegetic, but is then revealed to be extradiegetic, like a presumed homodiegetic narrator who is then revealed to be heterodiegetic would be considerably more difficult to handle well.

The Cinematic Narrator

Genette's discussion of the narrator applies to literary fiction, where it is clear that someone is telling a story. An important task for a poetics of cinema is to determine the place of the extradiegetic narrator within an audio-visual context, which may not have such a readily apparent teller. In the first place, however, we can see that the application of Genette's terms do not seem problematic when applied to diegetic character-narrators. Viewers are accustomed to characters inside the fictional world acting as narrators. Voice over narration and flashbacks, often used in tandem, are very familiar devices. Complications arise, however, when we seek to understand what might be the role of the extradiegtic cinematic narrator, something which has produced debate among commentators.

At one end, some argue that films do not have anything like extradiegetic narrators and that it is a fallacy, an instance of excessive personification, to import such a conception. At the other, we have commentators who take the cinematic narrator to be self-evident and ever present. The strategy here is to take one representative from each of these camps, David Bordwell from the latter, Peter Verstraten from the former, and to show the problems which accompany a too extreme view in either direction. The discussion concludes by comparing both these positions to that laid out by Sarah Kozloff, who strikes a reasonable middle ground which best describes this aspect of fiction filmmaking.

The most well known proponent of the no extradiegetic narrator position is David Bordwell. In *Narration in the Fiction Film* (1985), he writes the following:

> Since any utterance can be construed with respect to a putative source, literary theory may be justified in looking for a speaking voice or narrator. But in watching films, we are seldom aware of being told something by an entity resembling a human being. Even with the dissective attention of criticism, we cannot construct a narrator for Vidor's film *War and Peace* with the exactitude with which we can assign attributes to the narrator of Tolstoy's original novel. (48).

This position makes the mistake of basing a universal stance on a partial set of films. Bordwell's comment that we are seldom aware of a narrator suggests we are sometimes aware of one, though it must be said that the differences in the media will influence the nature of this narrator, and that things like word choice, as used in the novel, may create a more defined or different sense of a narrator than things like framing, which only exist in film. In any case, if we are sometimes aware of a cinematic narrator then why abandon the concept altogether, especially when there is always the option of positing a graduation. In a similar vein, he says we cannot pinpoint the narrator with the same exactitude as is possible in literature, which suggests a narrator can be pinpointed to some degree, and this within a film he selected as an example for why the cinematic narrator is not a useful concept. In short, Bordwell seems to be searching for a purity of definition that does not match

the diverse nature of films. It may be the case that Bordwell is well aware of these points, but if that is the case it is unclear why he would nevertheless not allow for the narrator under these contexts.

One genre in which we have a strong sense of an extradiegetic narrator is the documentary, particularly those which contain a strong expositional or argumentative component. Of course, despite what we may think of some of the propositions contained in certain works, these are not fictional works, the topic of Bordwell's study. But countless fictional works borrow heavily from the documentary toolbox (just as many documentaries, in their turn, contain approaches derived from fiction). Indeed, in some cases it is impossible to tell if a work is a documentary without additional information regarding the production context. The perception of an extradiegetic narrator in these works may owe itself to the use of language, but film is an audio-visual medium and both channels deserve consideration.

Other commentators stake out the opposite position, and claim that a cinematic narrator is a key feature of all films. Peter Verstraten illustrates this tendency in his recent book *Film Narratology* (2009), a work that applies many of Genette's terms to the study of cinema, though in a way that follows a number of Mieke Bal's revisions. He summarizes his framework in the following way:

> Since images and sounds can each tell a different story, I propose to divide the filmic narrator into a narrator on the visual track and a narrator on the auditive track. I proceed from the assumption that the narrator on the visual

track is essentially deaf to all sound, just as the narrator on the auditive track is blind to all visual influences. It is up to the filmic narrator to regulate the interaction between both sub-narrators." (8)

This is certainly one reasonable way to divide the filmic channels. With many examples, especially those that contain strong divergence or conflict between the channels, this approach will effectively capture the dual status of the cinematic narrator. The problem is that he applies this division to all films, something that would not hold well for works containing a strong correlation between sound and image, and would be especially problematic in the case of silent films. The idea that each film has three narrators, one for the visual track, another for the audio track, and that a third mediates between them, will, in the context of specific films, seem as strange and radical as Bordwell's idea that films never contain an extradiegetic narrator. Verstraten's error is similar to Bordwell's in that he argues for this conception because a film's two tracks can diverge. This may be so in some cases, but to base an entire theory of the narrator on what can happen is just as misguided as rejecting the idea because of what may not.

In her book, *Invisible Storytellers* (1988), Sarah Kozloff offers a diagram (fig. 7), displayed below, describing three degrees of correspondence between narration and images. Verstraten's notion of the narrator probably makes more sense as we move to the right, from overlapping, to complementary, to disparate.

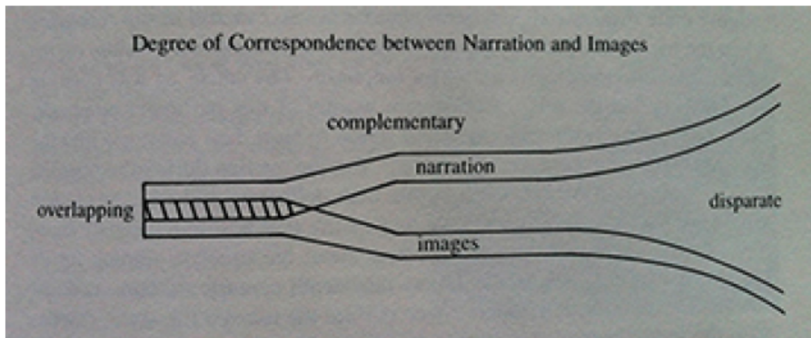


Fig. 7. Degree of Correspondence between Narration and Images. Kozloff, Sarah. Invisible Storytellers: Voice-Over Narration in American Fiction Film. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988. 103.

The difference between Bordwell and Verstraten is, in principle, similar to an argument between two people who looked at Kozloff's diagram and then insisted, from one side, that all films had overlapping correspondence, and then, from the other, that all films were disparate in this regard. Both of their positions are valid, but overly situated at a certain point along the spectrum. Following Bordwell, it does not make much sense to talk about the narrator if that narrator does not have a felt presence. In these situations, it makes sense to talk about narration as a process, even if multiple, unfelt sources are behind a given presentation. Films at the other end may function in a way outlined by Verstraten, though his framework does seem a bit particular. Films may certainly produce the impression of an extradiegetic narrator, though not always, and perhaps a minority of the time, in the way he outlines.

Applications of Level

Two related goals of poetics are to identify the constituent parts of narrative and to outline how they can be manipulated in the telling of a narrative. Having provided a summary on the first of these questions, it is now possible to consider the functions which can be fulfilled by level and involvement in the telling of a particular story.

In *Narrative Discourse*, Genette considered "the main types of relationships that can connect the metadiegetic narrative to the first narrative, into which it is inserted" (232), a definition which remains a bit narrow given that the relations can apply between any two levels (though for simplicity the examples below will use the diegetic and hypodiegetic). These relations were the explanatory, the thematic, and no explicit relation. Influenced by John Barth's article, *Tales with Tales within Tales,* these would be expanded to six in *Narrative Discourse Revisited,* though in this second manifestation the relations still remain ordered by the increasing importance of the narrative act itself, regardless of its content. As will be pointed out, there are a number of problems with Genette's commentary on each relation. Indeed, the six part framework does not seem tenable. After reviewing each of these points, an alternative framework will be presented.

The first relationship was termed the explanatory function. Here a hypodiegetic level reveals the antecedent causes for events of the diegetic level. Often this event's causal link with the present will be made explicit, though it may also be subtly suggested or not fully comprehensible until corroborated by other events. One reason that this act

of narration is less significant in and of itself is that this function does not necessarily require a new level, but could instead be handled with an explanatory analepsis. The narrator could simply present previous events, although this method would often be more conspicuous and perhaps therefore less desirable. Alluding to the possible overlap between audience members residing on different levels, Genette wrote that in many cases "the curiosity of the intradiegetic listener is only a pretext for replaying to the curiosity of the reader (as in the expository scenes of classical drama), and the metadiegetic narrative only a variant of the explanatory analepsis" (232).

