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Focalization

If narratology – the structural theory and analysis of narrative texts – were to be divided into just two major parts, then *narration* and *focalization* would be very suitable candidates. *Narration* is the telling of a story in a way that simultaneously respects the needs and enlists the co-operation of its audience; *focalization* is the submission of (potentially limitless) narrative information to a perspectival filter. Contrary to the standard courtroom injunction to tell "the *whole* truth," no-one can in fact tell all. Practical reasons require speakers and writers to restrict information to the "right amount" – not too little, not too much, and if possible only what's relevant.

In its original conception, dating back to the late 1960s, narratology is a timeless and culture-independent discipline. Yet narratologists have increasingly become aware of the fact that their seemingly neutral theoretical models may have been shaped by cultural and historical contingencies.[1] This is definitely so in the case of focalization because our present notions about perspectival filtering would hardly exist without the psychological interest that informs Western narrative literature from roughly the eighteenth-century novel onwards. The psychological turn reaches its height with the institution of psychology as a discipline and the flowering of the Modernist literary movement in the period of 1900 to 1950. Let us try to unravel this historical background by taking a brief look at the narrative aesthetics of the Modernist era.

The Modernist roots of focalization

At the beginning of the twentieth century authors such as Henry James, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson, Katherine Mansfield, Franz Kafka, Arthur Schnitzler, Ford Madox Ford (and many others) perfected a style that came to be called "psychological realism" or "literary impressionism." Just like the French impressionist painters of the 1870s and 1880s, the Modernist writers were not interested in realistic representations

of external phenomena but in presenting the world as it appeared to characters subject to beliefs, moods, and emotions. Treating subjectivity not as a distortion to be got rid of in the interest of science and empiricism, the Modernists looked at a world shaped by individual perceptions, and they were fascinated by what they saw. As the psychologist William James (the brother of Henry James, and the person usually credited with coining the term "stream of consciousness"), put it in 1890:

> Let four men make a tour in Europe. One will bring home only picturesque impressions – costumes and colors, parks and views and works of architecture, pictures and statues. To another all this will be non-existent; and distances and prices, populations and draining arrangements, door- and window-fastenings, and other useful statistics will take their place. A third will give a rich account of the theatres, restaurants, and public balls, and naught beside; whilst the fourth will perhaps have been so wrapped in his subjective broodings as to tell little more than a few names of places through which he passed.[2]

Interestingly, James refrained from censuring any of the views he described as inadequate or false (even though the fourth man is clearly "less perceptive" than the other three). Another author who stressed individual perception in her attempt to grasp the essence of literary impressionism was Virginia Woolf:

> Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad of impressions – trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms . . . Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incidence scores upon the consciousness.[3]

Today, Woolf's thoughts read like a program for the Modernist "novel of consciousness." The novel of consciousness was usually cast in the form of what Franz K. Stanzel calls a "figural narrative," that is, a third-person narrative in which the storyworld is seen through the eyes of a character. In his theoretical writings, Henry James called such central perceiving characters "centers," "mirrors," or "reflectors," and to this list narratologists have added a number of variants such as "figural media" (Stanzel), "focal characters" (Genette), "filters" (Chatman), and "internal focalizers" (Bal) – the proliferation of terms clearly indicating the importance of the concept.

A key feature of Modernist narrative technique was to create revelatory reflector characters. These included seemingly ordinary people such as Woolf's Clarissa Dalloway, an upper middle-class mother and wife, and Joyce's Leopold Bloom, an advertisement canvasser. Other popular reflector

figures were intellectuals, artists, and children. Henry James's *What Maisie Knew* (1897) covers a girl's development from the age of 5 to 12, while in Richardson's short story "The Garden" (1924) the reflector is an infant who has only just about learned to speak. In Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), the reader finds himself in the suicidal mind of a shell-shocked schizophrenic; in Graham Greene's *A Gun For Sale* (1936), the reflector is a murderer; and in Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano* (1947), he is an alcoholic. Anything seems to go in the way of reflectors, be he a Neanderthal man as in William Golding's *The Inheritors* (1955), a dog as in Woolf's *Flush* (1933), or an intelligent robot as in Walter M. Miller's "I Made You" (1954).

