CHAPTER FOUR

# *Narrative: What Happened*

Again, in this chapter, I would like to magnify a range of discourse, draw parallels between literature and everyday life, and work out in more detail some aspects of the general theory outlined earlier. Narrative occupies a considerable portion of the discursive spectrum, overlapping with drama, but not all of narrative is covered here — only those sorts having counterparts in fiction. I will stop short of broadly historical and typological narrative, which begin to bridge into explicit generalization. Indeed, the finer delineation of the upper ranges of the total discursive spectrum remains a task for the future.

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"What happened?" When we attempt to answer this question we become momentarily a story-teller. A friend asks, "What did you do yesterday?" A colleague asks what went on at a professional convention you attended. Or, more formally, we may report certain events in a newspaper or magazine, present a case history in a specialized journal, or write for the general reader a biography, memoir, or history.

The essence of story is once-upon-a-time. Once. Unique and unrepeatable events — not "recurring" events, as in science. Whether the events be made up or really happened makes no difference for what I am going to say, which concerns *how* we tell stories. All who set out to recount what happened — the historian and the fictionalist, the journalist and the case-writer, the man of law and the man in the street — share something in common: they all have some relation to the events and some relation to their audience. More basically than anything else, these two relations determine how we tell our stories.

Fiction writers, being people who like to talk anyway, do not wait to be asked, "What happened?" They just start in and tell you. But this is not their only aberration. The fiction artist differs from his soberer brethren in being more expert, not at communication, but at metacommunication, which is a word that he has probably never heard of (for in typical fashion he has left it to the scientist to name what he would just as soon not talk about, whereas the scientist may talk about such things, but of course he wouldn't touch the stuff himself).

Metacommunication is a set of more or less hidden signals that tell us where and when and how to look; the communication is what we are directed to look *at*. Form and content, if you prefer (or syntax and message, structure and substance, energy and mass, Yin and Yang). The novelist or short story writer turns the head of the reader with such cunning necromancy that, by comparison, the journalist and the lawyer look downright ingenuous with their slants and their biases. And of course historians and behavioral scientists don't use form, they just present objective content.

The artist knows innately, as the gamin knows how to steal, that *what* is merely a factor of *how*; that we can no more separate the story from the telling than, as Yeats said, we can tell the dancer from the dance. Events are human creations. Even when he claims to let the material speak for itself, the artist knows that he is just fooling the customers, that the great ongoing panorama of life does not speak at all — not until some human tongue begins to wag. So it is to that old snake-charmer, the fictioneer, that I turn for our lesson. By calling himself an artist and thus admitting that he is a low-down subjective cheat and a metacommunicative con man, he instructs us honest men how to stay honest. On the principle of a thief to catch a thief, let us look at a spectrum of fictional methods arrayed so as to "reveal" the different, but relative, forms of story-telling.

Each technique is illustrated by an excerpt from a short story or novel, the passage being typical of the technique employed throughout the entire work from which it is quoted. Before each passage I describe the technique abstractly. It is important to keep in mind that the illustrations merely sample the range of the spectrum, which may be infinitely graduated; the techniques blend one into another, according to gradual shifts in the rhetorical relation between speaker and audience, and the referential relation between speaker and subject. This sequence goes from the most subjective and personal to the most objective and impersonal, as regards both the speaker's relation to his listener and the speaker's relation to his subject. Thus it is based on varying relations among first, second, and third persons.

Significantly, there is also a progression up the abstraction ladder: (1) speaker, listener, and subject become gradually more diffused in time and space — more generalized; (2) each technique subsumes the previous ones and is built up out of them; in the same way classes include subclasses by increasing summary of primary moments of experience.

Narrative method is here defined as both a certain level of abstraction and as the communication system operating among teller, told-to, and told-about. The communication system expands throughout the sequence.

Other progressions are:

- From I to he, from informer to information.
- From present to past.
- From the I-you relation (drama) to the I-he relation (narrative)
- From double story to single story.
- From vernacular improvisation to literary composition.
- From intrapersonal communication to interpersonal communication to personal communication (identified speaker, anonymous audience) to impersonal communication (anonymous speaker, anonymous audience).
- Increasing time interval between date of events and date of narration, until time interval loses importance.
- Increasing distance (in all senses) between speaker and listener, then between speaker and subject.

## *Sequence of Narrative Types*

### *I. Interior Monologue*

An unintroduced, uninterrupted transcription of what some character situated in a given time and circumstance is perceiving and thinking. This amounts to intra-organismic communication, since the speaker is also listener; the reader is simply permitted to "tune in" on the communication. Strictly speaking, since this voice subdivides, a better name would be interior dialogue. The "story" is the *process* of perceiving and thinking at least as much as it is the content of the perceptions and thoughts.

WE'LL TO THE WOODS NO MORE[1]

*By Edouard Dujardin*

The menu. Let's see; fish, sole . . . yes, a sole. *Entrées,* mutton cutlets . . . no. Chicken . . . yes.

[1] Edouard Dujardin, WE'LL TO THE WOODS NO MORE, pp. 21–24. Translated by Stuart Gilbert. Copyright 1938 by New Directions. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation. Dujardin is generally credited with inventing the interior monologue as a fictional technique, and, according to Dujardin, James Joyce acknowledged that his own use of the technique in *Ulysses* was inspired by *We'll to the Woods No More.*

— Sole. Then some chicken, with watercress.

— Yes, sir. Sole, chicken, and cress.

So I'm going to dine, and a very good idea too. Now that's a pretty woman over there; neither fair nor dark; a high-stepper, by gad; tallish, probably; must be the wife of that bald man with his back to me; more likely his mistress; somehow she hasn't just the married air; quite a pretty girl, really. She might look this way; almost exactly opposite me she is; what shall I? Oh, what's the good? There, she's spotted me. Really a pretty woman, and the man looks a bore; a pity I can only see his back; I'd like to have a look at his face too; lawyer, I should say, a family solicitor up from the country. Absurd I am! How about the soup? The glass in front of me reflects the gilded frame; the gilded frame behind me of course; those arabesques in bright vermillion, all scarlet flashes; but the light is pale yellow; walls, napery, mirrors, wine-glasses, all yellowed by the gaslight. It's comfortable here, well-appointed place. Here's the soup, piping hot; waiter might splash some, better keep an eye on him. All's well; let's begin. Too hot, this soup; wait, try again. Not half bad. I lunched a bit too late, no appetite left. All the same I must eat some dinner. Soup finished. That woman looked this way again; expressive eyes she has and the man with her seems a dull bird; I might get to know her by some fluke; queerer things happen; why not? If I keep on looking at her, it might lead to something; but they've reached the joint already; never mind, if I choose I can catch them up at the post. Where's that waiter gone to? Slow as a funeral they are, these restaurant dinners; I might fix up to have my meals at home; the concierge could do the cooking, and it would be cheaper too. He'd make a mess of it, for a certainty. I'm a fool; deadly dull it would be, and how about the days when I don't come back? At least in a restaurant one isn't bored. What's that waiter up to?

