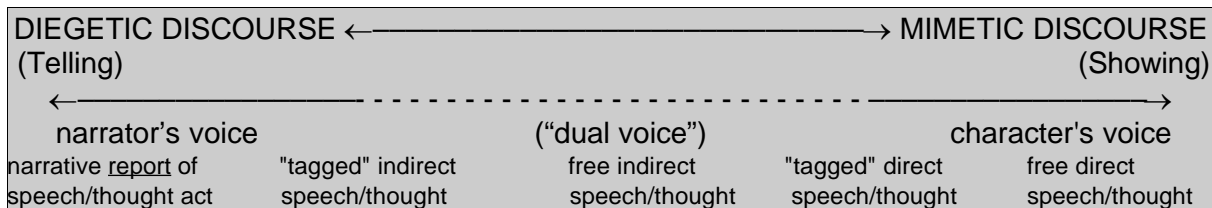


GUIDELINES FOR ANALYSING NARRATIVE FICTION

STEP 1: ANALYSING NARRATIVE

A. How is the story related? (>*DISCOURSE*)

- 1) What type(s) of narrator(s) can be found?
 - a) Does the story feature narrative *embedding*?
 - frame narrators (*extradiegetic*) vs. embedded narrators (*intradiegetic*)
 - b) To what extent is the narrator part of or involved in the story world?
 - third-person (*heterodiegetic*) vs. first-person (*homodiegetic*) narrators
 - *covert* vs. *overt* narrators
 - c) Who is the (main) narrator, what situation is s/he in, and what consequences does this have for the telling of the story (motivation, mood, tone, etc.) and his/her presumed relation to the reader (narrator position vs. reader position)?
 - d) Which narratorial functions dominate the narrator's performance?
 - presentation of story world
 - direct commentary
 - generalizing commentary
 - reference to the act and conditions of storytelling (reflecting functions, metafictional elements)
- 2) Whose perspective(s), emotion(s), thought(s) etc. dominate the story and how are they presented?
 - a) How does the narrative account for characters' speech and thought?
 - direct vs. indirect representation



- b) What type of *focalization* organizes the story as a whole?
 - *zero* (= flexible!) *focalization* mediated by narrator
 - *internal focalization* (fixed/variable/multiple)
 - strict *external focalization*

Note: The combination of your answers to questions A1 and A2 will yield a description of the basic narrative situation of a story, either in structuralist terms along the lines of "the story features a combination of ... diegetic narration and ... focalization" or in terms of Stanzel's typological circle (authorial narrative situation, first-person narrative situation, figural narrative situation + peripheral narrative, interior monologue, neutral scenic narrative for the intermediate sectors).

B. What are the main features of the story world? (>*STORY*)

- 1) When and where does the story take place? (*setting*)
- 2) Who is involved in the action? (*characters*)
- 3) What are the main events in chronological order?

C. How does the act of telling affect the presentation of the story world? (>PLOT)

- 1) What functions do setting and characters fulfil in/for this particular story?
 - representative/typical vs. extraordinary/striking setting
 - *flat* (representative, functional) vs. *round* (individualized) *characters*
- 2) Does the presentation of events follow the chronological order outlined in B.3 or are there striking deviations (*flashbacks, flashforwards*)?
- 3) How does the story handle the difference between *story time* and *discourse time*?
 - *summary* (st>dt) vs. *scene* (st=dt)
 - *ellipsis* (st..., dt=zero) vs. *stretch/pause* (st<dt/st=zero, dt...)

STEP 2: INTERPRETING NARRATIVE AS LITERARY FICTION

⇒ **What are the most striking features of the text's overall organization as a piece of literature/a work of art? (>STRUCTURE)**

- a) Are there specifically literary strategies such as imagery, symbolism, leitmotifs, intertextual references etc. and what is their function?
- b) What kind of beginning and ending does the text present?
- c) Does the overall constellation of characters suggest a larger design?
- d) Does the overall organization of the text suggest an ironical or satirical design which goes beyond what the narrator can possibly know (*unreliable narration*)?
- e) Does the text appear to be predominantly discourse-centred, story-centred, plot-centred or structure-centred?
- [f) whatever else appears to be important...]