The Modernists liked to think of themselves as avant-gardists, and their texts often provoked, challenged, and exhausted their contemporary readers. Because it focuses on a reflector's mind, the figural style tends to avoid exposition of background information, it may restrict itself to recording a reflector's stream of associative consciousness, and often it moves toward an interior moment of "epiphany" (revelation or recognition) rather than reaching a suspense-filled climax. Later, as Modernism became the current tradition, the figural novel made compromises and re-allowed expositions and conflict-oriented plots. Today, the figural style is a staple narrative technique that can be found everywhere, be it in fantasy, romance, the thriller, science fiction, and the journalistic genre called "New Journalism." Let us now see what links the Modernist figural novel to today's theories of focalization.

Theorizing focalization: Genette's model

Bent on "tracing the pattern . . . which each sight or incidence scores upon the consciousness," the Modernists discovered that the best way to achieve directness was to exclude the traditional mediator, i.e., the narrator (or let her or him become as inconspicuous, silent, and "covert" as possible). Normally, the narrator is the functional agent who verbalizes the story's nonverbal matter, edits the verbal matter, manages the exposition, decides what is to be told in what sequence, and establishes communication with the addressee. However, once exposition, comment, and narratorial intervention are dispensed with in the interest of directness, the figural text appears to be determined by the filtering and coloring devices of the reflector's mind, while the reader, seeing the storyworld through the reflector's eyes, becomes a witness rather than the narrator's communicative addressee. Noticing this, many contemporary commentators jumped to one of two conclusions, both equally problematic: either that the narrator was dead and the reflector had somehow absorbed his or her functions (Percy Lubbock); or else that the

reflector had become a narrator (Wayne C. Booth). Against this, the general consensus today is that no reflector ever literally *tells* the narrative we are reading. This point is squarely owed to Gérard Genette, who in an often cited statement said,

> most of the theoretical works on this subject [perspective] . . . suffer from a regrettable confusion between what I call here *mood* and *voice*, a confusion between the question *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?*[4]

One has to be careful not to take Genette's questions too literally. *Who sees?* aims at identifying a reflector (Genette's "focal character," but not any old seeing character), while *who speaks?* is interested in pinpointing the utterer of the narrative discourse, that is, the narrator (not any old speaking character). Setting his two questions in direct opposition, Genette defuses both the error of declaring the narrator dead and the error of equating focal characters with narrators. More importantly, by prizing apart voice and mood – narration and focalization – he opens the door for focalization to become an independent module of the narratological system. In order to let focalization encompass all narrative forms (not only the Modernist figural novel), Genette stipulates that the overarching criterion of focalization is not (only) "who sees?" but the gradable feature of "restriction of narrative information." Hence, based on a scale of increasing degrees of restriction, Genette distinguishes the following three categories.

A. In the mode of *non-focalization* or *zero-focalization*, events are narrated from a wholly unrestricted or omniscient point of view (as typically in Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749) and many other eighteenth- and nineteenth-century heterodiegetic [third-person] novels). To get the sound and feel of the style, consider an excerpt from a modern novel, James A. Michener's *Hawaii* (1961):

> Across a million years, down more than ten million years [the island] existed silently in the unknown sea and then died, leaving only a fringe of coral where the birds rest and where gigantic seals of the changing ocean play. Ceaseless life and death, endless expenditure of beauty and capacity, tireless ebb and flow and rising and subsidence of the ocean. Night comes and the burning day, and the island waits, and no man arrives. The days perish and the nights, and the aching beauty of lush valleys and waterfalls vanishes, and no man will ever see them.[5]

This passage exhibits what is commonly called a "panoramic point of view." The narrator has access to (in principle) limitless (i.e., unrestricted)

information which clearly transcends what is accessible to ordinary humans (hence "no man will ever see . . ." etc.).