### *II. Dramatic Monologue*

An unintroduced, uninterrupted transcription of what some character situated in a given time and circumstances is saying to some other character, whose responses, if any, are merely reflected in the monologue. The listener is now a separate per-

son but not the reader, who merely overhears. This is interpersonal communication. It creates a double tale: at the same time the monologuist is telling a story he is also enacting one. What he is saying may be no more important than *that* he is saying it now and to this particular person. Such stories feature verbal behavior and self-betrayal of the speaker.

### "THE APOSTATE"[2]

*By George Milburn*

Harry, you been jacking me up about how I been neglecting Rotary here lately, so I'm just going to break down and tell you something. Now I don't want you to take this personal, Harry, because it's not meant personal at all. No siree! Not *a*-tall! But just between you and I, Harry, I'm not going to be coming out to Rotary lunches any more. I mean I'm quitting Rotary! . . .

Now whoa there! Whoa! Whoa just a minute and let me get in a word edgeways. Just let me finish my little say.

Don't you never take it into your head that I haven't been wrestling with this thing plenty. I mean I've argued it all out with myself. Now I'm going to tell you the whyfor and the whereof and the howcome about this, Harry, but kindly don't let what I say go no further. Please keep it strictly on the *Q.T.* Because I guess the rest of the boys would suspicion that I was turning highbrow on them. But you've always been a buddy to me, Harry, you mangy old son of a hoss thief, you, so what I'm telling you is the straight dope.

Harry, like you no doubt remember, up till a few months ago Rotary was about "the most fondest thing I is of," as the nigger says. There wasn't nothing that stood higher for me than Rotary.

Well, here, about a year ago last fall I took a trip down to the university to visit my son and go to a football game. You know Hubert Junior, my boy. Sure. Well, this is his second year down at the university. Yes, that boy is getting a col-

[2] From *The Apostate,* by George Milburn, copyright 1959, reprinted by permission of Paul R. Reynolds, Inc., 599 Fifth Avenue, New York 17, New York.

lege education. I mean, I'm all for youth having a college education.

Of course, I think there is such a thing as too much education working a detriment. Take, for instance, some of these longhairs running around knocking the country right now. But what I mean is, a good, sound, substantial college education. I don't mean a string of letters a yard long for a man to write after his John Henry. I just mean that I want my boy to have his sheepskin, they call it, before he starts out in the world. Like the fellow says, I want him to get his A.B. degree, and then he can go out and get his J.O.B.

Now, Harry, I always felt like a father has got certain responsibilities to his son. That's just good Rotary. That's all that is. You know that that's just good Rotary yourself, Harry. Well, I always wanted Hubert to think about me just like I was a pal to him, or say an older brother, maybe. Hubert always knew that all he had to do was come to me, and I would act like a big buddy to him, irregardless.

Well, like I was telling you, Harry, I started Hubert in to the university two years ago, and after he had been there about two months, I thought I would run down and see how he was getting along and go to a football game. So I and Mrs. T. drove over one Friday. We didn't know the town very well, so we stopped at a filling station, and I give Hubert a ring, and he come right on down to where we was to show us the way. Just as soon as he come up, I could see right then that he had something on his mind bothering him.

He called me aside and took me into the filling station restroom, and says: "For the love of God, Dad, take that Rotary button out of your coat lapel," he says to me.

### *III. Letter Narration*

The direct presentation of a series of letters written by one character to another; usually a two-way exchange, in which case the letters not only report recent events but may also themselves be, or create, events. Thus, these are also double stories — at once a drama going on now and a narrative of previous action. Letters feature a continually shifting date of narration, so that

the correspondent is, until the last letter, always speaking from within the events instead of from the vantage point of their conclusion. One-way correspondence leads to the next group.

## CLARISSA

### *By Samuel Richardson*

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Arabelle Harlowe

Friday, July 21

If, my dearest sister, I did not think the state of my health very precarious, and that it was my duty to take this step, I should hardly have dared to approach you, although but with my pen, after having found your censures so dreadfully justified as they have been.

I have not the courage to write to my father himself, nor yet to my mother. And it is with trembling that I address myself to you, to beg of you to intercede for me, that my father will have the goodness to revoke that heaviest part of the very heavy curse he laid upon me, which relates to HEREAFTER: for, as to the HERE, *I have indeed met with my punishment from the very wretch in whom I was supposed to place my confidence.*

As I hope not for restoration to favor, I may be allowed to be very earnest on this head: yet will I not use any arguments in support of my request, because I am sure my father, were it in his power, would not have his poor child miserable forever.

I have the most grateful sense of my mother's goodness in sending me up my clothes. I would have acknowledged the favor the moment I received them, with the most thankful duty, but that I feared any line from me would be unacceptable.

I would not give fresh offence: so will decline all other commendations of duty and love; appealing to my heart for both, where *both* are flaming with an ardour that nothing but death can extinguish: therefore only subscribe myself, without so much as a name,

My dear and happy sister,

Your afflicted servant.

## *IV. Diary Narration*

The direct presentation of some character's diary, which of course still features a shifting date of narration; but a diary is addressed neither to a certain person nor to the world at large. It represents a transition between addressing another character and addressing the reader, and hence still purports to be a real-life document. In recording events soon after their occurrence, the narrator is also, intentionally or not, registering his successive states of mind, which also constitute a "story."

### THE PASTORAL SYMPHONY[3]

*By André Gide*

8 May

Dr. Martins came over yesterday from Chaux-de-Fonds. He examined Gertrude's eyes for a long time with the ophthalmoscope. He told me he had spoken about Gertrude to Dr. Roux, the Lausanne specialist, and is to report his observation to him. They both have an idea that Gertrude might be operated on with success. But we have agreed to say nothing to her about it as long as things are not more certain. Martins is to come and let me know what they think after they have consulted. What would be the good of raising Gertrude's hopes if there is any risk of their being immediately extinguished? And besides is she not happy as she is? . . .

10 May

At Easter Jacques and Gertrude saw each other again in my presence — at least Jacques saw Gertrude and spoke to her, but only about trifles. He seemed less agitated than I feared; and I persuaded myself afresh that if his love had really been very ardent, he would not have got over it so easily, even though Gertrude had told him last year before he went away that it was hopeless. I noticed that he no longer says "thou" to Gertrude, but calls her "you" which is certainly preferable; however, I had not asked him to do so and I am

[3] From *Two Symphonies*, trans. Dorothy Bussy (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), pp. 207–209. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

glad it was his own idea. There is undoubtedly a great deal of good in him.

I suspect, however, that this submission of Jacque's was not arrived at without a struggle. The unfortunate thing is that the constraint he has been obliged to impose on his feelings now seems good to him in itself; he would like to see it imposed on everyone; I felt this in the discussion I had with him that I have recorded farther back. Is it not La Rochefoucauld who says that the mind is often the dupe of the heart? . . .