The predictive function, Genette's second and new to *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, is effectively an inversion of the explanatory. Rather than antecedent causes, these narratives hint at subsequent effects. Like aspects of the predictive function, these hypodiegetic events unfold along the same spatio-temporal causal continuum as the primary diegesis. However, because they reference events that have not yet transpired, and therefore cannot be directly witnessed, they tend to unfold in a more removed way. This could mean mortals entering dream states, or supernatural beings offering cryptic predictions (Genette's examples of this function include Apollo's oracle to Oedipus and the witches of *Macbeth*). This does presume, however, a somewhat common sense conception of time. In certain fictional worlds it's possible that time is of such a different nature that this would not be an issue. A problem with this category is that this so called predictive if often causal. Genette acknowledges as much when he says that the "oracle in Oedipus the King is a metadiegetic narrative in the future tense, the mere uttering of which will throw into gear the 'infernal machine' capable of

carrying it out" (243). It is inaccurate to call these kinds of narratives merely predictive, even if the label holds for other examples in which the prediction does not trigger the event. These other forms of prediction are also different from the casual predictive, but similar to the explanatory, in that their function could be fulfilled without using a separate narrator, which would need to issue the prophesy. The primary narrator could jump ahead in the story (more technically know as a prolepsis), though, as with the analepsis, the effect of this movement may be not work for a particular narrative design. The effect of casual predictive narratives, however, cannot be taken up by other means because they are an inherent part of the story. In short, the predictive category has an internal division not captured in Genette's brief characterization, something which will be remedied below.

Genette's third category becomes what was originally his second type, which "consists of a purely *thematic* relationship, therefore implying no spatio-temporal continuity between metadiegesis and diegesis: a relationship of contrast (the deserted Ariadne's unhappiness, in the midst of Thetis' joyous wedding) or of analogy (as when Jocabel, in *Moyse sauvé*, hesitates to execute the divine command and Amram tells her the story of Abraham's sacrifice)" (233). Three difficulties exist with this characterization. The first problem, one of clarity, has to do with the presence of the 'purely thematic'. Because the explanatory and predictive functions discussed above could also be thematic, could perhaps be considered impure, it is unclear if Genette used the qualifier 'pure' to indicate that this instance requires that the narratives do not also overlap with the casual events of the timeline. If so, there is a need for categories

to designate mixed functions, such as *causal-thematic* (if the causal is deemed more important, perhaps in a work that privileges plot) and *thematic-causal* (if the thematic is more important, in a work more concerned with theme and meaning). The second and greatest problem is one of incompletion. Analogy and contrast, while often at play, are not the only ways to establish a thematic relation. For example, a story that is used to illustrate a theory (say a psychological condition) has a thematic link without conforming to analogy, as similar to does not mean example of. The last problem, and this may qualify as nitpicking, is that the description 'no spatio-temporal continuity' seems a bit imprecise. Taking one of his examples, Ariadne and Thetis exist within the same fictional world, even though they do not bear out a direct spatio-temporal causality. His second example, assuming we take the biblical Abraham as fictional, would have no spatio-temporal relation to the diegesis. Taken too literally, for example, we might assume, with the above, that contrast involves the same story world while analogy does not.

In *Narrative Discourse*, Genette wrote that the "thematic relationship can, moreover, when it is perceived by the audience, exert an influence on the diegetic situation: Amram's narrative has as its immediate effect (and, moreover, as its aim) to convince Jocabel; it is an *exemplum* with a function of persuading" (233). Originally framed as a strain of thematic relation, in *Narrative Discourse Revisited* the persuasive function becomes a independent category. Undoubtedly one character persuading another is a way the diegetic situation can be influenced. The problem is that there are many others, and it seems odd to promote one of them to the level an independent category. As with contrast and analogy above, this is a problem of an incomplete

category (or grossly overpriviledged individual function). More significantly, this categorization is especially limiting given that Genette's typology does not elsewhere capture other, less rhetorical or argumentative ways a hypodiegetic narrative can influence a diegetic character. Acts of persuasion may lend themselves well to independent, extended stories, but this could be true of other approaches and, in any event, remains insufficient for the establishment of a stand alone category.

Persuasive narratives could, however, form a branch within a higher level category that provides for events which actively influence the story. And it would be possible to further categorize these persuasive narratives. For example, in one case, the rhetorical goals in these works could be directed at a character in the story primarily as a tactical device to influence an extradiegetic reader who may take cues on how to think from the response of the diegetic character. In a second case, the effects of the persuasive story could be limited to diegetically bound recipients, and not rhetorically aimed at extradiegetic readers. Whatever the case, persuasion seems too specific to occupy such a high level placement.

For Genette, category five is distraction. Six is obstruction. With distraction, a character tells a story to distract another character from fulfilling a goal. This is a commonplace occurrence, and certainly most of us have been accused of changing the subject, perhaps by telling a story, as a way of getting off an undesirable topic. Genette affirms the primacy of the telling over the told, while also offering an apt example, when he says that with obstruction the "metadiegetic content (almost) not mattering any more than a Biblical message does during a filibuster at the rostrum of

the United States Senate" (234). Distraction tends to be sneaky, and obstruction blatant, but in both cases the act of telling a story is, in equal measure, of far greater importance than the contents of that story.

Genette's six part scale is not the best way of organizing the functions which can arise between two levels. Rather than six stand alone categories, a better approach would seem to outline a smaller number of options which will contain more specific uses. Three viable categories in this direction are causal-expository, causal-effective, and thematic. Casual-expository would designate instances in which a subordinate level reveals how one event helped bring about others, but does not actively do so in the story at that time. Genette's explanatory would reside here, as would those instances of the predictive which do not cause their predictions. The second category, causal-effective, would be for hypodiegetic narratives which actively influence the story as it is unfolding. This category would absorb the thematic, distractive, and obstructive. Predictive narratives which fulfill themselves, through plot circumstance, supernatural curse, or whatever else, would be similarly placed here. Finally, the thematic function would be reserved for those events which do not relate to the causal unfolding of events along a spatio-temporal continuum. Genette's contrast and analogy would be two examples, though there would no doubt be others, such as contradiction.

There are a number of advantages to this system. One is a tighter interrelation among categories, both within the three part framework and in their connection with other aspects of storytelling. Causal-expository and causal-effective both relate to the diegetic events, though in different ways. Taken together, however, they both contrast

with the thematic which, in its turn, would contrast to other aspects of narration which achieve similar ends. Such other aspects might include narrator commentary or symbolic systems, to give but two examples. Such a revised scheme would also allow for various ways of combining the causal-expository and causal-effective with the thematic, though each of the causal options would remain exclusive, even if some categories, such as the predictive, could fall into either camp. A final advantage to this system is that it can incorporate additional points, as invariably come up in response to individual texts, without seeming overly cumbersome or a simple laundry list of possibilities.

A shift in level may produce qualitative effects in the viewer which are independent of these categories and relate instead to other narrative strategies. For example, changes may increase the overall enjoyment of both the departed level and the overall story. This application is suggested by a recent article in the *Harvard Business Review*, titled 'Commercials Make Us Like TV More'. It reviews how three business professors devised an experiment in which different sample groups viewed the same shows, with and without commercials. Surprisingly, the ones who watched with commercials reported great enjoyment, and were willing to pay 30% more for a DVD compilation of similar shows. The magazine asked Leif Nelson, the lead researcher, what it was about commercials that could account for this difference. He responded:

> Nothing, actually. It's not the commercial itself, it's the interruption. The phenomenon we think is at work here is *adaptation*. The easiest example of adaptation is a massage chair. The longer a massage goes on, the more you get

> used to it. You adapt. But if it stops briefly, then starts again, it retriggers that initial enjoyment: “Oh yeah, this massage feels great.” People report enjoying interrupted massages more even though they predict they’ll like uninterrupted ones more. (36)

It follows that a shift in narrative level could also increase enjoyment if it is of sufficient difference and duration from its host level. The effect is unlikely to hold if the shift in level does not create new impressions, as might be the case if a diegetic narrator takes over a story from an extradiegetic narrator without much else changing, or if it does not go on long enough to sufficiently displace the previous enough to make its return seem refreshing. The interruption effect will not be effective without a return to what was previously enjoyed, or perhaps if the return takes too long. This fact leads to considerations of time. If the appreciated content comes back too quickly, perhaps the effectiveness of the interruption would not be maximized, but if the pause goes on too long then it risks creating an irritation that would nullify any positive gains. While there may not be anything in the commercial itself that accounts for the positive effect, this does not mean that appreciated content would not also raise the pleasure effect. This point can be seen in Nelson’s response to the suggestion that the rise in commercial free, subscription fee based television (like HBO) would seem to contradict his findings.

> Contemporary shows like *The Sopranos* might be interrupting themselves. Remember, it’s not the commercial that increases the enjoyment, it’s the

> interruption. These shows often run six or more parallel plots and constantly shuffle between them. One plot interrupts another. We saw this effect with one of our more elaborate studies, which compared enjoyment of different types of Bollywood musical numbers. The ones that were complicated and unpredictable and seemed to interrupt themselves got better ratings than the ones that had more linear narratives. (37)

It is at this point that Nelson clearly becomes overly enamoured with his own findings, or assumes devil's advocate, as he goes on to suggest that these interrupted narratives may account for HBO's success. The argument makes little sense. If shows are successful based on their ability to interrupt, and if regular TV already has ample interruption, then there would be no incentive for people to switch to an equally interrupted option at a higher cost. Such arguments are not required for anyone who has spent time getting lost in any of a number of first rate HBO shows. In any event, the point remains that a switch away from one narrative to another can increase enjoyment or refresh the senses, and that switches in level are one way to do this.