B. In the mode of *internal focalization* the story's events are "focalized through" one or more story-internal reflector characters, and narrative information is restricted to data available to their perception, cognition, and thought. The following excerpt is taken from the beginning of Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1943):

> He lay flat on the brown, pine-needled floor of the forest, his chin on his folded arms, and high overhead the wind blew in the tops of the pine trees. The mountainside sloped gently where he lay; but below it was steep and he could see the dark of the oiled road winding through the pass. There was a stream alongside the road and far down he saw a mill beside the stream and the falling water of the dam, white in the summer sunlight.[6]

Hemingway's novel begins *medias in res* (literally, in the middle of things) in the typical fashion of the figural novel, and the passage closely represents the reflector's current perceptions – mainly things he sees, feels, and hears. Perception modes are not only indicated by explicit phrases such as "he could see" but more subtly also by the "pine-needled floor", the "gently" sloping ground, the wind blowing "high overhead." All narrative information in this type of "narrated perception" is strictly aligned with the reflector's current spatial and temporal co-ordinates.

Genette additionally distinguishes three sub-patterns of internal focalization. (1) Texts employing *fixed focalization* are exclusively told from the point of view of a single focal character as in James's *The Ambassadors* (1903), Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), and Richardson's *Pilgrimage* (1915–46). (2) *Variable focalization* occurs in narratives that employ more than one reflector. In Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, for example, events are variously seen through the eyes of Clarissa Dalloway, Richard Dalloway, Peter Walsh, Septimus Warren Smith, Rezia Smith, and other characters. (3) Finally, *multiple focalization*, which is a special case of variable focalization, occurs in texts in which the same events are told repeatedly, but are each time seen through a different focal character. An example text is Patrick White's *The Solid Mandala* (1966), to be discussed in detail below.

C. *External focalization* marks the most drastic reduction of narrative information because it restricts itself to "outside views," reporting what would be visible and audible to a virtual camera. Externally focalized narratives typically consist of dialogue and "stage directions" only, as in the following excerpt from Hemingway's "The Killers" (1927), which is often cited as the mode's prototypical case:

> The door of Henry's lunch-room opened and two men came in. They sat down at the counter.
>
> "What's yours?" George asked them.
>
> "I don't know," one of the men said. "What do you want to eat, Al?"
>
> "I don't know," said Al. "I don't know what I want to eat."
>
> Outside it was getting dark. The street-light came on outside the window. The two men at the counter read the menu.[7]

As Genette points out, focalization patterns do not necessarily extend across whole texts but may be restricted to "a definite narrative section, which can be very short" (*Narrative Discourse*, 191). Fixed internal focalization is a static pattern by definition (if it weren't static, one wouldn't call it "fixed"), whereas dynamic patterns allow various shifts between patterns. Genette notes that nineteenth-century novelists tend to introduce characters via externally focalized block description before using them as reflectors (*Narrative Discourse*, 190).

Many narratologists have been happy to use Genette's categories, and some have contributed additions and refinements. Genette's allusion to a technique of focalizing through "an impersonal, floating observer" (*Narrative Discourse*, 192) has led David Herman to develop a general theory of "hypothetical focalization."[8] William Nelles has coined useful terms qualifying types of focalization by perception channels, yielding "ocularization" (sight), "auricularization" (sound), "gustativization" (taste), "olfactivization" (smell), and "tactivilization" (touch).[9]

The present author has suggested that all types of real-life perception – or *online perception* as it will be called in the following – need to be complemented by their counterparts in *offline perception* – meaning the imaginary sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches that one perceives in recollection, vision, hallucination, and dream.[10] The literary representation of imaginary or offline perception can involve the same styles and techniques that authors use to represent characters' online perception, and occasionally (as in real life) it may difficult to determine whether a character's perceptions are online or offline. On the other hand, imaginary perception can be notably less realistic than online perception; specifically, it easily overcomes real-life constraints when executing spatio-temporal jumps. The following passage from one of the famous childhood recollection sections of Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield* (1849–50) illustrates the phenomenon well:

> And now I see the outside of our house, with the latticed bedroom-windows standing open to let in the sweet-smelling air, and the ragged old rooks'-nests still dangling in the elm-trees at the bottom of the front garden. Now I am in the garden at the back, beyond the yard where the empty pigeon-house