## *V. Subjective Narration*

The narrator is the protagonist of his own story, which he is telling to the general public while still at the same age as, or in the same perspective as, when the events of the story ended. He is still under the spell of these events. Although he is writing from the vantage point of the conclusion, his understanding is still limited in some way either by inexperience, native imperception, or participation-blindness. Part of the story is his present distortion of the past events. Also, he is an amateur narrator who speaks *as if* he had a personal audience; he wants to confess to the world, defy it, or justify himself in its eyes. Style is still apt to be vernacular, and the organization distorted by a subjective classification, logic, and rhetoric. This begins the range of merely personal rather than interpersonal communication.

### "MY SISTER'S MARRIAGE"[4]

*By Cynthia Rich*

When my mother died she left just Olive and me to take care of Father. Yesterday when I burned the package of Olive's letters that left only me. I know that you'll side with my sister in all of this because you're only outsiders, and strangers can afford to sympathize with young love, and with whatever sounds daring and romantic, without thinking what

[4] Reprinted from *Mademoiselle;* copyright © 1955 by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., New York. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

it does to all the other people involved. I don't want you to hate my sister — I don't hate her — but I do want you to see that we're happier this way, Father and I, and as for Olive, she made her choice.

But if you weren't strangers, all of you, I wouldn't be able to tell you about this. "Keep yourself to yourself," my father has always said. "If you ever have worries, Sarah Ann, you come to me and don't go sharing your problems around town." And that's what I've always done. So if I knew you I certainly wouldn't ever tell you about Olive throwing the hairbrush, or about finding the letters buried in the back of the drawer.

I don't know what made Olive the way she is. We grew up together like twins — there were people who thought we were — and every morning before we went to school she plaited my hair and I plaited hers before the same mirror in the same little twist of ribbons and braids behind our heads. We wore the same dresses and there was never a stain on the hem or a rip in our stockings to say to a stranger that we had lost our mother. And although we have never been well-to-do — my father is a doctor and his patients often can't pay — I know that there are people here in Conkling today who think we're rich, just because of little things like candlelight at dinner and my father's cigarette holder and the piano lessons that Olive and I had and the reproduction of "The Anatomy Lesson" that hangs above the mantelpiece instead of botanical prints. "You don't have to be rich to be a gentleman," my father says, "or to live like one."

My father is a gentleman and he raised Olive and myself as ladies. I can hear you laughing, because people like to make fun of words like "gentleman" and "lady," but they are words with ideals and standards behind them, and I hope that I will always hold to those ideals as my father taught me to. If Olive has renounced them, at least we did all we could.

Perhaps the reason that I can't understand Olive is that I have never been in love. I know that if I had ever fallen in love it would not have been, like Olive, at first sight, but only after a long acquaintance. My father knew my mother for seven years before he proposed — it is much the safest way. Nowadays people make fun of that too, and the magazines are full of stories about people meeting in the moonlight and marrying the next morning, but if you read those stories you

know that they are not the sort of people you would want to be like.

Even today Olive couldn't deny that we had a happy childhood. She used to be very proud of being the lady of the house, of sitting across the candlelight from my father at dinner like a little wife. Sometimes my father would hold his carving knife poised above the roast to stand smiling at her and say: "Olive, every day you remind me more of your mother."

I think that although she liked the smile, she minded the compliment, because she didn't like to hear about Mother. Once when my father spoke to her she said: "Papa, you're missing Mother again. I can't bear it when you miss Mother. Don't I take care of you all right? Don't I make things happy for you?" It wasn't that she hadn't loved Mother but that she wanted my father to be completely happy.

To tell the truth, it was Olive Father loved best. There was a time when I couldn't have said that, it would have hurt me too much. Taking care of our father was like playing a long game of "let's pretend," and when little girls play family nobody wants to be the children. I thought it wasn't fair, just because Olive was three years older, that she should always be the mother. I wanted to sit opposite my father at dinner and have him smile at me like that.

I was glad when Olive first began walking out with young men in the summer evenings. Then I would make lemonade for my father ("Is it as good as Olive's?") and we would sit out on the screened porch together watching the fireflies. I asked him about the patients he had seen that day, trying to think of questions as intelligent as Olive's. I knew that he was missing her and frowning into the long twilight for the swing of her white skirts. When she came up the steps he said, "I missed my housewife tonight," just as though I hadn't made the lemonade right after all. She knew, too, that it wasn't the same for him in the evenings without her and for a while, instead of going out, she brought the young men to the house. But soon she stopped even that ("I never realized how silly and shallow they were until I saw them with Papa," she said. "I was ashamed to have him talk to them"). I knew that he was glad, and when my turn came I didn't want to go out because I hated leaving them alone together. It all seems a

very long time ago. I used to hate it when Olive "mothered" me. Now I feel a little like Olive's mother, and she is like my rebellious child.

In spite of everything, I loved Olive. When we were children we used to play together. The other children disliked us because we talked like grownups and didn't like to get dirty, but we were happy playing by ourselves on the front lawn where my father, if he were home, could watch us from his study window. So it wasn't surprising that when we grew older we were still best friends. I loved Olive and I see now how she took advantage of that love. Sometimes I think she felt that if she was to betray my father she wanted me to betray him too.

### *VI. Detached Autobiography*

Still the protagonist of his own story, the narrator is able to report his experience in a way that squares with the reader's understanding and that calls very little attention to his present self; whatever bias he has he is aware of. Usually he is looking back through a distance of time that permits him to disengage his present self from his former self and to understand now what he did not understand then. As such, the story is about growth and self-knowledge. Effectively if not literally, the speaker and the subject have split in two — into a first and a third person, as speaker and listener split off before. (See II. Dramatic Monologue.) This the distinction between informer and information, the narrating and the narrated, becomes much clearer.

#### GREAT EXPECTATIONS

*By Charles Dickens*

At the time when I stood in the churchyard, reading the family tombstones, I had just enough learning to be able to spell them out. My construction even of their simple meaning was not very correct, for I read "wife of the Above" as a complimentary reference to my father's exaltation to a better world; and if any one of my deceased's relations had been

referred to as "Below," I have no doubt I should have formed the worst opinions of that member of the family. Neither were my notions of the theological positions to which my Catechism bound me, at all accurate; for, I have a lively remembrance that I supposed my declaration that I was to "walk in the same all the days of my life," laid me under an obligation always to go through the village from our house in one particular direction, and never to vary it by turning down by the wheelwright's or up by the mill.

When I was old enough, I was to be apprenticed to Joe, and until I could assume that dignity I was not to be what Mrs. Joe called "Pompeyed," or (as I render it) pampered. Therefore, I was not only odd-boy about the forge, but if any neighbour happened to want an extra boy to frighten birds, or pick up stones, or do any such job, I was favoured with the employment. In order, however, that our superior position might not be compromised thereby, a money-box was kept on the kitchen mantel-shelf, into which it was publicly made known that all my earnings were dropped. I have an impression that they were to be contributed eventually towards the liquidation of the National Debt, but I know I had no hope of any personal participation in the treasure.

