Frames, Preferences, and the Reading of Third-Person Narratives: Towards a Cognitive Narratology

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Abstract   The article presents a model-oriented approach to how third-person narratives are read. Building on Minsky's (1979 [1975]) theory of frames, Jackendoff's (1983; 1987) concept of preference rules, Perry's (1979) theory of literary dynamics, and Sternberg's (1982b) Proteus Principle, its main aim is to conceptualize third-person narrative situations (Stanzel 1984) in terms of cognitive models, and to explore the mechanics of top-down/bottom-up hermeneutic processes. Avoiding classical "low-structuralist" narratology with its "normal case" approach, the essay also proposes new ways of analyzing protean phenomena like description, free indirect discourse, and parenthetical discourse. It presents an integrative account of primacy/recency conflicts and sketches the possible direction of a genuinely reading-oriented narratology.

A Frame-Based Conceptualization of Third-Person Narrative Situations

The term *frame*, either in its usual meaning of context, pattern or scheme, or in a variety of stipulative meanings is currently popular in a number of different disciplines—in literary theory alone, recent reference works list more than ten different uses.[1] In the present context, a frame will be

understood, as in Perry 1979, to denote the cognitive model that is selected and used (and sometimes discarded) in the process of reading a narrative text. According to Perry, a frame stores and structures the answers to questions like "What is happening? What is the state of affairs? What is the situation? Where is this happening? What are the motives? What is the purpose? What is the speaker's position?" (Perry 1979: 43). But while in Perry the term remains largely an undefined primitive, a more explicit theory of frames has been available from artificial intelligence research since about 1975. The following introductory passage from Marvin Minsky's influential exposition presents a useful working definition:

(1)   Here is the essence of frame theory: When one encounters a new situation (or makes a substantial change in one's view of a problem), one selects from memory a structure called a frame. This is a remembered framework to be adapted to fit reality by changing details as necessary.

      We can think of a frame as a network of nodes and relations. The "top levels" of a frame are fixed, and represent things that are always true about the supposed situation. The lower levels have many terminals—"slots" that must be filled by specific instances or data. Each terminal can specify conditions its assignments must meet. (The assignments themselves are usually smaller "sub-frames.") . . . Much of the phenomenological power of the theory hinges on the inclusion of expectations and other kinds of presumptions. A frame's terminals are normally already filled with "default" assignments. (1979 [1975]: 1–2)

To illustrate the uses of frame theory as a general theory of cognition and knowledge, Minsky discusses cases of visual perception such as seeing a room, the semantic processing of ungrammatical sentences, and the understanding of stories and various social scenarios.

Given the wide scope of frame theory, a frame conceptualization of Franz K. Stanzel's (1984) concept of narrative situations clearly falls within its range of possible applications. Although primarily conceived as tools of narratological taxonomy, the narrative situations emphasize pragmatic and cognitive detail. Part of their integrative power derives from Stanzel's decision to describe "ideal types," a notion that corresponds closely to the frame-theoretical "defaults." Despite such promising points of contact, however, a frame-oriented conceptualization of narrative situations

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Halász 1987; Harker 1989; Ibsch 1990; Ryan 1991; Weber 1992; Gerrig 1993; Andringa and Davis 1994; Cook 1994; Duchan et al. 1995; as well as in several articles in *New Literary History* 20:2 (1989) and *Poetics* 19:1 (1990). Readers may also want to refer to the forthcoming papers of the 1995 Utrecht conference, *Narrative Perspective: Cognition and Emotion*, edited by Will van Peer and Seymour Chatman.

is not immediately obvious. Certainly, Stanzel's own design of a "typologi-
cal circle," despite achieving an impressive featural synthesis (Cohn 1981:
159), cannot satisfactorily represent the complex dependencies, intricate
hierarchies, correlations, and restrictions pertaining to person, mediacy,
perspective, and narrative mode that are usually apparent in any discur-
sive account of the narrative situations.

   It would seem possible, however, to enlarge on Mieke Bal's (1981) pro-
posal that the formula *X relates that Y sees that Z does* constitutes a miniature
general model of narrative situation. In Bal's formula, X is a narrator, Y a
focalizer, and Z one or several actors. According to Bal, if the narrator is a
focalizer and also one of the actors, the narrative situation corresponds to
homodiegetic (first-person) fictional "autobiography." But if the narrator
does not take part in the action, the narrative situation is a heterodiegetic,
"realist" (ibid.: 45) one, which is more or less the extent of Bal's utilization
of the formula. In later elaborations of the various narrator-focalizer rela-
tions (Bal 1985: 120), she resorts to a different type of formalization that is
less germane to my present purpose.

   Marrying Stanzel's narrative situations to Bal's formula requires some
adjustments in the latter. First, I will extend the formula to include a
"receiver" (R) to represent the narratee, that is, the narrator's fictional im-
mediate addressee. Thus *X tells R that Y sees that Z does* conveniently installs
the text-internal pragmatic dimension and provides a possible projection
of text-external pragmatics. Second, Bal's focalizer will be understood to
be a reflector in Stanzel's sense, in other words, a characterical center of
consciousness (I will make no use here of "external" or narrator-focalizers).
Third, two cases will be separated out, one without a reflector — *X tells R
that Z does* — and one with a covert or withdrawn narrator — *(X tells R that)
Y sees Z does*. These two cases correspond to Stanzel's authorial and figural
narrative situations, respectively. The structural trees shown below (repre-
senting the basic syntactic relations of the respective formulas) can now
serve as intuitive frame visualizations of the three major third-person nar-
rative situations.[2]

In (2), the rounded squares denote the extent of narratorial control, the
ellipses or "spotlights of consciousness" (Stanzel 1984: 155) indicate reflec-
torial seeing, the "clipboard" icons represent sets of conditions, and the
small black boxes under the clipboards represent the terminal slots that
hold the various agents — narrators, narratees, reflectors, and actors. De-
spite the drastic simplifications, (2) enables one to visualize frames as hier-

2. Strictly speaking, only A and C correspond to Stanzel's two "ideal" third-person types;
B is an "intermediate" or "mixed" type.