> and dog-kennel are – a very preserve of butterflies, as I remember it, with a high fence, and a gate and padlock; where the fruit clusters on the trees, riper and richer than fruit has ever been since, in any other garden, and where my mother gathers some in a basket, while I stand by, bolting furtive gooseberries, and trying to look unmoved. A great wind rises, and the summer is gone in a moment. We are playing in the winter twilight, dancing about the parlour. When my mother is out of breath and rests herself in an elbow-chair, I watch her winding her bright curls round her fingers, and straitening her waist, and nobody knows better than I do that she likes to look so well, and is proud of being so pretty. That is among my very earliest impressions.[11]

The narrator's mother is here seen in the narrator's selective and mobile recollection. But, an attentive reader of these pages might ask, isn't the passage mainly seen through the child-character rather than through the adult narrator? Indeed, in many first-person (homodiegetic) texts, such as this one, the point of perceptual origin hovers between two co-ordinate systems because first-person narrator and protagonist – also called the "narrating I" and the "experiencing I," respectively – are separated in time and space but linked through a biographical identity relation. This creates an – occasionally unstable – union between the current, remembering self and what French critics term *un autre* (literally, "an other"). (A similar constellation is present in third-person, figural narration where a remembering reflector may also split into a current and a past self. However, only in first-person narration is the past self identical with the text's narrator.) Evidently, in the passage quoted, "now I see" signals focalization through the narrator while "I watch her winding her bright curls" (plus plenty of other detail) is focalized through *both* the child-protagonist *and* the narrator. Bringing the online/offline distinction to bear on the case one recognizes that the child's *online* perception is actually embedded in the narrator's *offline* perception. But, as another attentive reader, mindful of Genette's two questions – who speaks? who sees? – might ask at this point: isn't focalization through the narrator expressly forbidden in Genette's model? Indeed it is, and resolving this problem has resulted in one of the major innovations of post-Genettean focalization theory.

Post-Genettean accounts: Bal, Rimmon-Kenan, and the cognitive approach

Post-Genettean focalization theory has been strongly influenced by Mieke Bal's critique of Genette's model and her introduction of a number of new terms and definitions.[12] Bal specifically points out that Genette's "external" focalization (type C, above) is vague about who sees, what is seen, and how

it is seen. She raises a similar objection against the concept of "zero" focalization (type A) because even typical "non-focalized" passages are rarely entirely free of point of view, attitude, restriction of perceptual field, or emotional stance (and the passage from Michener's *Hawaii* quoted above seems to support the point). Bal therefore proposes to subsume Genette's external and zero focalizations under the single category of "external focalization" – external not because things are seen from the outside (as in Genette's etymology of the term) but because they are imaginatively seen by the narrator who, in Bal's definition, is external to the story (in Genette's terms, the narrator would be "extradiegetic"). Bal's narrator now acquires an additional function, namely that of being a possible "external focalizer" (or "narrator-focalizer") systematically opposed to the "internal focalizer" character (a.k.a. reflector etc.) residing within the storyworld. As one can see, Bal's proposal makes it possible to handle the multiple perceiving subjects in the Dickens passage without falling into the trap of the erroneous narrator = character equation. Once having admitted narrator-focalizers, Bal also explores the mechanics of presenting other minds' perceptions, of adopting somebody's point of view, of "delegating" focalization to subordinate focalizers, and of chaining or embedding focalization ("hypofocalization"). Many commentators have applauded the logical and practical gains of Bal's account.

In *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, Genette briefly acknowledges that his own original formula "who sees?" is too "purely visual, and hence overly narrow," and he replaces it by the more general "who perceives?"[13] However, many narratologists have argued for yet a further widening of scope. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, in particular, has suggested that the "perceptual facet" should be complemented by two further facets: the psychological facet (subsuming cognition and emotion); and the ideological facet.[14] Although her proposal has not met with general approval (dissenting views have been voiced by Seymour Chatman and Gerald Prince), it is well nigh impossible to deny that psychology, cognition, emotion, and ideology have a direct impact on perception. For this reason, the term *apperception* is often used to designate both the interpretive nature of perception and one's understanding something in "frames" of previous experience. Apperception explains why identical things can be perceived differently by different people, or in other words, why somebody sees X as Y and another sees X as Z, as in William James's four men touring Europe. Obviously, the forms, styles, and rhetorical uses of such "multiperspectivism" are of major interest to literary theory and criticism, but so far only one collection of German essays has been published on the subject, edited by Vera and Ansgar Nünning.[15]