Mr. Wopsle's great-aunt kept an evening school in the village; that is to say, she was a ridiculous old woman of limited means and unlimited infirmity, who used to go to sleep from six to seven every evening, in the society of youth who paid two-pence per week each, for the improving opportunity of seeing her do it. She rented a small cottage, and Mr. Wopsle had the room up-stairs, where we students used to overhear him reading aloud in a most dignified and terrific manner, and occasionally bumping on the ceiling. There was a fiction that Mr. Wopsle "examined" the scholars, once a quarter. What he did on those occasions was to turn up his cuffs, stick up his hair, and give us Mark Antony's oration over the body of Cæsar. This was always followed by Collins's Ode on the Passions, wherein I particularly venerated Mr. Wopsle as Revenge, throwing his bloodstained sword in thunder down, and taking the War denouncing trumpet with a withering look. It was not with me then, as it was in later life, when I fell into the society of the Passions, and compared them with Collins and Wopsle, rather to the disadvantage of both gentlemen.

### *VII. Memoir, or Observer Narration*

The narrator tells of what happens essentially to someone else, though he may have been a participator in the action. He identifies himself, states what his relation was to the main character(s) and the events, and expresses his reactions to them. Depending on how close he was to the people and events, he had access to information by three possible channels — confidant, eyewitness, and membership in a community or "chorus." The value of such a narrator is that he can provide an external and at the same time privileged personal view of the protagonist and what happened. The key is often *resonance* between speaker and spoken-about, first and third persons; what happens in the protagonist resounds in the narrator. Though actually two different people, a vicarious relation binds them. This is the frontier between autobiography and biography, first person and third person narrative.

THE GREAT GATSBY[5]

*By F. Scott Fitzgerald*

I stayed late that night, Gatsby asked me to wait until he was free, and I lingered in the garden until the inevitable swimming party had run up, chilled and exalted, from the black beach, until the lights were extinguished in the guest-rooms overhead. When he came down the steps at last the tanned skin was drawn unusually tight on his face, and his eyes were bright and tired.

"She didn't like it," he said immediately.

"Of course she did."

"She didn't like it," he insisted. "She didn't have a good time."

He was silent, and I guessed at his unutterable depression.

"I feel far away from her," he said. "It's hard to make her understand."

[5] Reprinted with the permission of Charles Scribner's Sons from THE GREAT GATSBY by F. Scott Fitzgerald: Copyright 1925 Charles Scribner's Sons; renewal copyright 1953 Frances Scott Fitzgerald Lanahan; and with the permission of The Bodley Head Ltd. from F. SCOTT FITZGERALD Vol. I.

"You mean about the dance?"

"The dance?" He dismissed all the dances he had given with a snap of his fingers. "Old sport, the dance is unimportant."

He wanted nothing less of Daisy than that she should go to Tom and say: "I never loved you." After she had obliterated four years with that sentence they could decide upon the more practical measures to be taken. One of them was that, after she was free, they were to go back to Louisville and be married from her house — just as if it were five years ago.

"And she doesn't understand," he said. "She used to be able to understand. We'd sit for hours — "

He broke off and began to walk up and down a desolate path of fruit rinds and discarded favors and crushed flowers.

"I wouldn't ask too much of her," I ventured. "You can't repeat the past."

"Can't repeat the past?" he cried incredulously. "Why, of course you can!"

He looked around him wildly, as if the past were lurking here in the shadow of his house, just out of reach of his hand.

"I'm going to fix everything just the way it was before," he said, nodding determinedly. "She'll see."

He talked a lot about the past, and I gathered that he wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps, that had gone into loving Daisy. His life had been confused and disordered since then, but if he could once return to a certain starting place and go over it all slowly, he could find out what that thing was. . . .

One autumn night, five years before, they had been walking down the street when the leaves were falling, and they came to a place where there were no trees and the sidewalk was white with moonlight. They stopped here and turned toward each other. Now it was a cool night with that mysterious excitement in it which comes at the two changes of the year. The quiet lights in the houses were humming out into the darkness and there was a stir and bustle among the stars. Out of the corner of his eye Gatsby saw that the blocks of the sidewalks really formed a ladder and mounted to a secret place above the trees — he could climb to it, if he climbed alone,

and once there he could suck on the pap of life, gulp down the incomparable milk of wonder.

His heart beat faster and faster as Daisy's white face came up to his own. He knew that when he kissed this girl, and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp again like the mind of God. So he waited, listening for a moment longer to the tuning-fork that had been struck upon a star. Then he kissed her. At his lips' touch she blossomed for him like a flower and the incarnation was complete.

Through all he said, even through his appalling sentimentality, I was reminded of something — an elusive rhythm, a fragment of lost words that I had heard somewhere a long time ago. For a moment a phrase tried to take shape in my mouth and my lips parted like a dumb man's, as though there was more struggling upon them than a wisp of startled air. But they made no sound, and what I had almost remembered was uncommunicable forever.

## *VIII. Biography, or Anonymous Narration: Single Character Point of View*

This is the beginning of impersonal communication: the narrator (now more nearly the author himself) tells what happens to someone else, but without identifying himself and telling how he knows what he knows. He makes claims, however, to the same three kinds of information that a confidant, eyewitness, and chorus might provide, namely knowledge of the inner life, of immediate action, and of general circumstances and background. Of course, the organization and language are those of the author, not of any character except where quoted, and ultimately the unseen narrator's perspective frames the story. Privy to the character's thought and perceptions as paraphrased by the author, the reader sees the events as both of them see them. Presentation of a *single* character's point of view usually indicates certain themes such as the individual *vs.* society, the confrontation of self and world, or the contrast of private and public reality.

## BENITO CERENO

### *By Herman Melville*

Presently the ship's bell sounded two o'clock; and through the cabin-windows a slight rippling of the sea was discerned; and from the desired direction.

"There," exclaimed Captain Delano, "I told you so, Don Benito, look!"

He had risen to his feet, speaking in a very animated tone, with a view the more to rouse his companion. But though the crimson curtain of the stern-window near him that moment fluttered against his pale cheek, Don Benito seemed to have even less welcome for the breeze than the calm.

Poor fellow, thought Captain Delano, bitter experience has taught him that one ripple does not make a wind, any more than one swallow a summer. But he is mistaken for once. I will get his ship in for him, and prove it.

Briefly alluding to his weak condition, he urged his host to remain quietly where he was, since he (Captain Delano) would with pleasure take upon himself the responsibility of making the best use of the wind.

Upon gaining the deck, Captain Delano started at the unexpected figure of Atufal, monumentally fixed at the threshold, like one of those sculptured porters of black marble guarding the porches of Egyptian tombs.