(2)   Third-person narrative situations as frames:
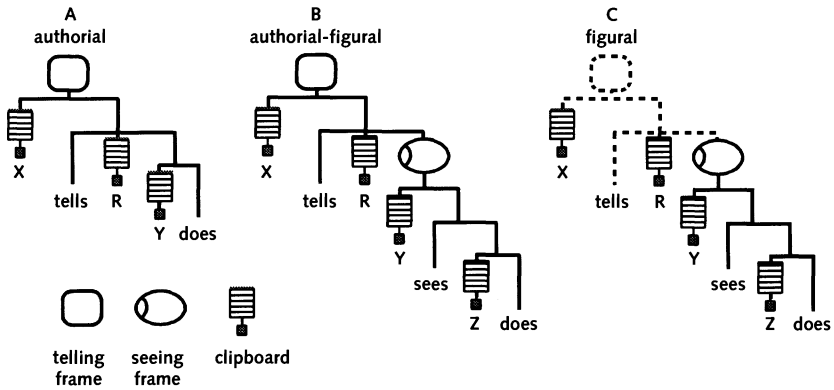
archical structures, modularize the components without losing the general picture, and situate concepts in a systematic context.

The following excerpts are textual examples of frames A, B, and C, respectively:

(3)   A. Arthur had passed the village of Hayslope, and was approaching the Broxton side of the hill, when at a turning in the road, he saw a figure about a hundred yards before him which it was impossible to mistake for anyone else than Adam Bede, even if there had been no grey, tailless shepherd-dog at his heels. He was striding along at his usual rapid pace; and Arthur pushed on his horse to overtake him, for he retained too much of his boyish feeling for Adam to miss an opportunity of chatting with him. I will not say that his love for that good fellow did not owe some of its force to the love of patronage: our friend Arthur liked to do everything that was handsome, and to have his handsome deeds recognized.   (George Eliot, *Adam Bede*, 1980 [1859]: 208)

B. According to the Buddhist belief, those who have done evil in their lives will spend the next incarnation in the shape of a rat, a frog or some other low animal. U Po Kyin was a good Buddhist and intended to provide against this danger. He would devote his closing years to good works, which would pile up enough merit to outweigh the rest of his life. Probably his good works would take the form of building pagodas. Four pagodas, five, six, seven— the priests would tell him how many—with carved stonework, gilt umbrellas, and little bells that tinkled in the wind, every tinkle a prayer. And he would return to the earth in male human shape—for a woman ranks at about the same level as a rat or a frog—or at best some dignified beast such as an elephant.

All these thoughts flowed through U Po Kyin's mind swiftly and for the most part in pictures. His brain, though cunning, was quite barbaric, and

it never worked except for some definite end; mere meditation was beyond him.   (George Orwell, *Burmese Days*, 1973 [1934]: 7–8)

C. 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.
    "Is that the mill?" he asked.
    "Yes."   (Ernest Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, 1943 [1940]: 1)

Let us begin with an informal summary of the main characteristics of (2A)–(2C), as exemplified in (3A)–(3C).

In passages read under the conceptual frames A and B, we encounter an anonymous and usually sexless authorial narrator who does not participate in the action, who is normally omniscient, omnipresent, and reliable, and who is responsible for exposition, temporal organization, choice of narrative mode, rhetoric, and style (usually well-spoken). An authorial narrator also typically engages in reader-address (using the first person as in 3A) and comment (as in 3A and 3B).

As pointed out above, the subject of the seeing activity in frames B and C is a reflector. A reflector is a foregrounded character, a "central consciousness," whose perceptions "reflect" the fictional world (Stanzel 1984: 48). By definition, reflectorial seeing includes perception, imaginary perception, thought, feelings, and other mental processes; and the product of these mental activities will be summarily referred to as a character's *consciousness-data*. In reflectorial mode, a reflector's inside views are shown "from within," the text foregrounds the reflector's consciousness-data, the narrative tempo is scenic, and the reader is cast into the role of a witness. No such reflectorial seeing is present in (3A), even though there are inside views and, indeed, Arthur is reported as seeing Adam. But this act of perception is reported by (3A)'s overt authorial narrator like any of Arthur's other acts, his pushing his horse onward, for instance. In other words, the inside views in (3A) are reported "from without" (Stanzel 1984: 126–27), and that puts them on a level with reports of ordinary activities so that they simply revert to a variant of *doing*. By contrast, the middle section of excerpt (3B), albeit embedded in explicit narratorial exposition and summarizing judgment, gives us an inside view of the reflector U Po Kyin "from within." The narrative in (3B) proceeds from telling us something about Buddhism to presenting a typical "good" Buddhist's mind at work, and is done in such a manner that we are momentarily transported into

U Po Kyin's head and seem to coexperience the reflector's thoughts and visions. Still, the authorial narrator of (3B) plainly *uses* the reflector as a medium to illustrate an unfamiliar world view, and the brief parading of the reflector's consciousness-data serves both characterization and narrative exposition in so far as it introduces an important character, actually, the story's main antagonist. By comparison, the reflector in (3C) is far less subservient to such transparent expository uses. Significantly, large portions of (3C) represent the reflector's consciousness-data, mostly perceptions — things he sees, feels, and hears. Most likely, even the two speech acts in (3C) represent the reflector's awareness of his own question and his hearing the other character's reply. A reflector thus is either subordinate and subservient to the narratorial purpose, as in frame B, or independent and absolute, as in frame C.

The foregoing characterization of narrative situations describes canonical features or "defaults," and these are easily converted into sets of conditions as stipulated in (1), earlier. The most typical features of narrators and reflectors are conveniently listed by Stanzel (1984: 169–70) in a comparative table (see also Jaap Lintvelt's "distinctive traits" lists [1978: 357–62]). Additional specifications can be culled from the numerous "descriptions of the unmarked case" presented in Susan Lanser 1981 — especially useful is Mary Ann Piwowarczyk's detailed list of eighteen characteristics of the "degree zero narratee" (Lanser ibid.: 180–81).

In an important respect, however, defaults are reductions because they necessarily leave out less likely cases, alternatives, exceptions, and what Minsky calls "excuses" (1979 [1975]: 18). Ray Jackendoff (1983: 141) proposes that Minsky's relatively abstract *conditions* be replaced by his own more explicit notion of *preference rules* because a terminal's set of conditions must strive to capture all potential candidates. According to Jackendoff, a preference rule is (usually) a nonnecessary but sufficient condition based on inductive clues, graded judgments, and typicality properties that captures a discrete cognitive decision process. A *preference rule system* is a collection of two or more preference rules, among which there is some overlap and competition; the interactions in the system determine whether a phenomenon is perceived as possible, typical, or exceptional.