On the cognitive level, perception and apperception (in both real and imaginary forms) affect *all* participants in the game of storytelling, including readers. In the greater picture, the general frame of storytelling contains (1) a narrator who is grounded in the point-of-view co-ordinates of his or her discourse here-and-now; (2) a reader who is situated in a reception here-and-now; and (3) the characters situated in the story here-and-now. But far from fettering the participants to these "home co-ordinates," narrative allows, invites, and possibly even requires "deictic shifts" to imaginary co-ordinates and spaces.[16] Thus narrators may imaginatively transpose to the story here-and-now (the narrator in the passage from Michener's *Hawaii* clearly *sees* that "aching beauty of lush valleys"), or they may adopt a character's view of the current scene; characters freely relocate from online to offline perception and vice versa, while readers can imaginatively hear the narrator speak and let themselves be transported into the world of action (an effect known as "immersion").[17] As can be seen, in this picture, narration and focalization come out as mutually reinforcing and mutually dependent factors of storytelling.

Focalization in Patrick White's *The Solid Mandala*

One of the questions that every narratologist has to decide for himself or herself is whether to stick to Genette's or Bal's model, and whether to use a broad or a narrow conception of facets of focalization. In what follows, Patrick White's novel *The Solid Mandala*, which helped him win the Nobel prize for Literature in 1973, will be analyzed as a case of multiple focalization, and an attempt will be made to treat the narrator's ironical slant as a case of narratorial focalization (external focalization, in Bal's terminology). All broader facets of focalization will be considered (especially psychological, emotional, and cognitive ones), and special attention will be paid to any reading effects caused by focalization.

White's third-person (heterodiegetic) novel, first published in 1966, is set in Sarsaparilla, near Sydney, Australia. It tells the story of unmarried twin brothers, Waldo and Arthur Brown, who never parted company in their lives. There are four chapters. Chapter 1 is a prologue in which the twins, now in their late sixties, slovenly in appearance and failing in health, are seen on their customary morning walk by two ladies on a bus. The narrator's recording device is located very close to the two ladies, registering what they say, perceive, and think. The result is an opportunistic mix of external (in Bal's sense), variable, and collective focalization, often making fun of the characters ("The eyes of the two women followed the tunnel which led inward, through the ragged greenery and sudden stench of crushed weeds.

You could hide behind a bush if necessary").[18] Both focalization and tone stand in sharp contrast to what follows in the next two chapters, entitled "Waldo" and "Arthur," respectively. Chapter 2, by far the longest chapter in the book (63 percent of the text), is focalized exclusively through Waldo, while chapter 3 (26 percent) is focalized exclusively through Arthur. Chapter 4 is a brief epilogue that uses three reflectors for the *dénouement* (resolution of the plot).

In chapters 2 and 3 perception and apperception vary with the different mindsets of the respective reflector characters. Conscious of having descended from upper-class English forebears on his mother's side, Waldo tends to be critical of everything – the Australian environment, the small-town inhabitants, and his brother, whom he considers a half-wit. Entering Waldo's apperceptions and thoughts, the reader soon notices that Waldo's mind is only tangentially concerned with the present because everything he sees in the present reminds him of events that happened in the past: his life with his parents (now long dead), his relations to professional and private acquaintances (among them the girl Dulcie, whom he had once proposed to but was rejected), and growing up and getting old with his brother, Arthur. In fact, around 80 percent of Waldo's chapter is concerned with the offline perception produced by his spontaneous recollections. These passages of retrospection constitute what Genette calls "subjective analepses" – reflector flashbacks – and although they get to us in the associative order of Waldo's consciousness they cumulatively supply the pieces that make up this reflector's biography and personality.