Application of Involvement

As with level, the different categories of involvement offer different potentialities within the context of individual works, although the task is more difficult in this case. While the descriptive-analytic task of outlining the different ways in which a narrator might be connected by involvement to a story lends itself well to analytic generalization, indicating the uses of these different positions requires much more caution. This is because this second kind of question takes us closer to the realm of individual works, a place where generalizations are likely to be overturned by concrete examples. The best that can be done is to indicate what potentialities become more available within certain positions, cite a historical record that bears some witness to the availabilities indicated, and allow for exceptions. The following quote, from Franz Stanzel, on the difference between homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narrators, is a variation on a position put forth in various ways. It is included here as an example of an approach which, while tempting, is better avoided.

> The contrast between an embodied narrator and a narrator without such bodily determination, that is to say, between a first-person narrator and an authorial third-person narrator, accounts for the most important difference in the motivation of the narrator to narrate. For an embodied narrator, this motivation is existential; it is directly connected with his practical experiences, with the joys

> and sorrows he has experienced, with his moods and needs. For the third-person narrator, on the other hand, there is no existential compulsion to narrate. His motivation is literary-aesthetic rather than existential. (93)

At first blush this passage may seem entirely plausible. This is presumably why Jakob Lothe quotes and endorses this view in his book length study, *Narrative in Fiction and Film*. Of course, the passage may adequately describe a difference that holds for most works within each of the two camps. But theory is not a democratic process; a simple majority is not sufficient for credibility. Many examples could be found which go against this characterization, but claiming all these nonconforming works to be deviant is much less desirable than adjusting any theory which would render them so. The above passage makes the all too easy error of promoting a prescriptive aesthetic under the guise of descriptive theory.

Also, from a more technical perspective the properties in question, existential and literary-aesthetic, do not relate to the narrators' involvement per se. Rather, they address the narrator's degree of visibility. This difference recalls Genette's objection to the use of the third person pronoun, which is that a heterodiegetic narrator can, and often emphatically does, speak in the first person. Conversely, homodiegetic narrators may avoid the use of the first person. Put differently, we can be highly aware of heterodiegetic narrators who constantly interject, or hardly aware of homodiegetic narrators who minimize their presence. In many cases it would be the former who seem existentially driven and the latter who strive for a literary-aesthetic quality. It may be

true that within a certain period of production homodiegetic narrators are more likely to make themselves felt, and the heterodiegic variety less so, but it is by no means a necessary correlation.

A better approach to poetics requires more precise descriptions and less all encompassing pronouncements. The three criteria on which the two involvement differ are time, space, and representation of consciousness. Heterodiegetic narrators, being 'different to', do not face any verisimilitude based restrictions in their spatio-temporal relations to the recounted narrative. They can be wherever they want, whenever they want, without violation. But they must always present from outside the narrative and do not have the option of experiencing things directly. Homodiegetic narrators, being the 'same as' the narrative, must work within significant limitations regarding their schedule and mobility. There is the issue of life expectancy, which would limit tellers, or else force them to seek refuge in genres without such limitations, such as science fiction or fantasy. And even with technological advantage, such as airplanes or surveillance technology, they face restricted mobility, though like the science fiction and fantasy situations, certain choices, such as having God occupy the role of narrator, could overcome this limitation. Homodiegetic narrators can, however, directly present the mind of a character (as narrator their own) and have a more direct contact with the events in the narrative. In short, heterodiegetic narrators have more spatio-temporal range but less access to subjectivity, while homodiegetic narrators have less range but more access to subjectivity. In this sense, what one does well the other does poorly.

From this it is possible to ask how each of these approaches would be best suited to certain kinds of narratives and then, somewhat paradoxically, to refrain from insisting that this is what they must do. It is enough to identify what each mode is best suited to without insisting it do just that. That said, the refusal is untaken out of a resistance to normative trends, for a look at certain genres or periods will tend to reveal associations. It is not surprising that a majority of detective fiction tends to use a homodiegetic narrator. The character's perceptual limitations work well to create suspense and the direct access to an investigator's thinking engage us in the solving process. The limitations of the homodiegetic narrator tend to naturalize the goals of this particular genre. Similarly, tales that deal with the process of growing up, and the subjectively felt difference between then and now, will also typically take the form of first-person retrospective narrative. Relations between how a character used to be and how they currently are can be handled easily within this framework. Meanwhile, other genres can make better use of the range afforded by heterodiegetic narration. Historical epics which seek to explore large scale social forces of change are one example. Here the narrator has great need to be able to cover many locations and timeframes but, perhaps, relatively little need for individual subjectivity. One reason not to normalize such relations, however, is that often new artistic opportunities will arise in working against the grain of what might seem like the natural working mode.

Chapter 2, Mood

Distance

Genette divides distance into two categories, narrative of events and narrative of words. He correctly notes, following Wayne Booth, that while the representation of speech can be either mimetic or diegetic in a reasonably strict sense, the narrative of events can, in the context of literary discourse, only ever be the impression of mimesis. There can never be a literal showing of events because the medium is language. The categories of mimesis and diegesis apply more directly to the ways in which a narrator represents a character's speech, the other component of distance, because the medium of representation, language, is the same as the medium of original expression.

Genette put forward three categories for how this can be done, categories which purport to cover both spoken and inner speech. Narrated speech is the most distant, least mimetic, and occurs when the narrator informs us in their own voice what was said without trying to capture any of the unique ways in which it was originally expressed. Next is transposed speech, which he claims is less distant, or more mimetic, but still "never gives the reader any guarantee – or above all any feeling – of literal fidelity to the words 'really' uttered: the narrator's presence is still too perceptible in the very syntax of the sentence for the speech to impose itself with the documentary autonomy of a quotation" (171). Third is reported speech, which occurs within quotations,

dialogue in other words, and is completely mimetic. With these three terms, Genette offers an incomplete framework. Where, for example, would one place non-reported speech that nonetheless gives the feeling of literal fidelity which, while not using quotation marks, is clearly the voice of a character. For a more exhaustive summary, it is necessary to look elsewhere.

The issue was taken up by contemporary poetics, which recast mimesis as direct discourse and diegesis as indirect discourse. One of the most cited, complete explications of the progressive scale between indirect and direct discourse is Brain McHale's 'Free Indirect Discourse: a survey of recent account'. In addition to its value as an overview, part of the reason for the popularity of this piece likely rests in the fact that it is also an insightful analysis of John Dos Passos' *USA Trilogy*. An effective strategy for writers of various stripes is to bind an abstract model to a particular work. In addition to assuring the ideas are applicable, this approach allows two routes to canonization as the piece may be revisited for the abstract ideas as well as how it connects with other works on a particular subject. In this regard, one of the most impressive things about *Narrative Discourse* is its dual role as groundbreaking theory and perceptive criticism. Rimmon-Kenan quotes extensively from McHale's *Narrative Fiction*, and the examples below are the same that appear in her work.

In the first three categories (namely *diegetic summary*, *summary that is less purely diegetic*, and *indirect content paraphrase*) the narrator reports what a character has said without any of the distinctiveness of the original speaker's voice. The changing factor along this scale is the amount of information which is relayed, something missing

in Genette's formulation. In this they differ from the next four spots on the gradation. *Indirect Discourse* preserves some features of the original expression, or discourse, and contains an indication that the words belong to another. McHale's example is: "When they came out Charley said by heck he thought he wanted to go up to Canada and enlist and go over and see the great war" (111). Next is *Free Indirect Discourse*, which is closer to the original speaker's expression but remains free of a clear marker of this speaker. The example: "Why the hell shouldn't they know, weren't they off'n her and out to see the goddamn town and he'd better come along" (111). *Direct Discourse* includes the characters words as they were spoken and within quotation marks, and most frequently occurs as dialogue. *Free Direct Discourse* is direct quotation without quotation marks. It is often used to suggest a kind of inner speech or preverbal state of awareness. In the following example, the suspension points, which appeared in the original, and the narrator's indication of a light head, help set up this subjective element. The transition occurs after the first sentence.

> Fainy's head suddenly got very light. Bright boy, that's me, ambition and literary taste. . . . Gee, I must finish Looking Backward. . . and jez, I like reading fine, an' I could run a linotype or set up print if anybody'd let me. Fifteen bucks a week . . . pretty softn, ten dollar's raise. (111)

McHale's seven categories are a mix of a continual spectrum and exclusive categories. The degree of character evocation between indirect discourse and free

indirect discourse, for example, is part of a sliding scale, but the textual indication of a 'character said' within the text (which occurs with indirect discourses) is, in principle, an absolute demarcation point between these categories. This does not mean that an individual work could not produce an example in which it is unclear if the indicator is subtle or absent, and if a certain passage is being attributed to a certain speaker, but as a schematic scale McHale's is probably the most complete.