But this time the start was, perhaps, purely physical. Atufal's presence, singularly attesting docility even in sullenness, was contrasted with that of the hatchet-polishers, who in patience evinced their industry; while both spectacles showed, that lax as Don Benito's general authority might be, still, whenever he chose to exert it, no man so savage or colossal but must, more or less, bow.

Snatching a trumpet which hung from the bulwarks, with a free step Captain Delano advanced to the forward edge of the poop, issuing his orders in his best Spanish. The few sailors and many negroes, all equally pleased, obediently set about heading the ship toward the harbour.

While giving some directions about setting a lower stunsail, suddenly Captain Delano heard a voice faithfully repeating his orders. Turning, he saw Babo, now for the time

acting, under the pilot, his original part of captain of the slaves. This assistance proved valuable. Tattered sails and warped yards were soon brought into some trim. And no brace or halyard was pulled but to the blithe songs of the inspirited negroes.

Good fellows, thought Captain Delano, a little training would make fine sailors of them. Why see, the very women pull and sing, too. These must be some of those Ashantee negresses that make such capital soldiers, I've heard. But who's at the helm? I must have a good hand there.

He went to see.

## IX. *Anonymous Narration: Dual Character Point of View*

What applies above (VIII. Biography, or Anonymous Narration: Single Character Point of View) applies here, except that the presentation of *two* characters' inner lives almost certainly announces the different themes of a meeting, conflict, or failure to meet of two people, an ironic discrepancy between their perspectives, or a dual character sketch. Also, the total effect is usually a greater impartiality on the part of the narrator.

### "UNLIGHTED LAMPS"[6]

*By Sherwood Anderson*

The farmer hitched his horse and brought it to the door and the doctor drove off feeling strangely weak and at the same time strong. How simple now seemed the thing he had yet to do. Perhaps when he got home his daughter would have gone to bed but he would ask her to get up and come into the office. Then he would tell the whole story of his marriage and its failure sparing himself no humiliation. "There was something very dear and beautiful in my Ellen and I must make Mary understand that. It will help her to be a beautiful woman," he thought, full of confidence in the strength of his resolution.

[6] Reprinted by permission of Harold Ober Associates, Inc. Copyright 1921 by B. W. Huebsch. Renewed 1948 by Eleanor Copenhaver Anderson.

He got to the door of the livery barn at eleven o'clock and Barney Smithfield with young Duke Yetter and two other men sat talking here. The liveryman took his horse away into the darkness of the barn and the doctor stood for a moment leaning against the wall of the building. The town's night watchman stood with the group by the barn door and a quarrel broke out between him and Duke Yetter, but the doctor did not hear the hot words that flew back and forth or Duke's loud laughter at the night watchman's anger. A queer hesitating mood had taken possession of him. There was something he passionately desired to do but could not remember. Did it have to do with his wife Ellen or Mary his daughter? The figures of the two women were again confused in his mind and to add to the confusion there was a third figure, that of the woman he had just assisted through child birth. Everything was confusion. He started across the street toward the entrance of the stairway leading to his office and then stopped in the road and stared about. Barney Smithfield having returned from putting his horse in the stall shut the door of the barn and a hanging lantern over the door swung back and forth. It threw grotesque dancing shadows down over the faces and forms of the men standing and quarreling beside the wall of the barn.

Mary sat by a window in the doctor's office awaiting his return. So absorbed was she in her own thoughts that she was unconscious of the voice of Duke Yetter talking with the men in the street.

When Duke had come into the street the hot anger of the early part of the evening had returned and she again saw him advancing toward her in the orchard with the look of arrogant male confidence in his eyes but presently she forgot him and thought only of her father. An incident of her childhood returned to haunt her. One afternoon in the month of May when she was fifteen her father had asked her to accompany him on an evening drive into the country. The doctor went to visit a sick woman at a farmhouse five miles from town and as there had been a great deal of rain the roads were heavy. It was dark when they reached the farmer's house and they went into the kitchen and ate cold food off a kitchen table. For some reason her father had, on that evening, appeared

boyish and almost gay. On the road he had talked a little. Even at that early age Mary had grown tall and her figure was becoming womanly. After the cold supper in the farm kitchen he walked with her around the house and she sat on a narrow porch. For a moment her father stood before her. He put his hands into his trouser pockets and throwing back his head laughed most heartily. "It seems strange to think you will soon be a woman," he said. "When you do become a woman what do you suppose is going to happen, eh? What kind of a life will you lead? What will happen to you?"

The doctor sat on the porch beside the child and for a moment she had thought he was about to put his arm around her. Then he jumped up and went into the house leaving her to sit alone in the darkness.

## X. *Anonymous Narration: Multiple Character Point of View*

Going into the minds of several or many characters builds up a panoramic cross-reference of perspectives and is used to explore thoroughly a group, community, society, or epoch. The concern is communal, and the result is a broad impersonal perspective created by the characters but beyond any one of them. The author may retire and let the characters play confidant, eyewitness, and chorus to each other. The old personal tie between narrator and protagonist is broken down even further.

### SHIP OF FOOLS[7]

*By Katherine Anne Porter*

Earlier in that evening at dinner, Herr Professor Hutten, still lacking his proper appetite, barely refrained from pushing away his loaded plate, rising and seeking fresh air; but his wife was eating well, and though the sight was faintly repugnant to him, still there was no good reason for interrupting

[7] From *Ship of Fools,* by Katherine Anne Porter, pp. 286–287; copyright 1945, 1946, 1947, 1950 © 1956, 1958, 1959, 1962, by Katherine Anne Porter. Reprinted by permission of Atlantic-Little Brown and Co. (New York).

her. The other guests seemed as usual, the Doctor amiably silent, Herr Rieber and Fraulein Lizzi exuding their odious atmosphere of illicit intimacy Frau Schmitt unremarkable as ever; only Frau Rittersdorf was chatting away lightly in the direction of the Captain — a frivolous woman, with what a vanity at her age! — and even if Herr Professor Hutten had no hope of hearing anything in the least edifying or enlightening, he listened in the wan hope of some distraction from his inner unease.

Frau Rittersdorf noted his attention, saw the other faces beginning to take on a listening look; without loosing her hold on the attention of Captain Thiele, she turned clever glances upon the others and raised her voice a little to include them in the circle of those who had been lately amused or annoyed or both with the antic of the zarzuela company and their *outré* notions of the etiquette of social occasions on shipboard — if such a word could be used even remotely in such a connection. There was above all that impudent creature they called Tito, who had tried to sell her some tickets of one kind or another for some sort of petty cheat they had thought up among themselves, who knew what?

"Ah yes," Lizzi broke in, "for a raffle! I bought one and got rid of them."

"You should have told me!" cried Herr Rieber. "For I bought *two* — you must give one of yours away!"

"I'll return it to them and get back my money!" whinnied Lizzi, tossing her head.