As the psychonarratologists Marisa Bortolussi and Peter Dixon have pointed out, when readers negotiate a reflector-mode text and become privy to the working of a reflector's mind, they have a natural inclination to empathize and identify with the person concerned.[19] True as this may be in general terms and under experimental conditions; in White's novel the reader's relationship to Waldo is anything but harmonious or "consonant." Waldo may be intelligent and erudite, but he is also egoistic, narcissistic (he kisses a mirror at one point), and entirely lacking in humor. His life, as it plays back in his recollections, is a relentless series of professional and personal failures. Symptomatically, the loved girl's features change chameleon-like from attractiveness to ugliness depending on whether Waldo believes she appreciates or scorns him. Because Waldo's outlook on life is so plainly warped and self-deceptive, the reader tends to laugh, with the narrator, at Waldo's unlikely representations and overblown literary aspirations. Referring to one of his "literary notes," Waldo reflects that "[n]ot even Goethe, a disagreeable, egotistical man and overrated writer, whom he had always detested, could have equalled Waldo's *dazzled morning moon*" (*Mandala*, 130). At

the same time the reader is also liminally aware that beneath the text's dissonant humor there lies a serious personality disorder which poses a gathering threat to the character's environment in general and to his brother in particular. As Waldo's apperceptions become ever more schizoid and addled with hate, a minor frustration finally precipitates an explosive outburst. Turning to his brother with the intention to strangle him, Waldo sees Arthur's face "Opening. Coming apart. Falling" (*Mandala*, 214). Abruptly, chapter 2 terminates at this point.

By this time, the reader has long suspected that Arthur is not the idiot Waldo takes him to be, and chapter 3, now focalized entirely through Arthur, gives us an opportunity to see what he is really like. Arthur's mind now serves as the balancing filter through which the episodes earlier remembered by Waldo are revisited, and this produces the juxtaposition of contrary apperceptions characteristic of multiple focalization. In a sense, Arthur's outlook on life is as exotic as Waldo's because Arthur is indeed retarded intellectually and deviant behaviorally. But, unlike Waldo, Arthur has many redeeming qualities: he has a head for figures; he is practical-minded and entrusted with taking care of everyday chores; and most of the time he has a just sense of what not to do. Above all, what makes him deviant also makes him endearing: a "man and child" (*Mandala*, 311), he retains a child-like simplemindedness, inquisitiveness, impulsiveness, perceptiveness, and creativeness. In the storyworld itself, sensitive people are as attracted to Arthur as they are repelled by Waldo. And while one laughs at Waldo's distortions, Arthur's strange visions are often oddly appropriate:

> Suddenly Arthur burst into tears because he saw that Waldo was what the books referred to as a lost soul. He, too, for that matter, was lost. Although he might hold Waldo in his arms, he could never give out from his soul enough of that love which was there to give. So his brother remained cold and dry.
>
> (*Mandala*, 284)

Significantly, it is Arthur who sees the mystic pattern of the mandala, which symbolizes the harmonious union or mingling of opposites, in the speckled "taws" (marbles) which he likes to give to people he is fond of. Naturally, critics have also found the mandala pattern in the novel's bonding of the two unlike brothers.

Waldo's and Arthur's chapters differ in one important technical detail. While Waldo's flashbacks are linked to the current here and now, Arthur's chapter represents a single long stretch of subjective analepsis without any clue as to when or in what situation it unfolds. Compelled to fill in the gap, the reader is likely to fall back on the conventional motif of a dying (or possibly dead) man's summary recollection of his life (as used, for instance,

in the film *American Beauty* or in Stevie Smith's poem "Not waving but drowning"). Naturally, it is an assumption that charges the text with emotion and tragedy – and leads to a considerable surprise when it turns out to be false. As the chapter recounts Waldo's mortal attack from Arthur's point of view we learn that it is *Waldo* who dies of a stroke brought on by the exertion of trying to kill his brother. In chapter 4, after Waldo's body has been found by a neighbor, Arthur accuses himself of having killed Waldo, but it is clear that what he means is that he was unable to prevent Waldo from killing himself. At the end of the novel, as Arthur is sent to a mental home, we have a double tragedy on our hands, pitying Arthur for failing to save Waldo, and finally also pitying Waldo because Arthur has taught us how to do so.