Jackendoff's own conversion of H. P. Grice's (1975) speaker-oriented conversational maxims into hearer-oriented preference rules (Jackendoff 1983: 155) is a suitable point of departure because the resulting preference rule system is easily adapted to narrative situations. Departing slightly from Jackendoff's formulation, let us focus on a special subset of the Gricean maxims, namely (a) "Be relevant" (relation); (b) "Do not say what you believe to be false" (quality); (c) "Make your contribution as informative as

is required" (quantity); and (d) "Be orderly" (manner). From the narratee's point of view, these maxims correspond to the following preference rules:

(4)   a. Prefer to assume that the narrator is conveying something relevant.

   b. Prefer to assume that the narrator believes what he intends to convey.

   c. Prefer to assume that the narrator is giving the right amount of information.

   d. Prefer to assume that the narrator presents his material in an orderly manner.

If, as is suggested by Jackendoff, following Kent Bach and Robert Harnish (1979, chap. 8), the individual preferences are understood to carry different weights, (4) turns into an operative preference rule system that explains default selection, predictions, inferences, and implicatures as well as — an important aspect—conflicts. For the sake of simplicity, I am assuming that the rules in (4) are ranged along an ordinal scale with (4a) carrying the most and (4d) carrying the least weight. With this stipulation, (4) is a reasonably explicit instance of the type of information represented by the clipboard icons associated with overt narrators as in (2A) and (2B). A more global preference rule system involving the selection of competitive frames will be discussed later.

   Since frame B comprises all of the features of frames A and C, it might be argued that A and C could be discarded as redundant. Although such a decision would be well in accordance with frame theory—Minsky (1979 [1975]: 2) explicitly encourages rich frames with as many slots as possible— the evidence of examples (3A)–(3C) seems to indicate that we experience three distinct situations rather than just variations of one situation. It is fortunate, therefore, that frame theory also favors "frame-systems," that is, collections of related, similar, or partially identical frames that can be used to represent "cause-effect relations" or "change over time" (ibid.: 14). Stanzel has, of course, shown in considerable detail that there is a "change over time" from authorial to authorial-figural to figural narratives. Indeed, ontogeny sometimes repeats phylogeny both on the level of individual texts—for instance, a number of stories in *Dubliners* shade from authorial to figural—and in the stylistic development of some authors such as Dickens or J. G. Cozzens. In some texts, switches in narrative situation occur either from chapter to chapter (e.g., *Bleak House*) or according to some less obvious pattern. As Stanzel has also pointed out, a narrative situation can be stable without necessarily being static because a good deal of variation—such as the rhythmic alternation of telling and showing passages—is easily tolerated (1984, chap. 3.2). Again, this tallies

well with Minsky's statement in (1) that only the "top levels" of a frame must be considered to be "fixed." Thus, a flexible frame system, such as (2), is actually needed in order to account for the internal dynamics of the narrative situations as well as the various diachronic and synchronic transitions mentioned above. Incidentally, given specific slot conditions (such as requiring an identity link between narrator and reflector, and binding the narrator to ordinary epistemological restrictions), the scenarios detailed in (2) might also be used to model first-person narrative situations.

Another considerable advantage of a frame system over a single, rich frame structure is that, given any two reasonably related frames, intermediate frames can be created by the relatively safe process of interpolation, or "tweening" as it is called in animated film technology (Jackson 1991: 344). Conceivably, tweening could generate the special frames or subframes needed for less common narrative situations like second-person narration (Fludernik 1993b: 225 posits several second-person forms intermediate between authorial and first-person narration), camera-eye narration, and autonomous monologue (Cohn 1981: 169–70). Tweening could also be used to create suitable subframes for many interesting hybrid or transitional devices used in modern texts, such as stylistic "contamination" (Stanzel 1984: 192–93), "reflectorization" (ibid.: 198–200), "authorialization" (Fludernik 1986: 17), and "figuralization" (Fludernik 1996: chap. 5), to name only a few.

The Proteus Principle

Frames and textual data enter into a mutual dependence relationship corresponding to what is traditionally known as the hermeneutic circle; more recently, it has also been termed the "interactive model" of the reading process (Harker 1989: 471). The adequacy of a frame is continuously put to the test by incoming data, and the analysis of the data depends to a considerable extent on the current frame. The frame tells us what the data is, and the data tells us whether we can continue using the frame. Only if the data is reasonably determinate, say if we encounter a first-person pronoun outside direct speech or thought, do we know that this must be a narratorial self-reference; and if our current frame does not support an overt narrator then it is inadequate and must be replaced by, or give way to, a different one.[3]

3. Something like this actually happens in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (Hemingway 1963 [1960]), the text cited in (3C). There is no narratorial "I," but other definite manifestations of narratorial control do occur: On page 3, there is a momentary outside view of the reflector

While a frame's defaults enable us to access normal-case assumptions and deal with expectations, a frame's exception conditions prevent us from discarding it prematurely when faced with unexpected data. Minsky adduces the example of a visual object that resembles a chair in all essential features but is much too small. So, Minsky argues, any "chair frame" worth its mettle should suggest the possibility that the object may be a toy chair (1979 [1975]: 17). This kind of circumspect reasoning clearly springs from the programming roots of artificial intelligence research, where frame theory originated. Typically, programmers are trained, and make it a habit from experience, to supply defaults—which in application programs are now often tellingly called "preferences"—and to account for unexpected and limit cases. Literary theorists, too, have found that investigating exceptions not only challenges the normal case but often leads to otherwise unavailable insights. Take the example of the "omniscient" narrator who at one point, or from a particular point onward, refuses to divulge essential information. Rather than assume somewhat contradictory "degrees of omniscience," the solution here is to devise a frame of reference that frees the narrator from being "omnicommunicative" (Sternberg 1978: 260).