"Oh," said Frau Rittersdorf, "that should be something to see, anyone getting back a pfenning from those bandits, for I know they are that! No, dear Fraulein, good businesswoman, that you are, everyone knows, but you will want to be better than that!"

"But wonderful dancing partners, don't you find, Frau Rittersdorf?" asked Herr Rieber, gleefully. Lizzi slapped his hand, annoyed, because she had meant to say that herself. "Shame on you," she said, "you are not very kind. Dancing partners are sometimes scarce, one cannot always choose too delicately."

Frau Rittersdorf, shocked at this turn of talk just when she was ready to give a sparkling account of that unusual inci-

dent, cried out in a high yet ladylike soprano, "Ah, but there are effronteries so utterly unexpected one is taken off guard, one is defenseless, it is better to follow one's instinct — yes, as well as training! and to behave as if nothing out of the way were happening — how could I dream of such a thing as that?" She sat back and held her napkin to her lips, staring over it in distress at Lizzi, whose laugh was a long cascade of falling tinware.

"Ah, but that is just what ladies are supposed to dream about," called Herr Rieber in delight, leaning forward to make himself heard over Lizzi's clamor. "What is wrong with that, please tell me?"

Pig-dog, thought Frau Rittersdorf, her dismay turning in a flash to a luxury of rage, at least I am not reduced to dancing with you! She bared her teeth at him and lifted her brows and narrowed her eyes: "Are you sure you would know what *ladies* dream about, Herr Rieber?" she inquired, dangerously.

These tactics impressed Herr Rieber, who had got his face smacked more than once by easily offended ladies, and at that moment Frau Rittersdorf resembled every one of them, in tone and manner. A man couldn't be too cautious with that proper, constipated type, no matter how gamey she looked. He wilted instantly, unconditionally.

## XI. *Anonymous Narration: No Character Point of View*

In withdrawing from the minds of all his characters, the author reduces his roles as informer to two — eyewitness and chorus. He no longer plays confidant to anyone. One result is something like legend or myth, where external deeds and words carry the story by themselves with the narrator supplying background information and commentary. The characters tend to be typical or universal, the action symbolic or ritualistic. Personal psychology is not the point. These are thoroughly communal stories with an archetypal psychology. Another result is the external sketch. The next step would be to drop the eyewitness role as well, leaving only chorus information in the form of generalized chronicles, digests of the sorts of documents

covered up to here. In other words, the rest is history, summaries of summaries of summaries.

### THE MINISTER'S BLACK VEIL — A PARABLE

*By Nathaniel Hawthorne*

The next day, the whole village of Milford talked of little else than Parson Hooper's black veil. That, and the mystery concealed behind it, supplied a topic for discussion between acquaintances meeting in the street, and good women gossiping at their open windows. It was the first item of news that the tavern-keeper told to his guests. The children babbled of it on their way to school. One imitative little imp covered his face with an old black handkerchief, thereby so affrighting his playmates that the panic seized himself, and he wellnigh lost his wits by his own waggery.

It was remarkable that of all the busybodies and impertinent people in the parish, not one ventured to put the plain question to Mr. Hooper, wherefore he did this thing. Hitherto, whenever there appeared the slightest call for such interference, he had never lacked advisers, nor shown himself averse to be guided by their judgment. If he erred at all, it was by so painful a degree of self-distrust, that even the mildest censure would lead him to consider an indifferent action as a crime. Yet, though so well acquainted with this amiable weakness, no individual among his parishioners chose to make the black veil a subject of friendly remonstrance. There was a feeling of dread, neither plainly confessed nor carefully concealed, which caused each to shift the responsibility upon another, till at length it was found expedient to send a deputation of the church, in order to deal with Mr. Hooper about the mystery, before it should grow into a scandal. Never did an embassy so ill discharge its duties. The minister received them with friendly courtesy, but became silent, after they were seated, leaving to his visitors the whole burden of introducing their important business. The topic, it might be supposed, was obvious enough. There was the black veil swathed round Mr. Hooper's forehead, and concealing every feature above his placid mouth, on which, at times, they could per-

ceive the glimmering of a melancholy smile. But that piece of crape, to their imagination, seemed to hang down before his heart, the symbol of a fearful secret between him and them. Were the veil but cast aside, they might speak freely of it, but not till then. Thus they sat a considerable time, speechless, confused, and shrinking uneasily from Mr. Hooper's eye, which they felt to be fixed upon them with an invisible glance. Finally, the deputies returned abashed to their constituents, pronouncing the matter too weighty to be handled, except by a council of the churches, if, indeed, it might not require a general synod.

## *Techniques of Fiction*

Ever since Henry James established the concept of a central intelligence or authority through whom the experience of the story is filtered to the reader, discussions of point of view have recognized four or five techniques — so-called omniscient third-person, third-person limited to one character's point of view, retrospective autobiography, first-person observer narration, and sometimes a subjective or unreliable narration.

In an incomplete theory, these categories seemed to be based on mixed principles — on distinctions, for example, between whether the character or the author is filtering the experience, whether the narrator is his own protagonist or focusing on another, and whether his account is reliable or not. Besides omitting other important distinctions, this classification can lead to a great deal of confusion. Some "omniscience" is more omniscient than others, and no third-person narration can really be limited to the point of view of a character. And while recognized as techniques in some contexts, interior and dramatic monologues, letters, and diaries never seem to get integrated into considerations of point of view. Many stories are indiscriminately called "monologues" in one discussion and indiscriminately described as first-person or subjective in another. Finally, so long as all the techniques are not placed in relation one to another, they suggest no sequence — a loss not only for teachers and literary critics but also for any reader interested in

the connections between form and content, or narrative art and everyday expression. This chapter attempts to contribute a comprehensive, unifying theory of narrative.

The techniques of fiction imitate everyday recording and reporting. The stories in the first two groups (interior monologue, dramatic monologue) purport to be actual discourse going on "now" — somebody thinking, somebody speaking. The stories of the next five groups purport to be documents written by characters in the story — letters, diaries, autobiographies, or memoirs. What we are asked to believe about all of the remaining stories, of course, is that the events really happened and that therefore these (third-person) narratives are also actual documents — biographies, case histories, or chronicles. Of course art implies artifice; my reader can note for himself what the differences are between these fictional forms and their real-life counterparts.

Any piece of fiction one might name falls somewhere along the spectrum, or represents some combination of the techniques illustrated herein. Familiarity with the storyteller's full repertory makes a particular author's choice of form more meaningful. You cannot separate the tale from the telling. Beneath the content of every message is intent. And form embodies that intent. Intuitively or not, an author chooses his techniques according to his meaning. Spontaneous attention to form will tell the reader more about what the author is doing and what he means than a direct analysis of meaning will do — besides preserving his pleasure. To appreciate the connection between form and subject, just imagine *Vanity Fair* told by one of its characters instead of by the godlike author, or *The Great Gatsby* narrated by Gatsby instead of Nick, or *Great Expectations* told by an anonymous narrator who enters the minds of all the characters, instead of by Pip. Changes in intent, effect, meaning, and theme occur as the technique shifts in the foregoing samples.