Extreme ambiguity is often the side effect of the heterodiegetic narrator's search for greater access to character subjectivity. Of McHale's points, indirect discourse, free indirect discourse, and free direct discourse are the positions that offer the greatest potential in this direction. They are also the points which can, increasingly in that order, lead to confusion. Even though indirect discourse tells us it is a somewhat mimetic summary of character speech, it can be unclear how much is being summarized. With free indirect discourse, it can be entirely unclear whose voice is being used, particularly if narrator and character have similarities. Trying to speak in two voices at once, the utterance can start to seem like it comes from no one. The narrator's search for plenary discourse can degenerate into confusion. The situation can become most dire in the case of free direct discourse. The problem is summarized by Herman and Vervaeck:

> In free direct discourse, which naturally makes use of first-person narration, the problem becomes particularly challenging. Because the narrator appears in this case to make way entirely for the character, some narratologists claim that the character should be considered the narrator. In other words, a character is

> talking about himself or herself and is therefore a homodiegetic narrator. Others suggest that there is an invisible heterodiegetic (often also extradiegetic) narrator trying to represent a character's consciousness as accurately as possible using free direct discourse. (98)

Like their heterodiegetic counterparts, homodiegetic narrators may also seek to adopt the voices of others so as to overcome modal limitations. For while this access may be particularly beneficial to the heterodiegetic narrator, who does not have any access to diegetic subjectivity, the homodiegetic narrator also has a vested interest in such strategies because they are subjectively limited to their own mind. Regarding others, their position is akin to that of the heterodiegetic narrator. Thus what was said above applies to them as well.

The ideas above are most readily applicable to the cinema when it comes to analyzing the speech of characters and/or voice over narrations. They could also, however, be linked with aspects of film style. Perhaps the most obvious instance of this would be the point of view shot. Following classical continuity editing, this typically unfolds with a shot of the character looking at something, and then a shot of that something. Such a device could be considered the visual equivalent of direct discourse because we see what a character sees. In other cases, a point of view shot will include part of the seeing character, often at the far right or left side of the frame. This situation, because we see with the character, but also with the camera, could be termed an example of free indirect discourse.

Perspective

The other part of Genette's conception of mood was termed perspective, and dealt with what he defined, following other commentators, as point of view. Although Genette offers some new insights into this extensively explored aspect of narrative fiction, his main objective is to gather previous ideas and categorize them into a more unified, rigorous framework. This leads to his three main categories of focalization that go by nonfocalized, internal, and external. The main problem with his formulations, as we will see below, is that they combine two senses of point of view, having to do with degrees of information and character subjectivity, which are not entirely compatible. His headings, in other words, attempt to capture too much. This incompatibility is illustrated below with a modeled story situation that attempts to show how certain common situations elude his taxonomy. The solution to this problem is to separate these two areas, degree of narrator knowledge and character subjectivity, and offer revised terms for each. This task is helped with ideas put forth by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, who write about film, and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, whose work deals with literature. The goal is to rehabilitate some of Genette's ideas which, while flawed in certain regards, represent a powerful attempt at synthesis. This discussion concludes with some thoughts on how these ways of managing aspects of the story world can change over a work's duration.

It is useful to begin with Genette's criticism of previous works that considered issues of point of view. Taking wide aim, he found fault in the works of Georges Blin,

Cleanth Brooks (writing with Robert Penn Warren), Wayne Booth, Norman Friedman, Percy Lubbock, and Franz Stanzel. The discussions of point of view undertaken by these other commentators all failed to make the same fundamental distinction, which Genette resolved before continuing with his own project. The following is probably one of his most reproduced, celebrated quotations:

> However, to my mind most of the theoretical works on this subject (which are mainly classifications) suffer from a regrettable confusion between what I call here *mood* and *voice*, a confusion between the question of *who is the character whose point of view orients the narrative perspective?* and the very different question *who is the narrator?* – or, more simply, the question *who sees?* and the question *who speaks?* (186)

For the purpose of a general poetics, this distinction is important because it parses two separate phenomenon which had been erroneously grouped as one. From a more practical standpoint, the clarification enables the analyst of a particular text or texts to better define the narrator by not confusing them with characters whose perspectives they are only representing or channeling. While this is certainly a useful insight, two problems exist as it is expressed above. The first is the overly narrow focus on 'who sees'. As will be illustrated below, point of view can take forms other than sight. The second difficulty is the implication that the narrator speaking and the perspective

being channeled might not be tied to the same person. This is often the case in first person retrospective narratives in which the narrator, as 'narrating I', distinct from the 'experiencing I', may nevertheless channel information in the way Genette is here describing as a 'regrettable confusion'.

Having imperfectly clarified this point Genette goes on to indicate the possible informational relations that can hold between narrator and characters. His explanation unfolds in a spiral fashion, the first pass describing the relations in the vocabularies of other theorists, the second naming them in his own technical vocabulary.

> The first term corresponds to what English-language criticism calls the narrative with omniscient narrator and Pouillon calls "vision from behind," and which Todorov symbolizes by the formula *Narrator > Character* (where the narrator knows more than the characters knows, or more exactly *says* more than any of the character knows.). In the second term, *Narrator = Character* (the narrator says only what a given character knows); this is the narrative with "point of view" after Lubbock, or with "restricted field" after Blin; Pouillon calls it "vision with." In the third term, *Narrator < Character* (the narrator says less than the character knows); this is the "objective" or "behaviourist" narrative, what Pouillon calls "vision from without." (189)

The odd thing about this passage, actually a major problem as we will see, is that it does not synthesize or elaborate on the characterizations originally laid down by

others. In these moments Genette recalls Dr. Frankenstein in the cemetery, digging up and stitching together various bits and pieces from others so that his own creation may one day walk with their help. Genette goes on to name these three terms and illustrate them with literary examples.

> So we will rechristen the first type (in general represented by the classical narrative) as *nonfocalized* narrative, or narrative with *zero focalization*. The second type will be narrative with *internal focalization*, whether that be (a) *fixed* – canonical example: *The Ambassadors*, where everything passes through Strether; or, even better, *What Maisie Knew*, where we almost never leave the point of view of the little girl, whose "restriction of field" is particularly dramatic in this story of adults, a story whose significance escapes her; (b) *variable* – as in *Madame Bovary*, where the focal character is first Charles, then Emma, then again Charles; or, in a much more rapid and elusive way, as with Stendhal; or (c) *multiple* – as in epistolary novels, where the same event may be evoked several times according to the point of view of several letter-writing characters; we know that Robert Browning's narrative poem *The Ring and the Book* (which relates a criminal case as perceived successively by the murderer, the victims, the defense, the prosecution, etc.) was for several years the canonical example of this type of narrative, before being supplanted for us by the film *Rashomon*. Our third type will be the narrative with *external focalization*, popularized between the two world was by Dashiell Hammett's novels, in which the hero

> performs in front of us without our ever being allowed to know his thoughts or feelings, and also by some of the Hemingway's novella's, like "The Killers" or, even more, "Hills Like White Elephants," which carries circumspection so far as to become a riddle. (190)

These classifications can apply to the text in two ways. On the one hand, they can be used to describe individual passages. They can also be used to describe the work as a whole. Nonfocalized and external focalization seem to imply no change, while two of the subheadings contained under internal focalization address how the degrees of information will change over time. Fixed indicated virtually no change. Variable suggests that multiple characters orient the narrative. Multiple also has different characters focalizing in turn, but with the added condition that they focalize the same object. Combining this elaboration with the previous paragraph on the different kinds of restrictions results in the following summary:

Consolidated Summary of Genette's Narrator Positions

Non-focalized/Zero Focalization

After Todorov: Narrator > Character

After Pouillon: 'vision from behind'

After English Language criticism: Omniscient narrator

Examples: 'classical narrative'

Internal

After Todorov: Narrator = Character

After Blin: Restricted field

After Lubbock: point of view

After Pouillon: 'vision with'

Examples:

a) Fixed: *The Ambassadors*, *What Maisie Knew*

b) Variable: *Madame Bovary*, Stendhal

c) Multiple: *The Ring and the Book*, *Rashomon*

External

After Todorov: Narrator < Character

After Pouillon: 'vision from without

Examples: Dashiell Hammett, *The Killers*, *Hills Like White Elephants*

The problem with Genette's taxonomy is that the formulations put forward by Pouillon and Todorov, while potentially overlapping, refer to different aspects of narrative fiction that in many cases cannot exist at the same time. The term 'point of view' refers to the different ways a character can see the world, literally but also in terms of subjective thoughts and/or feelings. This aspect is well represented by the 'from without', 'vision with', and 'vision from behind' terms imported from Pouillon. The more informational formulations of N>C, N=C, and N<C, pulled from Todorov, may connect to aspects of character experience, but may also refer to the regulation of narrative information which does not. For example, a narrator may have and share knowledge of a pending storm or incoming comet, things that are not human in nature.