Unfortunately, in narratology, this sort of circumspectness is relatively rare, possibly because narratology is burdened with a host of concepts, both traditional and recent, that are neither exception-conscious nor suitably flexible. Often enough, a conspicuous and discrete type of data acts as a squeaky wheel and acquires an ad hoc classificatory term, encapsulating some isolated conventional wisdom. For instance, the term "direct speech" implies that the data belongs in some kind of speech-act frame, not a perception frame as assumed above in the analysis of (3C). Similarly, "past tense" suggests past action, "free indirect discourse" a type of discourse, a "descriptive sentence" an act of description, "attributive discourse" an act of narratorial exposition, and so on. Although none of these terminology-driven associations are "wrong" in any sense of the word, they do undercut the complexity of the phenomena involved and actually stand in the way

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("The young man, who was tall and thin, with sun-streaked fair hair"); the proper name identification so conspicuously missing in (3C) is belatedly provided on page 4 ("The young man, whose name was Robert Jordan"); further into the text, the focus shifts to various other reflectors; some action is presented without a reflector being present (e.g., pp. 191, 194); and there are occasional reports of what reflectors are not aware of, especially when they are about to make a mistake (p. 417). Although none of this is smoothly compatible with a purely figural reading, it would probably be a mistake simply to replace the figural frame by, say, an authorial-figural frame. In *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, it seems, long figural passages are interrupted by authorial peaks. For the most part, the reading experience is quite different from that given under a composite authorial-figural (3B-type) frame.

of comparative concepts,[4] which would facilitate a more appropriate and systematic charting of the terrain. Another unwelcome side effect is that they propagate a form-function covariance that contravenes a baseline assumption of cognitive theory, namely, the "many-to-many correspondences between linguistic form and representational function" or "Proteus Principle" (Sternberg 1982b: 112). In terms of (low-level) data and (higher-level) frames, the Proteus Principle can be represented as follows:

(5)   The Proteus Principle:
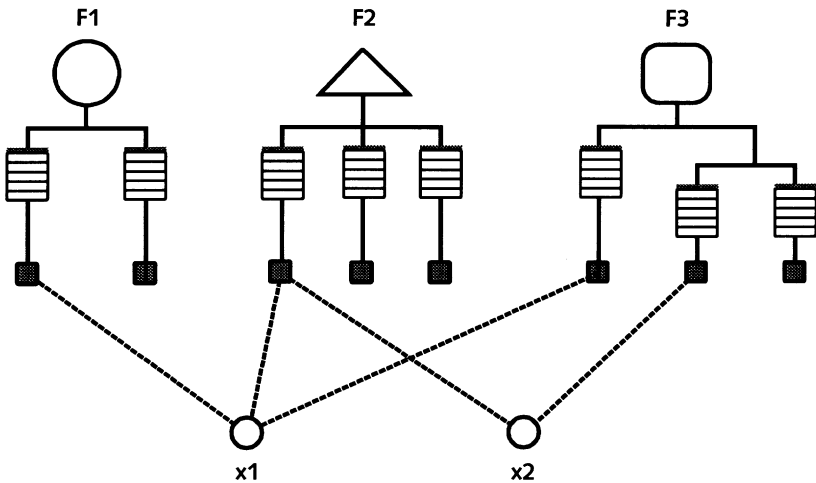
In (5) there are three competing frames—F1, F2, and F3—and two low-level linguistic forms—x1 and x2. The dotted lines indicate the many-to-many correspondences between data and frames. Indeed, Meir Sternberg has recently argued that there is good reason to assume that the Proteus Principle extends beyond linguistic surface forms and holds for many, if not all, objects and levels of analysis (1992: 471). To allow for this, x1 and x2 in (5) should simply be understood to stand for low-level data or subframes.

    For a more specific discussion, I will briefly focus on three protean phenomena: description, free indirect discourse, and attributive discourse.[5]

    1. Description is a narrative mode in which story time pauses and the narrator describes the characters or the setting. Description typically uses what Chatman has called "stasis" statements, that is, statements built

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4. The distinction between classificatory and comparative concepts was established by Carnap (1950: chap. 1.4).
5. See Sternberg 1981; 1982a; 1982b for more detailed protean analyses of description and quotation.

around the verbs *be* and *have*. Copulative sentences in particular are typical descriptive sentences. Consider "The room was dark" in the following minimal contexts:

(6) [a] The room was dark. [b] John opened the door and entered. (Chatman 1990: 30)

(7) [a] He opened the door and entered. [b] The room was dark.

A likely reading of (6a) is that it is a narratorial description; a likely reading of (7b) is that it represents reflectorial perception. In (6), "The room was dark" amounts to a narrative pause (nothing happens), and its fictional truth value depends on the narrator's reliability (usually high, given an authorial narrator). By contrast, in (7b) story time continues to elapse more or less in sync with the reflector's perception, and its referential validity depends on the reflector's current perceptive ability, which may range from *near zero* to *probably adequate*. Since "The room was dark" slots into two different frames, its status—whether it refers to a "static" object "*qua* existent" or a "dynamized" object "*qua* percept" (Sternberg 1981: 85)—must largely be determined by an independently given higher frame. The upshot is, no single (or simple) bottom-up path exists that leads from a copulative sentence to a uniquely determined descriptive function.

2. Free indirect discourse (FID) is perhaps the most notoriously multifunctional form in narrative texts, a veritable "narratological chameleon," as Stanzel puts it (1990: 808). A circumstantial indication of this is the striking number of terminological variants applied to it.[6] As was noted by Dorrit Cohn (1978: 100), the one necessary characteristic, or "litmus test," of FID is that it can be "translated" into a direct form. In line with this observation, I have suggested (Jahn 1992: 351) that all FID forms can be related to a hypothetical and approximate original version of some linguistic activity. Indeed, it is difficult to ascertain that (8a), below, is FID unless it is related to an approximate direct version of a putative utterance or thought such as (8b):

(8) a. The priests would tell him how many.   (Orwell 1973 [1934])

     b. ≈ The priests will tell me how many.