Because they feature unreliable or fallible speakers, the stories in the first five groups force us to pay attention to motive and attitude and style and tone, to all those qualities of the

speaker and his language that come through easily in everyday conversation but that become subtler on the page, especially in the techniques of anonymous narration that appear later in the spectrum. Third-person stories look deceptively bland: the speaker is hidden, we take his guidance for granted, and easily forget that — "third-person" or not — this story is being told by *somebody* and that that somebody exerts a rhetoric just as individual and influential as that of any character *I*.

*Every* story is first-person, whether the speaker identifies himself or not. Interior monologues, dramatic monologues, letters, diaries, and subjective narrations keep alive the drama of the narrating act: they put the speaker on display, so that we cannot ignore or forget the way he talks, the kind of logic he uses, and the organization he imposes on experience. Although Mark Twain tells the story of Tom Sawyer himself, instead of talking through Huck, as he does in *Huckleberry Finn,* he has ways of organizing and setting down his material just as unique as Huck's. And the authors Goethe and Samuel Richardson are essentially in the same position when they write, as Goethe's young Werther is when recording his sorrows in his diary, or Richardson's Clarissa Harlowe is when putting down in letters her plans to avert seduction. The difference is that the monologues of Huck, Werther, and Clarissa are spontaneous, vernacular, and private, whereas the monologues of Twain, Goethe and Richardson are composed, literary, and public. After listening to the everyday voices of characters caught in the open with all their prejudices showing, it is easier to detect and appreciate the subtleties of the detached professional writer. As Walker Gibson puts it in talking of "the speaking voice" in fiction, "We all play roles, all the time. I don't mean this is dishonesty — it is simply a way we have of making ourselves understood." This is no less true of the professional author than of Tom, Dick, or Harry. "To write a composition," says Gibson, "is to decide three things . . . who you are; what your situation is (your 'subject'); who your audience is." The key word is *composition.* When Tom speaks or writes spontaneously to Dick, he makes

the above decisions more or less unconsciously; when we behave like an author, we pay more attention to such decisions. When we act as a reader, we need to know how such decisions are made.

There is another way in which the earlier techniques prepare for the later ones. Interior and dramatic monologues, letters, diaries, and personal documents are some of the building blocks of the larger, less limited techniques. Most novels contain some directly quoted thoughts and dialogue. And many novels, like Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet,* incorporate the texts of letters and diaries. *Moby Dick* touches every part of the spectrum; there are the soliloquies of Ahab, dramatic monologue and dialogue, autobiography and observer narration by Ishmael, and broad, anonymous narration set by the author. A reader familiar with stories consisting entirely of monologue or document (letters, diary) is at a great advantage when plunged into the hubbub of voices that makes up the conventional novel or short story purporting to be memoir, biography, or chronicle.

More generally, each technique in this spectrum, regarded as real-life reportage, is more comprehensive and abstract, takes in more territory, than the ones before it. This comes from the narrator's increasingly complicated job of compiling and assimilating material from more and more remote sources — of incorporating and digesting, quoting and paraphrasing. A social worker would have to summarize much more material to tell the story of a client or group of clients than one of these clients would have to for his own diary or for an impromptu monologue. Throughout the spectrum, the narrator of the story becomes less and less confined to a particular time and place of telling and being listened to, and farther and farther removed from the time and place of the events narrated. He floats more and more freely, regardless of the concreteness of his language, and his broadening vantage point implies greater and greater selection and reorganization of his original information; at the same time, his more public audience demands of him a more universal style, rhetoric, and logic.

## *The Learning Process*

The narrative sequence corresponds closely to Piaget's description of the evolution of learning in the child. What hinders the growth of understanding, he says, is an unconscious preference for a limited local point of view. Learning is a matter of "decentering," of breaking through our egocentricity to new points of view not determined solely by our physical vantage point in time and space or by our emotional preferences. We achieve decentering by adapting ourselves to things and people outside ourselves and by adopting points of view initially foreign to us, as the anonymous narrator does with his single, dual, and multiple character points of view. This amounts to expanding one's perspective; one does not become less egocentric, but his center becomes an area, not just a point. In the last group of stories, the narrator is centered in the middle of the community consciousness.

If we imagine something called a primary moment of experience, such as what an interior monologue records on the spot, we may think of the other sections of the spectrum as stages in the processing of this experience, as ways of combining it with other experiences, as forms in which it is talked about, levels to which it is abstracted, and vantage points from which it is viewed. These are all different ways of expressing decentering and may demonstrate how this difficult and lifelong learning comes about. It makes a difference whether the moment of primary experience has just happened or happened a long time ago, whether it has happened to the speaker or someone else, and whether he is confiding it to an acquaintance or broadcasting it to a larger audience. The stories at the end of the spectrum are not, of course, superior to the earlier ones. What is important are the different modes of abstracting experience and what they correspond to in real life.

To speak of the reader's learning process, it seems that, ideally, comprehension and appreciation should happen, and happen as one reads, without formal analysis. Intuitions are

swift and deep, and intuitions can be developed. A course of reading that is structured according to some fundamental relations has advantages: the reader gains a perspective of the woods as he moves among the trees, and the spectacle of gradually shifting shapes permits him to grasp the facts about the field intuitively by himself. Real learning is not accepting statements of the sort made in this essay but reorganizing constantly one's own inner field in an effort to match it with the field of study. Stories may magnetize each other if they are sequenced so as to exploit the basic structure of discourse.

The interrelation of life and literature is both more precise and more organic than is commonly expressed in the truism that one can learn one through the other. Fiction holds a mirror up not only to our other behavior but to our modes of communicating and learning. It does this not only in what it says but in how it says it. By moving freely back and forth among the three realms of fiction, discourse, and growth, via a common concept, we can bring them to bear on each other and thus understand each better. The very subject matter of fiction inevitably concerns the making and breaking of communication among people, someone's learning or failure to learn, or something about discrepancies and adjustments of perspective. We invite the reader to test this statement with any story that comes to mind. Stories both *are* systems of communication and knowledge, and *are about* such systems. Good art, as we all know, weds form to content, either through the dissonance of irony or the consonance of harmony. What makes such fusions possible is that our ways of apprehending and sharing experience are themselves a crucial part of what we call experience.

## *Uses of the Spectrum*

First, a few suggestions that do not directly concern the classroom.

Perhaps this schema could be of use to critics and reviewers, who could in turn help, more than they sometimes do, the average reader. Most of us are content-bound by training. We ask

ourselves unnecessarily complicated questions about what a story means and what the author is doing, when a simple glance at the communication structure of the work would answer many of these questions. Every message has intent as well as content, and form embodies this intent. Gatsby is "great" only as seen by Nick; if you want to create a semi-legendary figure of romantic mystery you do not take the reader into his mind. And can you imagine what would happen to our ship of fools if it were viewed only by one of the characters?

