Thought and Consciousness Representation in Narratology

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Abstract

Narratology, a branch of literary theory, delves into the structure of narratives. It investigates commonalities and differences among narratives, based on a shared literary language or universal codes within texts. Narratology examines thought and consciousness representation in literature, analysing various text such as novels, poems, films, comics, and games, across different cultures and media. This paper delves into the crucial role that the representation of thought and consciousness plays within the field of narratology, highlighting its profound significance and impact on narrative analysis and interpretation. As narratology has permeated nearly every literary field, its focus on thought and consciousness has grown more prominent over time. Studying these aspects enhances the depth and creativity of fictional characters, allowing an exploration of their inner feelings. According to linguists and narratologists, narratives can represent not only events but also the psychological states of individuals' minds, making characters more lifelike and relatable in literary works.

Keywords: Narrative, Narratology, Thought, Consciousness, Narration, Representation

Introduction to Narratology

In 1969, Tzvetan Todorov introduced the term 'narratologie' in his influential work *The Grammar of Decameron*. Gerald Prince further explores this concept in his article "Narratology," providing a clear and concise overview. Prince explains that narratology analyzes what all possible narratives share and what sets them apart, with the goal of identifying the fundamental rules and norms that govern the creation and interpretation of narratives.Narratology is a field of study that traces its roots to the works of several prominent writers, including Vladimir Propp, Claude Levistrauss, A.J. Gremas, and Tzvetan Todorov. Each of these writers has contributed unique theories and concepts to the field of narratology.

Mieke Bal describes narratology is the "theory of narratives, narrative tests, images, spectacles events, cultural artefacts that tell a story" (3). Michael J Toolan defines narratives

as "Perceived sequence of non-randomly connected events" (8). According to Gerald Prince, "During the twentieth century narratology has been considerably growing since the last ten years significantly (4).

Thought and Consciousness Representation

Thoughts and consciousness representation is related to the representation of mental events like inner speech, perceptions, sensations, emotions, visual images, dreams, moods and visions. It also includes motives, intentions and reasons for action. It is also related to the inner development of a character through long periods of time particular mental instances and thought processes. It also includes inter-mental or group, joint or shared thought. It also includes commentaries and judgements of characters towards other characters, incidents, events etc.

Guldemann and Roncador are of the view:

> For a long time, reported speech or more generally reported discourse has been a topic not only puzzling to linguistics, it has also attracted philosophers interested in the distinction between de dicto and de re in speech acts and in the philosophy of mind, psycholinguistics investigating the development of dexis and literary critics studying the concepts of authors, narrator and character (VII).

Why to Study Thought and Consciousness Representation

In literary works, the technique of consciousness representation was developed for the study of the inner feelings of the characters. In real life, we all know that it is not at all possible to get a glimpse of what goes on in a person's mind unless the person speaks or we can guess through some body language or some gestures. But in literary works, the narrators give us a good insight into the mind and thought processes of the characters which they present using certain devices.

Waldron said that language, in short, is the basis of individual human consciousness and thought (74). In saying so, he attempted to show how language is closely connected to human thinking as reality is experienced through language.

For narrative techniques like stream of consciousness individuals are at the centre of study. Stream of consciousness renders the manifestation of inner states of mind of the character to the reader even though it is not articulated or voiced.

Classical narrative theory considers thought and consciousness representation in terms of what may be called the speech category approach. Character's thoughts are analysed by using the same categories that are used to analyse character's speech. Many of the discussions of thought presentation in narrative theory are included in or added onto, discussions of speech presentation, and according to Palmer, Cohn's *Transparent Minds* was until recently the only full length study solely devoted to thought presentation.

The world of fiction in the postmodern era needs an in-depth analysis. Exploring fiction writing through speech, thought and consciousness modes has been gaining a great deal of

attention in stylistics and narratology. This paper is significant as it would unravel the meaning and various modes of thought and consciousness representation of the characters in the fictional world.

Many narratologists have attempted and discussed thought and consciousness representation in their own way. In this paper, six well known narratologists have been taken who have worked exclusively on various modes on thought and consciousness representation.

Gerard Genette: Gerard Genette's work in narratology is structured around three key concepts: Tense, Mood, and Voice. The theory of Tense explores the potential for temporal organization and representation, including Order, Speed, and Frequency. The theory of Voice delves into the narrative embedding by narrators (framed narrative) and the selection of grammatical person. The theory of Mood scrutinizes the management of narrative data, encompassing a) the model of presenting action, speech, and thought, and b) the methods of selecting and limiting the information conveyed by the narrative. The second part of Mood theory, referred to as focalization by Genette, signifies the perspective-based limitation and direction of narrative data in relation to someone's perception, imagination, or viewpoint. Consequently, focalization theory encompasses the various methods of managing, selecting, and directing narrative data, especially viewing events from someone's perspective, regardless of how subjective or fallible this perspective may be.