Accepting Monika Fludernik's shrewd observation that FID "materializes in the reading process" (1993a: 441), it seems reasonable to say that (8a)

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6. McHale (1978: 249–50) lists two French, four German, and seven English terms, not including "free indirect discourse," "free indirect speech," or Banfield's (1982) "represented speech and thought."

is a FID token if and only if the reader makes the cognitive jump that yields (8b), or something very similar. This must not, of course, be taken to imply that (8a) is in any way transformationally derivable from (8b), nor that (8b) is the full "meaning" of (8a), nor that (8b) is a full recovery of (8a)'s presumptive original. As Brian McHale (1978: 256) and many others have convincingly shown, a fictional text does not normally allow any such recovery. In the case of (8), recovery is in fact precluded by the narrator's remarks in (3B) about the quality of U Po Kyin's thought processes. Despite these caveats, recourse to an "approximately equal" version proves to be very useful in definition, explication, and hypothesis testing. For instance, operational definitions of FID typically specify how to turn something like (8b) into something like (8a):

(9)   The direct words are transmuted, normally present tense backshifted to past, first person and second person become third person.   (Wales 1991: 191)

The crux of reductive handbook definitions of this type is that they foreground a basically arbitrary normal case, and at the same time marginalize or suppress all nonconforming instances. Even if "normally" in (9) referred to some sort of statistically most frequent case, this would be a notoriously unreliable index, given a range of possible realizations. Although it's not necessary to go quite so far as Fludernik (1993a: 72), who radically declares the "standard case" of third-person, past tense, literary FID as "not important," it is indeed salutary to shake off the fatal exclusionary attraction of the so-called normal case. Specifically, one may call to mind that FID can

- appear in conjunction with so-called parenthetical attributive discourse (definitionally excluded by Lanser [1981: 189] and many others, but allowed by McHale [1978], Banfield [1982], and many others — see discussion below);
- appear in present tense passages, leaving the tense unshifted (this is outlawed by Banfield [1982] but accepted by Leech and Short [1981: 327–29], also Fludernik [1993a]);
- appear in first-person texts, leaving the first-person pronoun unshifted (overlooked by Rimmon-Kenan [1983], but noted by Prince [1987: 35]);
- represent written discourse (not considered by most commentators);
- represent the perception of linguistic acts, especially heard, read, and imagined speech (not covered by, for example, Cohn's 1978 term "narrated monologue," but noted by von Roncador [1988: 238]).

Confronted with such protean shapes and multifunctionality, the theorist has three choices: one, give definition up as a bad job; two, reduce

the phenomenon to a manageable quantity (say, a shifted "verbatim re-production" of a character's "mental language"—thus Cohn's [1978: 14] conception of "narrated monologue"); three, stipulate a broad definition disentangling formal, referential, and functional properties. Exploring this last option, I propose the following frame-based definition:

(10) a. A FID token is a nonsubordinate, shifted construction, conforming to the person and tense parameters of the current narrative situation, and associated with a character's speech, writing, or thought act (frame 1).

b. Frame 1 may slot into a higher-order frame representing a character's perception (frame 2).

c. Frames 1 or 2 may further slot into overtly narratorial quotation or summary frames.

This frame-based definition could be termed protean because it separates the various forms of the phenomenon from the possible frames it can slot into. The first part of the definition, (10a), captures the cognitive jump assumed to take place in (8): it creates FID's necessary and sufficient conditions by specifying formal characteristics and an initial frame (which, in true protean fashion, can already handle a variety of other data, such as direct and indirect speech). Judged on its linguistic form alone, FID is "not a definable linguistic category" (Culler 1978: 612). All things being equal (which, of course, they rarely are), "Oh she simply hated her daughter!" can as easily be a sentence of narrative report as "She was tired" can be a piece of FID.[7] Parts b and c of the definition prepare the ground for additional (now strictly nonnecessary) functions or "naturalizations" (McHale 1978: 274). According to (10b), a FID token can slot into a perception frame (frame 2), in which it may function as heard speech, remembered thought, or even something as complex as remembered heard speech (see Cohn 1978: 133, and Jahn 1992: 358 for more examples). Finally, (10c) takes account of the fact that FID, plus the foregoing intermediate frames, can occur in the context of overtly narratorial quotation and iterative summary.

Of the latter higher-order frames, the quotation frame is of particular interest because it allows a reassessment of ironical FID. It is true that irony often goes with FID, but there is little ground for assuming that irony is contained in FID, or that it is a defining feature, or that it is, as Roy Pascal (1977) claims, due to the "dual voice" character of FID, a

7. In fact, "Oh, she simply hated her daughter!" *is* a sentence of narrative report in Nabokov's *Lolita* (New York: Van Rees, 1955), page 92. As to "She was tired," see the discussion of (24c) later in article.

point that is also made by McHale, who criticizes Pascal for failing to ex-
plain how dual-voice irony works (1978: 279). As for "irony of situation,"
McHale adds the following interesting remark:

(11)   Irony of situation is better thought of as a second-order than a first-order
       function, in that it resides not in the FID utterances themselves . . . but in
       the relation between FID and larger patterns of plot and theme.
       (ibid.: 275)

It seems apparent that the basic logic of McHale's suggestion also applies
to ironical FID. As Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson (1981) have argued
(explicitly including FID), the essential prerequisite for irony is a quota-
tion (in their terms, a "mention") frame. If they are right—and clearly
their analysis of irony is a quantum advance over traditional approaches
toward irony—there is no need to assume a mechanism linking FID and
irony at all. Recall that, according to (10c), FID may slot into a frame in
which it functions as quotation, issuing, say, from an authorial narrator.
Like the narrator in *Emma*, he or she may be interested in ironically fore-
grounding the numerous follies in the thoughts and speeches of his or her
characters. On the other hand, if FID slots into a figural frame with a
covert narrator (who, I am assuming, is too withdrawn to be a dissonant
quoter), its lack of quotational character would tend to inhibit irony. This
prediction is indeed corroborated by Cohn (1978: 139).

   3. *Attributive discourse* is one in a series of competing terms used to refer
to phrases such as "he said" (called *inquits* by Bonheim 1982b) or "she
thought" (mental process phrases) or "she saw" (called *percepits* by Füger
1993) accompanying the representation of some linguistic or perceptional
activity (see also Prince 1987 and especially Collier 1992b for a compre-
hensive account of "speech-tags" in Patrick White). Attributive discourse
either occurs in an introductory, sentence-initial position, or as a paren-
thetical phrase (Banfield 1982, sec. 3.1; Fludernik 1993a, sec. 5.1) in me-
dial or final position. This distinction, often overlooked (for instance, by
Wales 1991: 452–54 under "tagging"), is important because very obvious
co-occurrence restrictions hold for direct, indirect, and free indirect rep-
resentations (for instance, indirect discourse, unlike FID, collocates with
sentence-initial attributive discourse, and so forth).