For literary scholars and historians the spectrum might be a revealing way to examine individual authors or epochs or national trends. Some writers, such as Thackeray and Tolstoi, seldom move outside a certain range of the spectrum, whereas others, such as Dostoevski, play it freely from one end to the other. Why has the diary technique been used most, and most successfully, by the French? Why have the British, until very recently, stayed in the third-person range more than the Americans, French, or Russians? Why has the historical development of storytelling followed the reverse of this spectrum, moving from the most abstract and external to the most immediate and internal?

Generally, all people whose work requires writing narrative of some kind, or sifting other people's narratives, should become sophisticated about the relations of lower-order reportage to high-order reportage. An historian or case-writer or lawyer or foreign service officer should ask himself which form squares best with his relations to his material and to his audience. If information is firsthand, to what extent am I an eyewitness or confidant or member of a chorus? Am I playing all the roles I should? In the best ratio? Should I go and look, go and interview, go and ask? If secondhand, what about sources? Are they not precisely such things as recorded interior and dramatic monologues, letters, journals, varied first-person accounts? In *The Use of Personal Documents in the Psychological Sciences*,[8] Gordon Allport has discussed the difficulty of honestly and sen-

[8] New York: Social Science Research Council, 1942.

sitively converting first-person material into third-person when writing up cases. When and how do we quote, summarize, and synthesize these personal documents? Such are the problems of the biographer, historian, and sociologist, who may not, like the novelist, imagine what they do not know. At every stage of abstracting *from* his material and *for* his audience the teller of true tales faces choices involving increasing inference, increasing risk of confusing teller and told.

As regards classroom education itself, the spectrum may be of use, first of all, to the teacher, for whom it is intended to be an aid in understanding narrative technique in terms of abstraction, person, and point of view. What are all the story types and how do they relate to each other? Traditionally, the approach to fiction has been dominated by the Aristotelian categories of plot, character, setting, and theme. Now, for one thing, it is terribly hard to "factor out" these elements in a given story, because they are so interwoven with each other, and it is not at all clear why readers should attempt to do so. Second, since presumably all stories contain all elements, these categories do not enable one to distinguish among story types but only to "analyze" a single story, although some pedagogues and anthologists have attempted, with alarming results, to classify stories according to which element was emphasized. Third, like Aristotle's other theories of language and poetics, the conception of story elements was not created for teaching purposes; it is not part of a pedagogical scheme of discourse. And finally, plot, character, setting, and theme involve issues of who, what, where, when, and why that are best understood by grasping the information and communication systems of a story, and by perceiving how these shift from one story to another.

As a curriculum sequence the narrative spectrum should be used with a strong regard for the maturity of the students at hand and for the different learning problems of reading and writing. For students in elementary school and junior high, the spectrum may provide a sound reading progression *if reversed.* Although this reversed order does roughly recapitulate literary history, I would not of course recommend it for that reason but

rather for the reason I mentioned in connection with Northrop Frye's theory of heroes — that child development does in some ways seem to concur with historical development. I said then that children want first to read about the grandiose and the far-fetched — superhuman figures set in the there-then — and that they only gradually come to accept scaled-down characters and everyday situations. As the *Open Court Readers* have put it, very young readers want their heroes to be extreme — much better or much worse than they are themselves. An important correlation exists, I believe, between kinds of heroes and narrative method. It is interesting, for example, that folk and fairy tales, myths, legends, and fables — the stories that contain superhuman or miraculous heroes — are told by an anonymous narrator to an anonymous audience and include little character point of view, if any. The distances between speaker, subject, and listener are at the maximum possible for narratives still featuring individuals. Such stories are impersonal in every sense except for there being heroes at all. When referred to, the inner life of the hero is simply and factually stated, being usually so universal that it need not be presented. Indeed, the main point about archetypal heroes is that they stand for the reader's own psychic content and invite projection by remaining empty. At the other end of the spectrum, the anti-hero, the ironic man who is less than man, appears in conjunction with personal narration of a claustrophobic point of view — the subjective narration of *Notes from Underground,* diaries, interior monologue. The anti-hero speaks for himself, which is to say he hangs himself, and his self-told story is displayed for mockery. It is as if grandeur were a factor of distance! At any rate, judging from children's and adolescents' tastes, it seems that an appropriate progression of fiction reading would lead at once down the scale of heroes and down the scale of abstraction. I hypothesize that both run from *he* to *I,* in some manner that approximates in more or less detail the gradations of the narrative spectrum.

Likewise, the youngest student is apt to cast his own fictions into remote third person, and only gradually differentiate story

technique into the many narrator-character-audience relations that I have arrayed. But at this point we have to distinguish between his writing of fiction and his writing of actuality. To the extent that narrative assignments ask him to recount incidents from his own experience, he is perfectly capable of narrating in the first person, and indeed must do so until he has learned to gather the kind of data required for telling what happened to other people. In other words, if the spectrum is to serve as some sort of curriculum guide, it should probably be reversed when the events are being made up but followed as presented here when the events are real. This is in line with the principle, discussed in Chapter Two, that fictionalizing and reporting are different modes of abstracting entailing different psychological processes. If, as I would recommend, a reportage assignment stipulates, not the content, but the writer's relations to his subject and audience, then the student is automatically placed in the position of a narrator of one of the story types on the spectrum. When inventing a story, however, he must *choose* the technique, which, for one thing, presupposes familiarity with all the possibilities, but which also, and more importantly, involves him in the psychic objectification of feeling. In this case, I maintain, the younger he is, the more likely that he will choose a third-person technique. My own proposals for narrative assignments (in *A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum*) often leave the order open to further experimentation, but I have suggested that the writing of letters, diaries, and general autobiography begin in elementary school and be followed in junior high by narrative that specializes successively in memoir, biography, and chronicle. Since interior and dramatic monologues are natural discourses anyway, these are not assigned until junior high, when students can become aware of them enough to simulate them fictionally in dramatic activity and in writing.

Senior high and college students who have already encountered most of the narrative spectrum, partly through reading and partly through writing, perhaps piecemeal, perhaps in a limited order, would probably benefit from a sequence of fiction

reading following the spectrum as sequenced in this chapter. The purpose would be to put all the story types in relation to each other, thereby increasing the understanding of each, and to heighten awareness of the informational and communicational processes operating in both real life and literature, as mentioned earlier. *Points of View* was intended to pull together in this way the varieties of narrative that students had probably experienced previously as separate entities. Older adolescents not familiar with many story types might be introduced to them in continuum by reading through the spectrum as presented here and by writing some of the types themselves.

In brief, the spectrum should prove useful in arranging both reading and writing sequences, if not always adhered to in detail, if reversed when appropriate, and if employed always in relation to the maturity of the learner and the mode of the abstracting.