Genette states that the narrative voice has different levels. Nasrullah Mambrol in his article, *Gerard Genette and Structural Narratology* says that voice is constituted by the following elements:

i.   Narrative Instance: This refers to the actual moment and context of the narration the "temporal setting" of the enunciation of the narration.

ii.   Narrative Time: This is the time indicated by the tense (of the verb) in the narrative. The narrative instance also indicates the times of narration with respect to the events narrated.

iii. Narrative levels: This refers to the relation of the acts narrated to the act of narration itself.

Genette discerns four important levels of narrative. They are:

1) Order: The sequence of events in relation to the order of narration
2) Duration: The rhythm at which the events take place (does the narrative expand episodes, summaries them?). There are four speeds of narration:
a. Ellipsis: infinitely rapid
b. Summary: relatively rapid
c. Scene: relatively slow
d. Descriptive: No progress in the story
3) Frequency: The extent of repetition in a narrative (how many times has an event happened in the story?).
4) Mood: Mood is the atmosphere of the narrative treated by distance and perspective. Mood is distinguished by Genette into two further categories:
a. Distance or the relationship of the narrative to what it narrates.
b. Perspective or what is commonly called "point of view" or focus. Focus determines

the extent to which the narrator allows us penetrate into the character or the event.

5) Genette favours, "focalisation" over the traditional "point of view." Types of focalisation may be based on two criteria: a) position of narrator relative to the story, b) degree of persistence. Focalisation based on the position of the focaliser is of two types:
   a. External: with its vehicle the "narrator-focaliser." This is both pan chronic and panoramic (across time and space)
   b. Internal: with its vehicle the "character-focaliser."
   c. Focalisation whether external or internal can be within – presenting the thoughts and emotions of the character, or without – presenting the outward manifestation of the object" (n.p).

Dorrit Cohn: Dorrit Cohn's work *Transparent Minds* is a classical work in the field of narratology. In her pioneering work, she has intricately elaborated on various innovative techniques for rendering consciousness in both third-person and first-person storytelling perspectives, providing profound insights and creative approaches.

According to Cohn, there are three different ways of representing what a character thinks or feels in a story that is told by a third-person narrative. The three modes of thought and consciousness are given by Dorrit Cohn in the first part of her study. She has identified them as follows:

1) Psycho-narration: The narrator tells the reader directly about a character's thoughts, feelings, perceptions, memories, or fantasises (14). Cohn defines psycho-narration as a mode of the presentation of consciousness that relies on the narrator's discourse rather than the character's mental discourse. She says that this is one of the least direct and most mediated techniques for rendering a character, thought and feelings in a third-person narrative.

2) Quoted monologue: The narrator quotes a character's inner speech, using quotation marks or other indicators (14). Dorrit Cohn defines quoted monologue as a mode of presentation of consciousness that uses the character's own words to show their thoughts, without any intervention are commentary from the narrator. The quoted monologue without any markers became a distinctive feature of stream-of-consciousness novels.

3) Narrated monologue: The narrator presents a character's inner speech without quotation marks or other indicators, but using the character's own words and style (14).
   Narrated monologue is a way to showing how a character thinks. It uses the same language that the character would use in their mind, but it keeps the third-person point of view and the past tense of the story. So, we can say that narrated monologue is a way of showing a character's thoughts that is more nuanced than quoting them and more direct than describing them.

Seymour Chatman: Seymour Chatman in his *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* divides his study into various headings. He has divided the elements story into Time, Plot, Order, Duration, and Frequency. He has further categorized 'Existents' into characters and other subdivisions such as the real author, implied author, narrator, actual reader, implied reader, point of view, stream of consciousness, and both covert and overt narrators. Chatman has elaborated "speech, thought and consciousness representation" in

the section entitled Discourse.

For the representation of character's consciousness, Chatman had provided the following tools:

1) Direct Free Thought: This is a form of dramatization known as 'interior monologue' when extended. Its critical features include:
   a) When the characters refer to themselves, it is in the first person.
   b) The current discourse moment aligns perfectly with the unfolding story moment; consequently, any predicate that refers to the current event will be articulated in the present tense.
   c) The Language – The idioms, diction, word choices, and syntactic structures distinctly belong to the character, regardless of any potential narrative interjections by the narrator.

2) Stream of Consciousness - Free association. It refers to the random ordering of thought and impressions, Chatman quotes Lawrence Bowling:

   The term 'stream of consciousness' ought to encompass the entirety of the 'narrative' technique through which the author strives to present an unmediated quotation of the mind—not merely confined to the realm of language but encompassing the full spectrum of consciousness. From his perspective, the concept of 'stream of consciousness' encompasses more than just the articulation of thoughts through 'interior monologue'. It also captures the 'sense impressions'—those fleeting sensations and perceptions that are experienced but not yet translated into words by the character's mind, and distinct from any internal narrative provided by the narrator (187).

Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan: Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan is a prominent scholar of narrative theory and literary criticism. In her influential book *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, she offers a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the main aspects of narrative fiction, such as story, text, and narration. She organizes her study into three major parts: Story (Events & Character), which deals with the content and structure of the fictional world; Text (Time, Characterization, Frequency), which examines the ways in which the story is presented and organized in the narrative text; and Narration (Levels and Voices, Speech Representation), which explores the relations between the narrator, the characters, and the reader. In the last part, she focuses on the nuanced representation of both speech and thought within the realm of narrative fiction, drawing on the works of Brian McHale and other theorists. She reproduces McHale's typology of speech representation verbatim, and explains each mode with examples from various literary texts. She also proposes a progressive scale that ranges from the 'purely diegetic to the purely mimetic', as suggested by McHale, to capture the degree of mimetic illusion and narrative mediation in each mode. According to this scale, the modes of speech representation are:

1) Diegetic summary: The narrator summarizes the content and the manner of the speech act without quoting or paraphrasing the actual words of the character. For example: "He asked her to marry him."

2) Less 'purely' diegetic: The narrator summarizes the content of the speech act, but adds some details or indications of the manner or tone of the speech. For example: "He asked her to marry him in a trembling voice."

3) Indirect content paraphrase: The narrator paraphrases the content of the speech act, but does not indicate the manner or tone of the speech. For example: "He said that

he loved her and wanted to spend the rest of his life with her."

4) Indirect discourse: The narrator paraphrases the content and the manner of the speech act, using a subordinate clause introduced by a verb of speech or thought. For example: "He said that he loved her and wanted to spend the rest of his life with her, his voice trembling with emotion."

5) Free indirect discourse: The narrator paraphrases the content and the manner of the speech act, but without using a subordinate clause or a verb of speech or thought. The narrator's and the character's voices merge, creating a hybrid discourse that reflects the character's perspective and style. For example: "He loved her and wanted to spend the rest of his life with her, his voice trembling with emotion."

6) Direct discourse: The narrator quotes the exact words of the character, using quotation marks and a verb of speech or thought. For example: "He said, 'I love you and I want to spend the rest of my life with you.'"

7) Free direct discourse: The narrator quotes the exact words of the character, but without using quotation marks or a verb of speech or thought. The character's voice is presented as if it were directly heard by the reader, creating a strong mimetic illusion. For example: "I love you and I want to spend the rest of my life with you." She proceeds to free indirect discourse and identifies the linguistic features and functions. She explains how free indirect discourse can be distinguished from indirect discourse by the use of tense, mood, modality, deixis, and expressive elements that reflect the character's point of view. She also discusses how free indirect discourse can create various effects, such as irony, ambiguity, empathy, and polyphony, in the narrative.

Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck: They divide their work in three chapters. Chapter one deals with before and surrounding structuralism. Chapter two studies structuralism while chapter three deals with post-classical narratology. The second chapter deals extensively with Speech, Thought and Consciousness Representation. According to Herman and Vervaeck, "Every bit is essential as the narrating agent is the representation of consciousness that is, the way which the narrator renders the consciousness of the character" (91).

Herman and Vervaeck have built upon Dorrit Cohn's, *Transparent Minds*, to further elaborate the various modes of representing speech, thought, and consciousness. According to them, the three primary vehicles for consciousness representation are:

1) Psycho-narration: It aligns with indirect speech, offering a paraphrased account rather than a word-for-word representation of the character's thoughts. This method, employed by the narrator, conveys the character's ideas and subconscious musings, utilizing the narrator's unrestricted access to the character's inner world and deeper self (24).

2) Quoted Monologue: It corresponds to direct speech where the narrator quotes the actual ideas or thoughts uttered by the character (25).

3) Narrated Monologue: It corresponds to free indirect speech, where the introductory main clause is omitted, turning the reported sentence into the primary clause. This style retains the original word order of the quotation and does not incorporate specific references to place and time (26).

Herman and Vervaeck quote the work of Brain McHale, who has presented seven kinds of

consciousness representation as follows:

- Diegetic Summary
- Summary, less purely diegetic.
- Indirect content paraphrase
- Indirect discourse, mimetic to some degree.
- Free indirect discourse.
- Direct discourse.
- Free direct discourse.

Manfred Jahn: Manfred Jahn in his *Narratology: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative* has structured his study on narratology into various sections. Section N8 is entitled Discourse: representation of speech, thought and consciousness. Jahn divides narrative as Narrator's Discourse and Character's Discourse.