   The term *attributive discourse* deserves particular attention because it ex-
plicitly encapsulates a form-function link. As a consequence, attributive
discourse is usually considered to be a particularly plain marker of "the
explicit presence of the narrator" (Wales 1991: 454). Norman Page (1973)
goes out of his way to characterize the phrase *thought Clarissa Dalloway* as a
"conative expression" that "reminds the reader of the mode employed, as

a broadcasting station will remind listeners periodically of its own iden-
tity," and as an "interruption of the character's thoughts by a narrator
conscious of the responsibilities of that function" (41–42).

However, as I have noted (Jahn 1992: 363–64), some evidence suggests
that attributive discourse, too, has certain protean qualities:

(12) a. L'ennemi, dit-il, serait là dans deux heures.
      b. L'ennemie, disait-il, serait là dans deux heures.
         [The enemy, he said/was saying, would be there in two hours.]
         (Bally 1992: 599)

(13) "Oh, Lucy," she said, "the silver does looks nice!"
      "And how," she said, turning the crystal dolphin to stand straight, "how did
      you enjoy the play last night?" "Oh, they had to go before the end!" she
      said. "They had to be back at ten!" she said. "So they don't know what
      happened," she said.   (Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, 1973 [1925]: 43)

(14) Yet there seemed a call for some amends. He either thought or said: "Well,
      tomorrow perhaps I'll drink beer only. . . ."   (Malcolm Lowry, *Under the
      Volcano*, 1985 [1947]: 130)

As Charles Bally (1912: 599–603) points out, both (12a) and (12b) are pos-
sible in French, in which the unmarked narrative tense is the *passé simple*,
while the *imparfait* has an aspectual character and usually attaches to FID
and represented perception. If attributive discourse were exclusively nar-
ratorial report, one would expect parentheticals in French to be in the
passé simple only, as in (12a). However, the parenthetical in (12b), set to
what Bally (ibid.: 600) calls an *imparfait par attraction*, apparently acquires
the same aura of subjectivity, and a corresponding lack of facticity, as
the FID-token it accompanies (strongly suggesting perception by a third
party). Example (13) contains an extraordinary, almost inane, sequence
of parentheticals. To savor its full scandal, one has to appreciate that all
she pronouns refer to one character only—Mrs. Dalloway—and that her
interlocutor (i.e., Lucy), whose part of the dialogue is not represented, is
also female. One certainly hesitates to follow Norman Page and call these
parentheticals "interruptions" from an overt narrator who is "conscious of
the responsibilities" of attributive discourse. Likewise, again supposing at-
tributive discourse to be tied to an overt authorial frame, a similar scandal
occurs in (14), where the narrator chooses to use an introductory tag and
then apparently cannot make up his or her mind what it is that he or she
wants to introduce.

Not surprisingly, things look entirely different as soon as (13) and (14) are
placed within figural frames, whose covert narrators typically forego any

"conative solicitude" (Bonheim 1982a) and usually delegate referential re-sponsibility to their reflectors. Because we expect reflectors to be unaware of any readers, the conative scandals of (13) and (14) turn into functional indices of reflectorial consciousness. Mrs. Dalloway's mind, one infers, is only minimally involved in the conversation, passively registering her own automatic questions. The Consul in (14) is, of course, drunk; so it is *he* who does not know whether he is speaking out loud.[8]

To conclude, "attributive discourse," far from identifying a determinate data type, turns out to be an ill-advised exclusionary concept, ossifying what is, at best, a normal-case form-function link. At the same time, with both (13) and (14) conspicuously failing to attribute, one is powerfully re-minded of the protean patternability of the data.

Preferences and the Dynamics of Reading

The mutual dependence of frames and data has so far prompted us to ask two questions: How does a frame specify its conditions? and, How do pro-tean data and subframes link into higher-order frames? A third and more speculative question, which we will address now, is, What are the prin-ciples that govern the selection of frames?

For our main point of departure we are again indebted to Perry's (1979) seminal exposition of "literary dynamics." Drawing on the findings of studies in visual cognition and character-attribution, Perry discusses top-ics such as the nonlinear character of reading, the order of presentation, the replacement of frames, the relevance of discarded readings, and the impact of first and second readings. One of his major concerns is to give an explicit account of the principles that determine the selection of frames. He proposes that frames are preferred on the basis of "maximum relevancy" (ibid.: 43), their capacity to link textual detail, their structural depth, and their relative simplicity.

It is evident that Perry's principles amount to an informal preference rule system in Jackendoff's sense (as discussed earlier in article), preparing the ground for, among other things, a principled analysis of very high-level stereotype and ambiguity phenomena. As Jackendoff points out, the

8. Note that it is the figural narrative situation that provides the unexpected test case. In part, it is unexpected because the figural narrative situation is little more than a bastard slip in non-Stanzelian mainstream narratology. For many additional protean forms in similar circumstances, see Collier's (1992a) excellent study of Patrick White. See also the discussion of the beginning of "Eveline" later in article.

recognition of stereotypes and ambiguity is a natural consequence of the general mechanics of a preference rule system:

(15) The overall analysis arrived at by the system is the one that receives the greatest weight from individual conditions. If an analysis results from the reinforcement of a number of conditions, and no competing analyses present themselves seriously, the analysis is a relatively stereotypical instance of its category. If two or more competing analyses receive approximately equal weight, an ambiguous or vague judgment results. (Jackendoff 1987: 252)

To emphasize the fact that the same set of preference rules often applies in different areas of cognition, Jackendoff cites examples from visual and auditory perception, phonology, syntax, semantics, natural language parsing, music analysis, pragmatics, and social behavior. Similarly, Sternberg (1978) and Perry (1979) note that the reading of literary texts is affected in specific ways by the so-called primacy and recency effects found in visual cognition and character-attribution experiments.

Primacy and recency are cognitive mechanisms that can be profitably explained against the background of frames and preferences. Normally, a frame can be imagined to have two quasi-organic instincts: It tries to protect itself, and it tries to maximize its scope. Both of these instincts save it from being discarded at the earliest appearance of exceptional or irregular data. In addition, admitting excuses, modifications, and perhaps also some judicious bending of low-level conditions ensures that a frame correctly adapts to new, idiosyncratic, and unusual situations. However, if the data persistently fail to match a frame's essential conditions, if the frame appears to be "basically wrong" and its interpretation of the data exotic or suspect, then a "replacement frame" (Minsky 1979 [1975]: 18) must be tried. Since a replacement frame, like an initial frame, will also strive to protect itself and maximize its scope, it will attempt a retrospective reanalysis. A replacement frame's major justification will in fact be that it creates a recency effect that provides a better (more consistent, more natural, less contrived) interpretation of the foregoing as well as the ensuing data. The conflict between an initial and a replacement frame can be cast as a very general readerly preference rule system:[9]

(16) a. *Primacy preference rule:* Retain a frame for as long as possible.

      b. *Recency preference rule:* Allow a replacement frame to reinterpret previous data.