An imaginary game scenario helps crystalize the differences between these two categories of information, between degrees of information about the story and degree of access to a character's subjective outlook. And it does so without assuming that other aspects will play along. The purpose here is only to more rigorously illustrate the problem with Genette's formulation. The example could be expanded to include an actual game, perhaps with dramatic effects, but that might only obscure the essential point. Similarly, various instances could be culled from literary or cinematic works, but a useful device, very common in the sciences, is to build small scale models which test and elaborate upon a given theory.

Imagine two characters are playing a card game in which they have to add to their own hand by taking a card from a facedown deck (Rummy for example).

This situation could be represented in four ways. In the first possibility we are not provided any details on what cards the character sees or what the concealed card is. In the second scenario the narrator could reveal what one character sees in their own hand but not reveal the hidden card. In the third case the narrator could see the hidden, face down card but not know the player's holding. In the fourth possibility, the narrator could know both what the character sees and the face down card. Again, because this is a model, the cards seen by the players could represent what they see, or as thoughts or feelings originating in their own heads. Similarly, the hidden card could be an external narrative event, such as the storm or comet mentioned above. The four possibilities regarding what the narrator knows about the characters' and hidden card are show in table form.

Situation	Character's card	Hidden Card
1.	Unknown	Unknown
2.	Revealed	Unknown
3.	Unknown	Revealed
4.	Revealed	Revealed

Each of these ways of representing information are legitimate possibilities which correspond to the kinds of situations we encounter in narrative fiction. The problem is that only the first two situations are well captured by Genette's

taxonomy. The first example works as zero focalization because we have access neither to the character's subjectivity or to privileged aspects of the world. The second example is a good instance of internal focalization because we see with the character and have to live with the same restrictions as they do.

The third example is not adequately described by any of the above classifications. It cannot be nonfocalized or internal because we do not know the character's card, while our knowledge of the hidden card precludes use of external focalization. Similarly, the fourth case cannot really be called non-focalized. While the narrator knows more than the character (N>C), because of the hidden card, the narrative is also being filtered through that character's perception ('vision with'), in that we see that character's cards with them. Once again, this game situation attempts to show the problem with Genette's formulation though modeling and analogy. The hidden card could be some informational aspect of the world, while the character's seen cards could correspond to the character based subjectivity in the story world. While Genette's terms could refer to each of these sides without contradiction, the problem is that he used his categories to cover to both of these areas at once.

David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, in *Film Art, An Introduction* (1979), offer helpful terms that work towards resolving this confusion. Their framework rests on the distinction between story and plot, which is a recast of fabula and syuzhet, terms utterly compatible with Genette (who used narrative and story). In any case, the terms are range, which corresponds to the part derived from Todorov, and depth, which links up with the vision metaphor, taken from Pouillon.

They write that the "plot's range of story information creates a hierarchy of knowledge, and this may vary somewhat depending on the film. At any given moment, we can ask if the viewer knows more than, less than, or as much as the characters do" (84). Because *Film Art* does not posit that film has an extradiegetic narrator, but rather describes narration as a process, their use of viewer is a necessity. The problems with this position were argued for in the section on voice. Also, rather than talking about a narrator, they refer to a viewer. While this is different from Genette, who obviously does speak of a narrator, their general approach is still compatible with his framework.

Rather than working with mathematical symbols (<, >, =) along a horizontal line, they place the viewer positions along a vertical spectrum of restricted to unrestricted. Characters who know more than the viewer appear above, characters who know less than the viewer appear below. In *North by Northwest*, for example, the viewer knows more than Thornhill but less than the agency. In *Birth of a Nation*, the viewer knows more than all the characters. *The Big Sleep* binds the reader to the protagonist. The following chart, from *Film Art*, shows three examples from Hollywood cinema.

The Birth of a Nation	*The Big Sleep*	*North by Northwest*
(unrestricted narration)	(restricted)	(mixed and fluctuating)
viewer	viewer-Marlowe	the Agency
all characters		viewer
		Thornhill

These terms recall Genette in a number of fairly direct ways. Their category of unrestricted narrative is describing something very similar to zero or non-focalized passages. A restricted narrative is effectively the same as internal focalization. That said, a major advantage that the formulation put forth in *Film Art* has over that in *Narrative Discourse* is that is makes immediately clear that the informational relation will depend on the character to which we are comparing the narrator. In the case of *North by Northwest*, the category of mixed can be expanded by saying that it is unrestricted in relation to Thornhill but restricted in relation to the agency.

To address what Genette termed point of view, *Film Art* uses depth to indicate "how deeply the plot plunges into a character's subjective state" (85). *Film Art* outlines three types of depth. Objective depth is no depth, technically speaking not really a type at all, and limits viewer perception to the outside of the character, something which would overlap with external focalization in Genette. Sound perspective and perceptual subjectivity indicate hearing and seeing with a character. Finally, we might "hear an internal voice reporting the character's thoughts, or we might see the character's inner images, representing memory, fantasy, dreams, or hallucinations" (85). These would constitute examples of mental subjectivity.

An overlapping but terminologically refined typology can be found in *Narrative Fiction*, where, working from categories originally laid out by Boris Uspensky in *A Poetics of Composition*, Rimmon-Kenan proposes three facets of focalization. The perceptual facet includes character perceptions related to time and space, and would include seeing and hearing. The psychological facet includes the cognitive and emotive

components, which would cover mental subjectivity. The primary advantage to this framework is that it both groups the visual and aural under one umbrella heading while also further breaking down subjectivity into two usefully distinct categories.

When dealing with Genette's original three part typology of focalizations which variously categorizes texts as zero, internal, or external, the primary decision is weather the terms should refer to aspects of range or depth, since, as has been demonstrated, their differences are sufficient enough to preclude categorizing the simultaneous presence of both aspects with one term, even if this might work in some situations. The conceptualization here uses external to refer to Rimmon-Kenan's perceptual, and internal to denote the psychological. Focalization, as an umbrella term, references the evocation of character subjectivity.

The focalized objects of the perceptual will tend towards greater material presence than those of the psychological, which as thoughts and feelings will be more abstract. Bal introduced the terms perceptible and non-perceptible for these characteristics of the focalized, terms that, in conjunction with Kennan's, map well onto the subject/object nature of the situation. Taking these terms together, we can say that the perceptual facets will have perceptual focalized, while the psychological facets will have non-perceptible focalized objects. That said, the difference between perceptible and non-perceptible (expressed as 'p' or 'np') should not be overly insisted upon. A character's way of looking at something could be heavily directed by non-perceptible features, if, for example, aspects of their thinking effect how they see. Conversely,

thoughts and feelings could be strongly based on sharply etched mental images which are effectively perceptual to the character.

Combining these aspect of range and depth yields the following reconceptualization. Depth has been replaced with focalization. Unlike depth, focalization has the advantage of the derivative terms focalizer and focalized, and has therefore been retained[1]. For range, the descriptive, if somewhat clinical, terms are greater, equal, and less. While these two areas will often overlap with each other within the context of a given story, and we will have an example of this below, they have been split into separate categories because of their distinct natures.

<u>Range</u>

Greater; Viewer > Character

Equal; Viewer = Character

Less; Viewer < Character

<u>Focalization</u>

Internal – (Non-perceptible; Cognitive – Emotional)

External – (Perceptible; Relating to the Five Senses)

While range and focalization are two distinct aspects of narrative, they will often work together in the overall regulation of narrative information. An example of how

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[1] Genette did not like this revision, which was introduced my Mieke Bal. See Narrative Discourse Revisted, pg 42.

they can work together, and how such cooperation can produce a humorous effect, is found in the opening of Hitchcock's *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943). The film opens with two detectives following uncle Charlie, a serial killer on the run. The three men duck and weave though vacant streets, until we see the two officers, from a high angle shot, give up and reluctantly accept that they have lost their target. At this point we have no idea where Charlie is, and so, in terms of range, are equal to the officers. So far there has been no character focalization. The camera, however, then pans slightly to the left, revealing uncle Charlie looking down on the officers from his raised perch. This is an example of external focalization, because we are experiencing what Charlie does, and that is the perceptible sense of sight. It also changes the range dynamics, as we are now equal to Charlie and know more than the officers. The joke here seems to be that the officers are wondering where Charlie is and thinking he must be far away, when he was in fact very close. It is also a play on the audience who, like the officers from a moment ago, might have suspected Charlie to be long gone when he was in fact very close to them. Indeed, he could not have been closer. Just as mise-en-scene and camera work conspire in this moment, aspects of story range and character focalization function in concert in the creation of cinematic effects.

