Narration (1)
The narrator

- Who speaks?
- The narrator as a link between the author and the reader.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Narrator</th>
<th>Reader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reality</td>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>Reality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The complete narrative chain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Real author</th>
<th>Implied author</th>
<th>Narrator</th>
<th>Narratee</th>
<th>Implied reader</th>
<th>Real reader</th>
</tr>
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Types of narration

• 3 ways to analyse narration:
  – Relationship narrator ↔ story
  – Relationship narrator ↔ characters
  – Relationship narrator ↔ time scheme of the story
Relationship narrator ↔ story

- Narrator TAKES PART in the story
  → intradiegetic narrator

- Narrator DOES NOT TAKE PART in the story
  → Extradiegetic narrator
Relationship narrator ↔ characters

• Narrator IS a character in the story
  → homodiegetic narrator

• Narrator IS NOT a character in the story
  → heterodiegetic narrator

• Narrator TELLS HIS/HER OWN story
  → autodiegetic narrator
Relationship
narrator ↔ time scheme

• Ulterior narration:
Narrator tells events after they happen
(most common case)
• Simultaneous narration:
Narrator tells events as they happen
(Facebook)
• Anterior narration:
Narrator tells events before they happen
(prophecy)
The narrator’s functions (1)

• As narrating agent
  – Relates what happens
  – Establishes the setting
  – Reports the characters' words/thoughts
    • Direct discourse
    • Free direct discourse
    • Indirect discourse
    • Free indirect discourse
    • Narrative report
The narrators functions (2)

- As commentator
  - Omniscient narrator supplementing a character’s vision
  - Generalisation
  - Comment on the narration itself
Narratorial presence

• Obtrusive or unobtrusive?

• Reliable or unreliable?
Narrating agency and reader response

• Self-effacing narrator → dramatisation / identification

• Obtrusive narrator → critical distance
Narration (2)
• I/ Identifying the narrator
• II/ Characterising the narratorial presence
• III/ Place of the narrator in the narrative chain
• IV/ Place of the narrator in the time scheme
• V/ Functions of the narrator
Heterodiegetic VS homodiegetic narrator

• Example 1 = heterodiegetic narrator (the narrator is not a character).

• Example 2 = homodiegetic narrator (1st person narration → narrator = character).
Superimposition of narrative voices

- Cf David Lodge « Telling in different voices », *The Art of Fiction*, p. 125-129

- Ex. 5: superimposition (Nick Carraway / Jordan Baker)

- Ex. 10 d: polyphony (different unidentified voices)
• I/ Identifying the narrator
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Obtrusive or unobtrusive?

- **Obtrusive**: ex. 2 (→ distance)
- **Unobtrusive**: ex. 10b (→ immediacy)
Reliable or unreliable?

• !! Can only be determined by reading the whole work !!

• **Reliable**: ex. 1

• **Unreliable**: ex. 10c « […] but why *will* you say that I am mad? […] How, then, am I mad? […] »
• I/ Identifying the narrator
• II/ Characterising the narratorial presence
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• V/ Functions of the narrator
The narrative chain (1)

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### The narrative chain (2)

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## Narrator → reader (ex. 2 & 4)

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<th>Narratee</th>
<th>Implied reader</th>
<th>Real reader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark Twain</td>
<td>« Mr Mark Twain »</td>
<td>Huck Finn</td>
<td>= implied reader = « You »</td>
<td>« You »</td>
<td>Us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Ellison</td>
<td>« I »</td>
<td></td>
<td>= implied reader = « You »</td>
<td>« You »</td>
<td>Us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real author</td>
<td>Implied author</td>
<td>Narrator</td>
<td>Narratee</td>
<td>Implied reader</td>
<td>Real reader</td>
</tr>
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<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ring Lardner</td>
<td>(undefined presence)</td>
<td>« I » (= a character)</td>
<td>« You » (= another character)</td>
<td>(undefined presence)</td>
<td>Us</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I/ Identifying the narrator
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Narrator ↔ time scheme (1)

• **Ulterior narration** → « My father was happiest behind the wheel » (ex. 6)

• **Simultaneous narration** → « This is the seventy-first public appearance… » (ex. 7)
Narrator ↔ time scheme (2)

• Anterior narration → « With a little luck, you’ll dismiss this labor… » (ex. 8)
  = prophecy

• …the smoke of three thousand incinerated bodies would drift over toward Brooklyn…
  But for now, it was still eight o’clock… » (ex. 9)
  = prolepsis
• I/ Identifying the narrator
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The narrator as narrating agent

• Reporting actions and events: « It was eight o’clock when I stepped out into the street » (ex. 9)

• Characterisation: « Not long ago there lived in uptown New York [...] Leo Finkle, a rabbinical student [...] » (ex. 1)

• Setting: « [...] as I walked along the avenue under that brilliant blue sky » (ex. 9)
Reporting a character’s words and thoughts

- **Direct report:**
  - explicit: ex. 5 (« said Jordan Baker ») + ex. 10 a (« Mrs Dalloway said »)

  - implicit:
    - « -- How could you, Madam [...]? » ex. 10 b = dialogue
    - « For Lucy had her work cut out for her » 10 a) = stream of consciousness

- **Indirect report:** « He shared with my mother his memories of these journeys [...] » (ex. 6)
The narrator as commentator

- Revealing elements unknown to the characters: « Just two hours after that, the smoke of three thousand incinerated bodies would drift over toward Brooklyn » (ex. 9)
- Making generalisations: « I never seen anybody but lied, one time or another […] » (ex. 2)
- Commentiong on the act of narration: « What else but try to tell you what was really happening when your eyes were looking through? » (ex. 4)