9. We will provisionally assume that the two rules are equally weighted. For a less noncommittal view, see Perry 1979: 57, who argues that recency has a higher preference index than primacy.

Although we are, of course, mainly interested in textual applications, it is important to prove that (16) has a more general cognitive validity. Consider the following informal experiment involving visual data:[10]

(17)   Three bricks:

a.   b.   c.
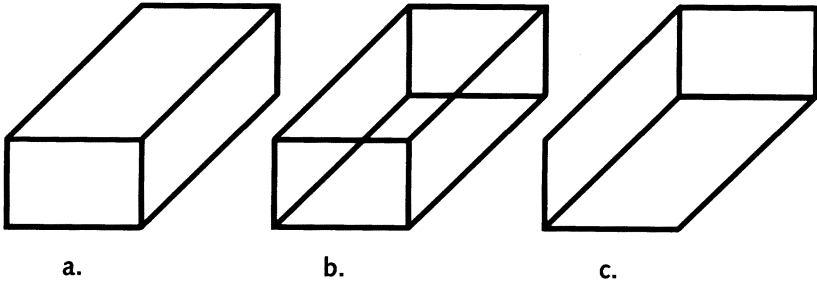
First, focus on (17b), the center "wireframe" brick (cover the other shapes in this and other parts of the experiment, if necessary, to avoid unwanted priming). Except for its rectangular shape, the brick shares the major property of a "Necker cube" and other famous trick drawings which haunt the pages of psychology handbooks (the "duck/rabbit" figure, the "Peter-Paul" goblet, the "wife and mother-in-law," and so on)—it is ambiguous (Neisser 1967: 144; Jackendoff 1987: 115). Depending on which of its ends is seen as closer to the viewer, the brick is construed from either of two points of view: (i) from right-and-above, or (ii) from left-and-below. Whichever interpretation is initially chosen—though (i) is the more likely candidate—after a while the mind somehow tires of it and spontaneously produces the other one. Among other things, a Necker cube illustrates that competing interpretations (especially those that involve a change in point of view) tend to get blocked. As Jackendoff says, echoing Ernst Gombrich (1962), "Though the two interpretations may alternate freely, they are not simultaneously present to awareness" (1987: 115).[11] If one contemplates (17a), in isolation, I assume the natural interpretation is that of a solid viewed from point of view (i). Next, if one takes in both (17a) and (17b) but excludes (17c), perception is likely to be determined by the primacy influence exerted by (17a). Indeed, if one now takes in (17c) as well,

10. Compare the discussion of a similar graphic in Marr 1982: 26. Interestingly, Marr does not recognize that (17a) and (17c) are, in fact, ambiguous.
11. "We cannot experience alternative readings at the same time" (Gombrich 1962: 5 on the duck/rabbit figure). For a narratological argument exploiting the visual analogy see Genette 1988: 55.

point of view (i) will probably be maintained, resulting in (17c) perceived not as a brick but as an incomplete open box, consisting of two sides and a bottom, lying on the same plane as (17a) and (17b). The process can be reversed if one continues focusing on (17c) and waits until its natural interpretation—point of view (ii), a brick seen from below—asserts itself. The recency influence exerted by (17c) should be powerful enough to give the whole sequence a reading under point of view (ii)—with (17a) now turning into an incomplete box apparently floating in the air or stuck to the ceiling. The natural interpretation of (17a) may at this point regain the upper hand and effect a reversion to point of view (i), possibly resulting in a chain reaction of point-of-view switches and a prolonged tug of war between unstable interpretations. Indeed, some viewers do complain that the picture makes them dizzy and, appropriately enough, that they do not know what they are supposed to see. To sum up, the three-bricks experiment graphically illustrates the working of primacy and recency preferences on an ambiguous (multifunctional, protean) data sequence.

In reading-oriented literary analyses, primacy effects have often been noted, and I will survey just two of many similar statements (for further instances see Stanzel 1984: 66, and especially Perry 1979: 46–52). Ronald Lethcoe's "continuity rule," reproduced in (18), refers to passages containing stretches of reflectorial consciousness-data and narrative report. Fludernik's "perseverance rule," reproduced in (19), refers to the degree of resilience of authorial and figural frames.

(18)   When reading a passage of continuous discourse the reader tends to adopt the path of least resistance, reading in such a way as to preserve the continuity of the report . . . until he is forced by some explicit linguistic signal to recognize that a shift has occurred.   (Lethcoe 1969: 80)

(19)   Once the reader has established a prevalent perspective, he tends to persevere with it as long as possible.   (Fludernik 1986: 20)

Although in (18) Lethcoe states that "an explicit linguistic signal" is needed to motivate a "shift" (i.e., frame switch), spontaneous frame substitutions like those experienced in Necker cube experiments should perhaps not be ruled out. Thus, it could suddenly dawn on the reader, even in the absence of any explicit clues, that a different frame might be just as suitable, or indeed more suitable, than the one hitherto entertained. This shift would be likely to happen if one tires of a frame (just as after a while one tires of a particular view of a Necker cube), or if the frame is not reinforced regularly, or if it fails to produce a sufficient amount of cognitive payoff.

Recency is somewhat less well acknowledged in literary analyses, but

when it is, it is always considered in conjunction (that is, conflict) with primacy. In (20), below, McHale is interested in nonlinear processes of meaning construction; in (21), Perry envisages a global pattern exploiting a primacy-recency conflict. Both theorists posit close literary analogues to the three bricks experiment.