Further, Jahn has given three traditional forms of speech representation:

- Direct Discourse: A direct quotation of a character's speech, termed 'direct speech,' or their verbalized thoughts, referred to as 'direct thought,' is often encapsulated within quotation marks. This explicit punctuation marks the shift from the narrator's voice to the character's discourse.
  According to Short, "Direct thought (DT) is quite often used to represent imaginary conversation which characters have with themselves or others, which is presumably why it so often has the flavour of conscious thinking. Therefore, direct thought is full of instinctive markers that enable readers to have the feeling of witnessing everything from the character's mind without mediation (312).
- Free indirect discourse: This mode elegantly captures the essence of her/his speech or thoughts. It delicately balances 'indirect' elements by adapting pronouns and tenses to fit the narrative's flow. Simultaneously, it embraces 'freedom' in allowing subtle shifts in wording, preserving the character's subjective expressions, questions, exclamations, and emphatic tones. This approach achieves a nuanced harmony, offering a portrayal that is less literal than direct discourse, yet more deeply resonant than indirect discourse.
- Indirect discourse: Indirect discourse is a way of showing what a character says ('indirect speech') or thinks ('indirect thought'). It uses a reporting clause to introduce the character's words or thoughts, and places them into a subordinate clause. This technique generally summarizes and interprets what the character saying or thinking, while also is making their language grammatically correct (N8.7).

In his further study, Manfred Jahn has presented vivid styles to represent her/his mind and inner views. They are as follows:

- Stream of Consciousness: William James, an American psychologist, coined the term "stream of consciousness." He explained that it is used to describe the fragmented nature of mental processes and how different levels of awareness, both central and peripheral, blend and overlap (Jahn N8.8).
  Abraham and Harpham also defines stream of consciousness as the name applied specially to mode of a character's mental process in which sense perceptions mingle with conscious and half-conscious thought, memories, expectations, feelings, and

random association (345).

- Interior Monologue: This technique masterfully captures the intricate sound and rhythm of a character's stream of consciousness. Jahn, referencing Edward Dujardin, defines it as the innovation that aims to evoke the continuous flow of thought coursing through a her/his mind, emerging in their natural order without any imposed logical sequence, thereby creating an impression of 'raw experience' (Dujardin 118, as quoted in Jahn N8.9).

  By immersing the audience in the character's internal world, interior monologue offers a unique glimpse into their motivations, fears, and desires, thereby enhancing the emotional depth of the story. It bridges the gap between the character's outer actions and inner reflections, creating a more holistic and immersive reading experience.

  Beckson and Ganz quote Dujardin who defines interior monologue as unspoken discourse without a hearer present, by which a character expresses his most intimate thought with syntax reduced to a minimum, in such a way as to give the impression of a "welling forth" (np).

- Soliloquy: This is the earliest style which is used to present the thoughts of the character in a more direct way.

Manfred Jahn has defined two patterns to express the psychological states of mind in narrative fiction, based on the distinction between telling and showing. These patterns are:

1) Psycho-Narration: Expressing a character's inner thoughts and mental processes, whether conscious or unconscious, primarily through the style of 'narrative report of discourse' or 'narrated perception.' This technique delves deeper into the psyche of characters, allowing readers to gain insight into their motivations, fears, and desires. It bridges the gap between external actions and internal reasoning, making characters feel more rounded and relatable. By immersing in their mental landscapes, we understand not just what characters do, but why they do it, adding layers of complexity to the narrative.

2) Narrated Perception: Portraying a character's perception typically involves using psycho-narration or blending direct discourse with free indirect discourse. This approach, known as narrated perception, serves as a method of revealing the character's sensory experiences and internal commentaries, allowing the narrative to present their observations and thoughts in a vivid and immersive manner. By employing these techniques, the narrative not only shows what the character perceives but also how they interpret and react to those perceptions. This method deepens the reader's connection to the character, providing a more nuanced understanding of their inner world and emotional responses. Through narrated perception, the narrative captures the subtleties of the character's internal landscape, making their experiences more tangible and relatable for the reader.

Conclusion

Narratology is a very vast subject that needs an in-depth analysis. The fictional world too needs an in-depth analysis to study the characters' mind and soul. The thought and consciousness representation in narratology has touched upon the inner psyche of the fictional character. Through this paper, I have taken the works of well-known narratologists

who have extensively worked on various modes of thought and consciousness representation. The reader must be aware of the thought process and inner psyche of the characters. This paper extensively examines different modes of thought and consciousness representation within narratology. Since the story comprises both verbal and non-verbal events, the character's thought and consciousness are interwoven within the narrative. The modes of representation discussed in this paper are specifically designed to reveal the character's mind.

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