As was mentioned earlier, Genette's categories can refer to individual passages or to an entire work. That said, Genette allows a degree of looseness when applying these terms to a narrative as a whole. Responding to critics who debated his ideas, Genette offered the following in *Narrative Discourse Revisited*:

> In her debate with Bronzwaer, Mieke Bal denies I admit the existence of "nonfocalized passages" and claims I specify that such a category is applicable only to narrative taken as a whole. That obviously means that the analysis of a "non-focalized" narrative must always be reducible to a mosaic of variously focalized segments and, therefore, that "zero focalization" = variable focalization. (…) Instead, therefore, the right formula would be: zero focalization=variable, and sometimes zero, focalization. Here as elsewhere, the choice is purely operational. This looseness will undoubtedly shock some people, but I see no reason for requiring narratology to become a catechism with a yes-or-no answer to check off for each question, when often the proper answer would be that it depends on the day, the context, and the way the wind is blowing. (74)

It is difficult to know how to take this looseness. If the goal is to construct a highly structured theory of narrative and focalizations, it could seems a bit imprecise, but at the same time also suggests a wise aversion to too tight categories and overly rigid frameworks. It is unlikely to be a problem, however, when we are engaged in the analysis of a particular work. *Narrative Discourse* is, after all, an impressive analysis of an individual work, and no one could credibly say that the focalizations in Proust's masterpiece are not adequately captured therein. Also, a more drawn out and nuanced list of how works can be categorized in their entirety would very likely become

unnecessarily cumbersome, the narratological equivalent of the human genome project. If such a categorization of entire works is to be fruitful, it would seem most at home in something like a historical poetics, where we can identify trends and proclivities within genre or delimited timeframes. In short, Genette seems correct and circumspect to allow a degree of looseness when dealing with all narrative.

Genette cited one term and coined another to describe changes in the text, which he calls alterations.

> The two conceivable types of alteration consist either of giving less information than is necessary in principle, or of giving more than is authorized in principle in the code of focalization governing the whole. The first type bears a name in rhetoric, and we have already met it apropos of completing anachronies: we are dealing with lateral omission or *paralipsis*. The second does not yet bear a name; we will christen it *paralepsis*, since here we are no longer dealing with leaving aside (-lipsis, from *leipo*) in formation that should be taken up (and given), but on the contrary with taking up (-lepsis, from *lambano*) and giving information that should be left aside. (195)

While there were problems with the way Genette collapsed story information and character point of view into one category, paralipsis and paralepsis can apply to focalization and range. Regarding paralipsis, this could be a shift from fixed to zero within focalization, or a move from the viewer knowing more than a character to the

viewer knowing less than a character, within range. Or there could be a paralipsis within one category or a paralepsis within another. Breaking up Genette's original use of focalization terms expands the utility of his other contributions, which remain considerable.

Chapter 3, Hitchcock, An Analysis of *Frenzy*

One of the most easily grasped functions of suspense is to create dramatic tension. There is an event that may or may not occur. Usually we have hope for one outcome, aversion for the other. Being suspended between the possibilities produces a kind of anxiety that is resolved though disappointment or relief which, either positive or negative, will return the viewer or protagonist to a state of equilibrium, or, in the case of the fictional character, existential termination. Because of the highly structured nature of suspense and the limited outcomes it affords, the creation of this effect is not difficult and is often based around very simple, psychologically flat situations. In the hands of competent storytellers, however, the straightforward, easy nature of suspense will be connected to other thematic concerns in a way that both amplifies those concerns and elevates the effects and affects of suspense.

This is what Hitchcock does in *Frenzy* by mapping two types of suspense to the voyeuristic and sadistic pleasures of a psychopathic killer who obtains pleasure by withholding and revealing the damage he plans on delivering to his victim. What he does to his victims within the film parallels, in a patterned way, certain structures of suspense experienced by the viewer outside it. The killer in this film, Rusk, rapes and murders two of the main characters, and in both cases plays a game of information management with himself and his victim. Regarding the withholding of information, Rusk, in different ways, first takes a kind of voyeuristic pleasure in

knowing that the victim will soon die, mainly because the target in his presence does not yet know this, and then, moving into something closer to sadism, he takes a follow up pleasure in the revelation of his intentions to his victim and the audience.

Both of these horrific forms of pleasure, in terms of information management, correlate in a repeated way with two forms of suspense defined by Susan Smith, in *Hitchcock; Suspense, Humour, and Tone*. The first of these, which connects to voyeurism, is called vicarious suspense, and is defined in the following terms:

> Suspense, according to Hitchcock's definition of the term, requires the audience to experience anxieties and uncertainties on behalf of a character - i.e. vicariously – following receipt of crucial narrative information of which that character is unaware. Yet while this type of suspense can generate intense, extreme emotions for the character threatened, the epistemic privileging that is also entails precludes 'the sharing of consciousness' that is necessary for the attainment of a fuller form of identification. In vicarious cases, therefore, the intellectual and emotional strands inherent in all suspense become separated, resulting in an ambivalent viewing position consisting of both distance from, and involvement with, the character(s) concerned. (19)

The result this form of suspense has on the viewer connects to Rusk's inability, as a psychopath, to feel anything for his victims despite being, in a tragic

sense, deeply involved with them. For both Rusk and viewer, there is a sense of removal, an inability to connect, though in his case it has to do with a psychological condition and is not, as it is for the viewer, a side effect of narrative information management. Nevertheless, the viewer is put into a frame of mind that, very generally, echoes Rusk's. Paralleling his sadistic urge, which requires that he inform his victims of their pending demise before it occurs, so that he can enjoy their horrified recognition, is the second type of suspense defined by Smith. This is shared suspense, and it arises when both the viewer and the character in the fictional world are aware of the possibility of harm or escape. The main difference between Rusk's sadism and shared suspense has to do with who the information is being shared with, which is a diegetic character in the latter and the viewer in the former. In both of *Frenzy's* attack scenes, though in slightly different ways, the stages Rusk puts his victims though corresponds to a shift, regarding narrative strategy, from vicarious to shared suspense, or, put differently, from a state of not knowing to a state of knowing. In the second of these attacks the revelation happens offscreen and is not directly witnessed by the viewer, although by that point in the film we know enough about his approach to imagine how events will unfold. While both attacks share this aspect, they also mobilize, as we will see below, the two different aspect of mood, which are range and focalization.

Rusk stages horrific suspense scenarios for his victims which are also perceived by the viewers, but the relations between the viewer's degree of knowledge and that of the character undergo shifting, complex relations. Having broadly sketched out the general relations between the structures of suspense and

how it relates to Rusk's staging of death, it is now possible to look at how precisely this unfolds within the two murders in *Frenzy*. This complexity is something missed or brushed over in Smith's discussion. She writes:

> Shared suspense can take place on a highly sustained basis (as in *Rebecca* and *Suspicion*), intermittently (as in *Rear Window*, where it culminates in our waiting with Jeffries for Thorwald to arrive at his apartment) or can be concentrated into a relatively short period of time (often serving to bring us into an intense but only temporary involvement with a character, as during the rape and murder of Brenda Blanley in *Frenzy*). (20)

While it is true that the rape and murder of Brenda contains moments of shared suspense, to imply that the scene is limited to this mode is to miss the complexity and horror of the scene. Rather, it contains two forms of suspense, and moves though three epistemic shifts, the first being a lack of suspense.

While each of these beats within the scene are discussed in detail, an overview of the situation can first be represented by summarizing the shifts in knowledge that occur between the characters and viewer. In the table below, R and M, displayed in brackets, represent rape and murder, and are placed before the characters' knowledge of these events. The representation of range, or what each character knows vis-à-vis each other and the viewer is displayed following the method laid out in *Film Art*. Characters above the viewer know more, characters below less. Rusk's pleasure is described as voyeuristic or sadistic, though I hope to

avoid all of the psychological implications these can imply. Rather, the definition can be kept fairly surface level, with voyeurism meaning a pleasure in observing someone who does not know they are being observed, and sadism a pleasure in harming another. Finally, viewer suspense displays the type of suspense, as defined by Smith, which is at work in the scene. As can be readily observed, Rusk's voyeurism, once the scene is in play, links with vicarious suspense, while his sadism correlates with shared suspense.

Relations of Character Pleasure and Viewer Suspense and in *Frenzy*

Beat/Aspect	Range	Rusk's Pleasure	Viewer Suspense
1) R/M	Rusk Viewer = Brenda	Voyeurism	None
2a) R	Viewer = Rusk / Brenda	Sadism	Shared
2b) M	Viewer = Rusk Brenda	Voyeurism	Vicarious
3) M	Viewer = Rusk / Brenda	Sadism	Shared

Beat 1, R/M; The scene opens with Brenda applying makeup in her matrimonial agency, an action interrupted with Rusk's entry. Our suspicion is immediately raised when she reluctantly acknowledges him by saying "Oh Mr. Robinson, it's you again". While the first letter matches the 'R' on his tie pin, a previous scene had two people refer to him as Mr. Rusk, one of his employees at the fruit stand, and a constable, who uses his name twice, and asks him, as a man with contacts, to put the word out for women or boyfriends who might have information about men with violent behavior. In response to her greeting, he looks up and says "I'm afraid so", something which subtlety suggests that he is aware of the menacing nature of his visit, and is making a joke to himself which also heightens his voyeuristic pleasure in regarding a victim who does not yet know the brutal purpose of his visit. The scene continues with him opening and closing file cabinets, suggesting a dangerous comfort with another person's property that implies rape, and the revelation that he had waited for Brenda's secretary to depart before he entered. The scene moves closer to it's conclusion when Brenda provides exposition, saying to Robinson/Rusk that "certain peculiarities appeal to you and you need women to submit to them", an observation that correlates to an analysis of the sexual nature of the necktie murder's MO provided earlier, by two men in a pub. While not yet fully aware of the pending grave danger, both the viewer and Brenda are led to a state of general discomfort.