The foregoing thumbnail sketch of *The Solid Mandala* illustrates how strategic choices in focalization determine this novel's structure (especially in its counterbalancing or rather contrapuntal chapters), characterization (opening up several viewpoints on the characters), and its surprise outcome.[20] Above all, the novel's strategy of multiple focalization motivates the reader to re-read the text in order to compare the many twice-told events, to reconstrue the personalities of the characters, and to appreciate the many leitmotifs and contrasts. Any reader interested in an in-depth unraveling of these features might wish to consult Gordon Collier's 500-page study of the novel, which is a masterpiece of scholarly analysis and narratological criticism.[21] Collier excellently demonstrates the breadth and variety of reflector-mode narration especially when grounded in focalizers as given to narrativizing their lives as Waldo and Arthur, and he also persuasively demonstrates the merits of a close analysis of focalization. It is along these lines that the following catalog of questions aims at stimulating the reader's further research and exploration.

A task sheet for analyzing focalization

1. Given an internally focalized text, does it use a special reflector or set of reflectors? How accurate are the perceptions and thoughts of the reflectors, and to what extent are they "fallible filters" (to use a phrase of Chatman's)? (In White, we encounter two reflectors whose experiences overlap but whose apperceptions are entirely different. Waldo, of course, is the proverbial fallible filter.)
2. Historically speaking, in what tradition of focalization does the text stand? Is it contemporaneous with or does it predate/postdate the era of Modernism and literary impressionism? Does it anticipate a later style or technique or does it fall back on an earlier style or technique? Does it

use the contrast potential of divergent apperceptions as in William James's four men touring Europe or the unlike brothers in *The Solid Mandala*? (Notable pre-impressionist instances of idiosyncratic apperception occur in the novels of Jane Austen, Gustave Flaubert, and Charles Dickens, often creating a humorous effect similar to that of chapter 2 of *The Solid Mandala*.)[22]

3. In what proportion does the text use ocularization, auricularization, gustativization, olfactivization, and tactivilization? Are the sense data dependent on external circumstances (reflector not able to see anything because it is pitch dark – Molly Bloom in *Ulysses*) or special character traits (the reflector in Patrick Süskind's *The Perfume* [1985] being gifted with an exceptional sense of smell)? Are concomitant thoughts and emotional states represented or left to the reader's empathetic construction?
4. What is the proportion of online to offline perception? What is the relative significance of online and offline segments? (In the two main chapters of White's novel the characters' recollections play a central role. In chapter 3, Arthur's long stretch of floating offline perception serves the purpose of creating a surprise effect.)
5. In which way(s) does the text render a character's perceptions and thoughts? To what extent does it use "interior monologue," "free indirect discourse," and "narrated perception"? Does it use explicit perception indicators (such as "Waldo saw"), or does it leave identification of focalizer and mental process to the reader?
6. If analysis proceeds on the post-Genettean model, which kinds of narratorial offline perception (imaginary perception, recollection, etc.) characterize the narrator's discourse? Do the narrator and the reflector have different degrees of knowledge and different kinds of apperceptions? If so, which concepts best describe the contrasts arising? If the narrator's and the reflector's apperceptions do *not* markedly differ, what are the reasons – narrator restricting him- or herself to what is "public knowledge" in the storyworld? narrator remaining neutral or non-committal? narrator allowing his or her diction to become "colored" by the character's language? Are there specific locations, such as chapter beginnings or endings, that favor expression of the narrator's privileged point of view? Is the degree of consonance or dissonance between the narrator's view and the character's apperception ever treated explicitly? (In White's novel, the narrator's ironical slant initially invites a humorous response but later heightens the tragic effect through contrast and reversal. However, neither in Waldo's nor in Arthur's chapter does the narrator allow himself the freedom of explicit comment.)

7. Is the focalization pattern static (as it would be in a fixedly focalized figural novel) or dynamic (as it would be in variably focalized texts or texts that use both narrator and reflector focalization)? (In White's novel, focalization is highly dynamic, changing from chapter to chapter.)

NOTES

1. Monika Fludernik, "The Diachronization of Narratology." *Narrative* 11:3 (2003), pp. 331–48.
2. William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I (New York: Dover, 1950), pp. 286–7.
3. Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction." In Andrew McNeillie (ed.) *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, Vol. IV (London: Hogarth, 1994), pp. 160–1.
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