Beat 2, R/M). Rusk reveals that he is not visiting to have her reopen his file for others, but rather to be with Brenda. Her comportment immediately changes

from hostility to fear. Rusk shares an expression from the fruit business, don't squeeze the goods until they are yours, which expresses his approach to women, and that he by now considers her to be his woman. She reaches for the phone. He takes the receiver, telling her not to call the police. From this point a struggle ensues and it becomes clear to Brenda and viewer alike that she is going to be sexually assaulted. The viewer is now in a position of shared suspense with her regarding the rape. However, at this point she is not aware of the possibility of murder, so the viewer simultaneously feels vicarious suspense with regards to this second crime. The viewer, like Rusk, is aware of this possibility. Our greater awareness comes from three main sources. First, we can strongly hypothesize that the necktie murderer will be a major character in the film, and that this is therefore very likely that person. That this is going to be that character is also reinforced by the attention that is drawn to his tie. From Brenda's perspective, the likelihood that one attacker will also be London's most notorious could seem like a remote possibility. Our third indication of the pending murder is our knowledge that we are watching a Hitchcock film, where women are often, though not always, sadistically victimized.

Beat 3, M). The transition to the third stage occurs when Rusk is finished and begins to slowly remove his tie. Brenda screams, and a full knowledge of the situation is now shared by her, Rusk, and the viewer. For the viewer, vicarious suspense regarding the murder, at the moment of this scream, transitions into shared suspense.

These changing states allow us to more vividly experience the scene from the perspective of both characters. During the first beat, we share Brenda's

position, as we do not know what is going to happen. When it becomes clear she is going to be raped, we experience shock and horror with her. For the remainder of the scene, however, we occupy Rusk's position. For the reasons mentioned above, we may, unlike Brenda, strongly suspect that after the sexual assault she will be murdered. Having this knowledge puts us in something closer to Rusk's position. The main difference here, of course, is that while we occupy the same privileged position, from an epistemic standpoint, our response to this knowledge is not pleasure but horror. Our response is an inversion to Rusk's, but nevertheless shares the quality of being a powerfully rendered emotional state. The scene's impact comes from the different ranges of information, or focalizations, to use Genette's original term, but cannot be adequately described by any one of his categories because the overall situation must be categorized differently depending on whose point of view we adopt. The displayed chart, taken from *Film Art*, solves this problem.

Rusk's game of reveling in a character's lack of ignorance regarding their pending rape and murder is also played out in the demise of Babs, the film's second victim. By this point in the film, we obviously know Rusk is the killer, and that Richard, Bab's lover and Hitchcock's 'wrong man,' continues to be falsely suspected by the police as the necktie murderer, something of which Rusk is also aware. Seeing Brenda, who is temporarily on the run from the cops, he offers her safe haven in his apartment. As they walk towards his place, his comments reveal a delight in his own privileged knowledge. First, he encourages Brenda to think about how she is young and still has time to see the world and enjoy all the great experiences that might still

be in store. While she listen's to Rusk's evocations of a better life with a smile, it is obvious to him that the possibility of any future experiences will soon come to a horrible, violent end. At one point he says that "I'd travel too if I were not so tied down here", a comment which constitutes a clear joke to himself about his method of killing and motivation for staying in a city that provides ample cover. Once again, his sadistic pleasure derives from a game he is playing with the range of information available to him vis-à-vis his victim.

The forms of suspense during the walk of Babs and Rusk is conditioned by previous scenes. Most explicitly, our knowledge that he is the necktie murderer results in a vicarious suspense for Babs, just as the extremely graphic representation of Brenda's murder crates a high degree of tension. Almost as though to relieve the viewer of this possibility, Hitchcock has the murder and rape occur entirely offscreen. As Rusk and Babs reach his door, the camera lingers outside and we hear Rusk say to Babs, as he did to Brenda, that she is his "kind of woman". The camera then backtracks down the stairs which they climbed, and out onto the street which led up to Rusk's apartment.

While we know that Babs will die, Smith makes a comment on this scene that misses an important aspect contained within the decision to pull the camera out of Rusk's apartment. Regarding this scene, she writes the following:

> An even more extreme instance of direct suspense emerging out of vicarious suspense occurs during the two scenes dealing with Rusk's murder of Babs in *Frenzy*. What is most striking here is the way that we are prised away from

> the character whom we are meant to fear for so intensely: the epistemic distance created by the privileged knowledge that Rusk is the neck-tie murder is even translated into spatial terms as the camera retreats from the site of the murder, down the stairs and out across the other side of the street. In requiring its audience to project an imagined scenario of what is going on inside, the film renders the character herself somewhat redundant (having effaced her completely from the scene both visually and aurally). Her traumatic experience thus becomes rather disconcertingly divorced from our own suspense which instead functions as an end in itself. (23)

This passage seems to miss the significance attached to the way the camera leaves Rusk's apartment which, rather than effacing Babs, focalizes her desire to avert death in one of the only two ways possible, both of which were also exhibited by Brenda during her murder. The first of these would be to remove herself from Rusk's apartment, something Brenda, in a different location, attempted to do by accepting Rusk's invitation to lunch and indicating that he could have his way, but that it would be better if they first went to her place. This avenue of escape, presumably on Bab's mind during her assault and murder, would be to escape from Rusk's apartment and the only way to do this would be to exit the way she was lured in, via the stairs. That the camera does what she likely desires inscribers her subjectivity into the scene. In the terms proposed earlier, this would be an example of external focalization (perceptible), because we see what she would want to see, but also internal (non-perceptible), because it is not what she actually sees, but

rather a projection of a kind of hope or fantasy. In this way, Hitchcock complicates an easy demarcation of focalization types. Against this desire for escape, her experience of death is also evoked by an auditory track which goes silent, thereby evoking the slipping away of life.

The second way in which Babs would presumably attempt to save herself would be to scream and have people from the street come into Rusk's apartment. This defense was attempted by Brenda when she told Rusk that her secretary would be returning at any moment, and also by her brief efforts to scream during the murder. When the camera exits the building, the sound of a bustling street comes sharply into focus and it slowly pulls back to display Rusk's second floor apartment, with it's blood red roses and drawn curtains. During this held shot, it is hard not to be aware of how close help may physically be, even if there is no hope of accessing that help. An awareness of close but unavailable assistance is reinforced by the composition of the people on the street. With the exception of one older woman, dressed in all black as though going to or from a funeral, all the people are strong looking fruit vendors who would have no trouble dispatching Rusk.

After the offscreen murder of Babs, and an light interlude scene in which the lead detective is forced to eat some of his wife's horrifying, presumably designed to punish French cuisine, Rusk dumps Bab's body in a potato truck outside his apartment, from where it will be transported out of the city. After placing the body, and returning to his lair, he realizes, after attempting to pick his teeth, that his tie pin is missing. While viewers may have been grateful that this second murder was not explicitly drawn out in the manner of the first, Hitchcock nevertheless replays

fragments of Bab's murder from Rusk's subjective point of view. Some of these scenes are shown from her visual perspective, so that we see her hand reach out and remove the pendant. In this moment, though a subjective, projected flashback, she again is presented as alive when she is actually dead. Overtly motivated by Rusk's practical need to see things from Bab's perspective, his act of looking at this event from her optical viewpoint also evokes part of the pleasure presumably derived from his abominable actions, in this his pleasure relates to the other person's horror. Again we have a kind of displaced focalization. Incidentally, the scene is not an example of paralepsis because the narrative is not actually moving back. Rather, a previous moment is being replayed in a character's head. He returns to the truck, which then drives off with both of them in the back.

As the truck bounces along, Rusk has great difficulty retrieving the incriminating tie pin. Regarding this scene, Smith wrote that "shared suspense can also force the viewer into close involvement with a character whose earlier actions provoked revulsion and outrage (as during the potato truck scene in *Frenzy*)" (21), and that this "uneasy sense of being entrapped in a character's pathological state of mind is often reflected externally by the use of claustrophobic, confined settings (as in the *Frenzy* example)" (22). While it is certainly possible that otherwise well adjusted viewers would identify with Rusk because of this aspect of shared suspense – will he or won't he retrieve the incriminating pin – Smith's interpretation does not factor the way Babs continues to exist as though alive from beyond the dead, something we similarly witnessed in the way the camera pulled out of Rusk's apartment, and which continues in this scene and is discussed below.

Because of this presentation of Babs, the viewer allegiances in the scene are more complicated than would be the case if were simply aligning ourselves with a character for whom we find revulsion. Rather, we are aligning ourselves against our better judgment.

The choreography of the potato truck scene further develops the impression that Babs is, in some sense, still alive. This happens over four distinct moments, two of which stem from behaviors of her body, and two from context. After the truck leaves, she kicks Rusk in the face twice. It is as though she were alive and, literally, kicking. While it is the moving truck on a country road that results in these movements, they still resemble something close to what she would presumably be doing if alive. This impression of being alive is further aided, in the second instance, by Rusk's tendency to talk to her, even to ask her a direct question, as he says "You bitch, where is that pin?". As with this direct address, her impression of being alive is reinforced, for a third time, when the potatoes spill out the back of the truck and the driver must pull over to refasten his truck's back door. While they have spilled out because of Rusk's fumbling, the impression is a mix of the two modes of escape discussed above, that she is attempting to remove herself, like the potatoes with which her body is closely aligned (our first glimpse is off her toes among the potatoes), or that she is attempting to create a signal which will result in others coming to her postmortem rescue. The latter almost occurs, as the driver pulls over to stem the spillage, but does not notice the new cargo. The desire to obtain outside help is something that the film had already suggested by the above discussed camera movement.

The fourth way this scene creates the impression that Babs is alive resides in her refusal to give up the pin. Rusk discovers that it is in her hand, but also that this is not a place from which it can easily be removed. Indeed, he has to snap three of her fingers before he is finally able to loosen her hand and retrieve the prize. While Babs' death grip is the result of rigor mortis, her determination to keep the pin is again something she would presumably attempt if she were alive. Like the truck on the country road, the fact of her death does not change behavior which would unfold in life. The way in which the pin is revealed, working in an opposite direction, helps bind our allegiance to Rusk. He looks somewhat hopelessly at Babs body, but the shiny pin is clearly visible to the viewer. There is an almost involuntary urge to tell Rusk about the location of this pin, a urge which seems to exist virtually independent of our feelings about him. This vicarious suspense about the location of the pin moves into shared suspense once Rusk does notice it, a few seconds after the viewer has been given a chance to. While it is possible to simultaneously feel suspense for, or look at things from the perspective of two characters who have directly opposing goals, as the revelation of the pin might, the continued life given to Babs in this scene works to undercut any association or identification we might have with Rusk.

In addition to the physical movements of a dead body which align with those the same body would be making if alive, aspects of the narrative also contribute to the impression that Babs lives on. More specifically, it not actually she who is alive, that much is very clear, but rather the possible fulfillment of her objective continues to exist after she herself has expired. Earlier in the film, she expressed strong

affection for Richard and a desire to see his good name cleared. Her decision to take the pin while she was being murdered had everything to do with that aim and nothing to do with her own survival. People's impressions of and affections for others outlive those people's physical presence, and it is common to honor the memory of someone by continuing traditions they valued in life. Her physical movements in the truck, and again the camera movement out of Rusk's apartment, derive their power from this basic fact of human attachment.

The nature of both of the murders covered in this paper bear traces to strategies Hitchcock employs in other works, and can, moreover, be considered technical advances of them. Regarding Brenda, a character's transition from a state of not knowing to knowing about their own pending death can easily be observed elsewhere. A famous example of this occurs in a scene in *Notorious* (1946) when Alicia is offered a glass that, like many before it, contains poison. When a visiting doctor inadvertently attempts to drink from her cup, and her husband and mother in law panic and make sure he drinks from his own, she realizes that they are attempting to slowly kill her…while also being too weak to escape. For the viewer, this produces a shift from vicarious to shared suspense. The situation in *Frenzy* is broadly similar to this, but is considerably more sophisticated because it sets up a situation in which the viewer makes this sort of shift regarding what is happening before the character does. In other words, the shift Alicia undergoes within *Notorious* parallels that which the viewer experiences in *Frenzy*. The result is a deeper identification with the victim.

The depiction of a character operating as though from beyond the dead, as was the case with Babs, is similarly easy to spot in the Hitchcock canon. In *Rebecca* (1940), such a notion, a staple of gothic works generally, is a guiding principle of the entire film, and obtains specific embodiment at different points. Perhaps most memorably when Rebecca is tricked into wears a gown that, she learns the hard way, was also worn by the late Mrs. de Winters. In other instances, Hitchcock employs the device in a more localized way, as when, in *Suspicion* (1941), Johnnie raises a glass to the portrait of his wife's late father, and toasts to him for winning from beyond the grave by denying is daughter an inherence he was looking forward to spending. The depiction of someone operating from beyond the dead, however, is more fully brought to life with Babs than in any other work, both in terms of pervasiveness and importance to plot and within individual, vividly rendered scenes. While it is easy to admire Hitchcock's development and technical virtuosity in *Frenzy*, the horrific contents of his last film produces a resistance to allowing oneself to do this. Presumably this is a discomfort the late direct would be savoring from beyond the grave.

The two *Frenzy* murders discussed in this chapter illustrate the importance of the distinction made earlier regarding the two dimensions of which Genette included under the single heading of focalization, which were the amount of information revealed (termed range in this thesis) and the representation of character subjectivity (termed focalization). As is hopefully clear after the above analysis of these moments, each of these scenes operate along different lines and derive their power from each of these potentially overlapping, but fundamentally

distinct areas. In the case of Brenda, the scene's impact comes from a carefully orchestrated arrangement of differing degrees of narrative information. With Babs, much of the power comes from the manipulation of subjective focalization.

Trying to describe what happened in both of these instances with one set of terms would have been more difficult than was possible with the two, parsed terms. These scenes were also selected to show how, in practice, the manipulation of such elements can connect to other areas, such as suspense or the mind of a killer or dead person, to dramatically come to the fore. Narratology, pursued in the abstract, can seem dry. Looking at how aspects of storytelling function in an actual story reveals how they are, in fact, anything but.

Conclusion

The goal of this thesis has been twofold. On the one hand, the task was to explore the ideas of Gerard Genette to help promote a useful set of terms that can and have be applied in the analysis of narrative texts. As we saw, a number of his ideas could be productively adapted with the help of other theorists. The second, related task was to illustrate their descriptive power by analyzing an individual text. The hope is that both of these tasks have been executed with clarity, and that the reader will leave this paper with a good sense of what they are and how they can be employed. Having, again hopefully, accomplished this task, this paper concludes with a brief statement about the primary advantages of this approach.

These concluding remarks relate to something said by David Bordwell, in *Making Meaning* (1991), a work which is at once a robust analysis and detailed history of interpretive practice. While slightly dated now, given that it was a polemic clarion call for a reorientation of the discipline of film studies, a number of the observations put forth still seem to apply to the discipline's current state while also laying out a more timeless notion of what interpretation should be. Bordwell takes issue with forms of criticism that indulge what might be described as flights of fancy which, in some cases, are only tangentially related to their putative, fundamentally neglected object of study. He states a perceived problem with critical practice in the book's preface:

> For now, I simply suggest that film interpretations do not conform to the "testing" model. Unlike a scientific experiment, no theory can fail to confirm the theory, at least in the hands of the practiced critic. Criticism uses ordinary (that is, nonformalized) language, encourages metaphorical punning redescription, emphasizes rhetorical appeals, and refuses to set definite bounds on relevant data – all in the name of novelty and imaginative insight. These protocols give the critic enough leeway to claim any master theory as proven by the case at hand. (4)

To be clear, Bordwell is not saying that every interpretation needs to be verifiable in the way described above. Like a defensive politician talking about cherished entitlement programs, he promises, in the book's last chapter, that the reforms he is calling for "would not push the ascription of implicit or symptomatic meanings out of its central place in practical criticism". (263).

One main advantage of narratology is that it will take individual works of criticism closer to the empirical basis and texture of the individual works. One aspect of this approach is well captured by Jonathan Culler who, in his forward to *Narrative Discourse*, states that in this work students will find "terms to describe what they have perceived in novels but also be alerted to the existence of fictional devices which they had previously failed to notice and whose implications they had never been able to consider." (7). This aspect of narrative analysis, and something implicit in Bordwell's proposed approach, is also captured in Susan Sontag's memorable observation about

interpretation being the revenge of the intellect on art. It is, in other words, an approach that seeks to make more clear those properties which are immanent to the artwork, rather than the critics' creative imagination.

That said, not all interpretations will or should fall into the category of a provable observation, certainly many of Bordwell's don't. It is, rather, like certain ideals, something we strive towards but know will always remain partially out of reach. That said, when these more interpretative approaches are grounded in a narratological approach, the founding evidence will be all the stronger for it.

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