(20)   Now contrast this with the alternative model I have been arguing for here, what might be called an *integrational* model, whereby sentences give rise to interpretive reconstructions which in turn affect the interpretation of subsequent and even, retrospectively, of preceding sentences, and so on, a global picture of the text's meaning and intentionality being continually built, unbuilt, and rebuilt at every point.   (McHale 1983: 39)

(21)   What happens in a literary text is that the reader retains the meanings constructed initially *to whatever extent possible*, but the text causes them to be modified or replaced. The literary text, then, *exploits* the "powers" of the primacy effect, but ordinarily it sets up a mechanism to oppose them, giving rise, rather to a recency effect.   (Perry 1979: 57)

Focusing on characterization and narratorial control of readers' perspective and world-making at large, Sternberg (1978: 98) identifies four principal narrative strategies on a gradient of increasing primacy/recency conflict:

(22)   a. No conflict
        b. Moderate clashes
        c. Integrated heterogeneity
        d. Maximum conflict

According to Sternberg, (22a) designates a polar extreme, signifying unquestioned primacy without any "shock of retrospective illumination" or "need to abandon previously formed attitudes and conclusions" (ibid.: 98). In terms of characterization, this designation applies to a character whose actions remain wholly *in character*, who neither develops nor discloses new aspects, or only along expected lines (e.g., James Bond). "Moderate clashes" (22b) is an intermediate position denoting a primacy effect that "is not homogeneous, but interspersed with warning signals and anticipatory cautions pointing the other way, so that the subsequent disclosures are less surprising to the reader" (ibid.: 99; Sternberg's example is the character Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*). In (22c), the primacy effect turns out to be "one-sided," and there is a recency effect that "is designed to complicate, modify, or qualify . . . the reader's first impressions" (Odysseus' characterization in *The Odyssey*). Finally, (22d) designates a head-on collision in sequence whereby recency may oust primacy: "a homogeneous

primacy effect . . . is . . . demolished by subsequent revelations surprisingly establishing the contrary" (for example, the reader's view of the character Christmas in Faulkner's *Light in August*). Cast in frame-theoretical terms: (22a) rests on an initial frame that accurately predicts and integrates all subsequent data; in (22b), the first frame must accommodate some not wholly homogeneous data; in (22c), the frame must be modified in order to integrate a certain amount of exceptional and recalcitrant data; and in (22d) the first frame yields to a replacement frame, triggering a reanalysis.

One of the remarkable psychological effects in Necker cube experiments is the moment of sudden reversal when the mind switches from one interpretation to another. Potential reversals of this kind have been noted by Stanzel for texts like Hemingway's "The Killers," which appear to hover between frames. Stanzel predicts that in situations of "instable equilibrium," a determinate detail would be likely to effect a major reorientation:

(23) A single sentence clearly spoken by a teller-character—perhaps an authorial commentary, or, conversely, a larger passage attributing a perception exclusively to a character as reflector-character . . . would upset this equilibrium and would suggest the presence of either a teller-character or a reflector-character for the narrative as a whole.   (Stanzel 1984: 145–46)

A variant of the reversal effect apparently also occurs in the authorialfigural passage quoted earlier as (3B), where there is a kind of local switch to a figural frame. In (3B), the figural inset can be regarded as a functional part of the surrounding authorial context precisely because overt authorial factors radiate into the figural section both by primacy and recency influence. As a result, it is almost impossible to pinpoint the exact spot where the switch toward the figural orientation occurs.

To point up the methodological impact of the foregoing hypotheses, I will now briefly turn to two pieces of reading-oriented narratological analysis, admittedly without being able to do them full justice. The first is Seymour Chatman's (1978) bid to uncover strategies of voice attribution; the second is Wilhelm Füger's (1993) attempt to delimit the scope of internal focalization. In both cases, the textual basis is the beginning of Joyce's "Eveline":[12]

(24) [a] She sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue. [b] Her head was leaned against the window curtains and in her nostrils was the odour of dusty cretonne. [c] She was tired.

   [d] Few people passed. [e] The man out of the last house passed on his way home; she heard his footsteps clacking along the concrete pavement

12. See Hrushovski 1982, Scholes 1992 [1979], and Weber 1992: 29–40 for further narratological analyses of "Eveline."

and afterwards crunching on the cinder path before the new red houses. (James Joyce, "Eveline," 1992 [1914]: 29)

Chatman's reading analysis is an exercise in coming to grips with the "logic" (1978: 204) of voice attribution. On first reading (24a), Chatman says, the reader might briefly feel that the text is "nonnarrated," as in the manner of a stage direction. However, when one comes to "evening invade the avenue," the metaphor "clearly presupposes a mind capable of its invention; if it is not Eveline who does so, the speaker can only be the narrator" (ibid.). In (24b) "the jelling context . . . seems more like a covert narrator's pronouncement" (ibid.: 205). Both (24c) and (24d) are "ambiguous" in the manner of "free indirect forms": they are either the narrator's voice, or the character's voice, "or *both*" (ibid.: 205; emphasis in original). Then, in (24e), Chatman finds an instance of Eveline's true idiom ("the man out of the last house") and takes this to be evidence for the fact that she is indeed incapable of (24a)'s invasion metaphor. Thus, ultimately, "we distinguish the simple colloquial voice of the character Eveline from the voice of a covert narrator of literary ability." "Later sentences confirm our judgment about the first two sentences: They are clearly a narrator's report" (ibid.: 206).

There are many problems with this account, even if one discounts the "nonnarrated" option that Chatman later abandons (Chatman 1990: 115). To begin with, it seems rather odd that "hearing" should be a retrospective inference, in other words, that we do not know what we hear in (24a) until we process (24e) and "later" sentences. Second, how "covert" can a narrator be if we can identify a narratorial voice of "literary ability"? For instance, is this a male or female voice? Third, by stressing that Eveline is incapable of the invasion metaphor and criticizing Clive Hart (1969) for claiming otherwise, Chatman courts the misunderstanding that (24a) could be a special type of narratorial "internal analysis," namely, a "Report of What Characters Did Not Think or Say" (or perceive) (1978: 225). But Chatman must know that the invasion notion is a piece of the puzzle of Eveline's mind, one it would be foolish to throw to a narrator. As he himself says in an earlier chapter, discussing the functions of setting, "The strange and sinister outer world threatens to overwhelm her" (ibid.: 143)— significantly, Chatman does not take this up now that he is focusing on identification of voices. Fourth, Eveline's saying/thinking things like "the man out of the last house" certainly does not prove that she is incapable of coining an invasion metaphor; to prove that, one would have to show that she does not know the word "invasion." Fifth, since Chatman's reader has come to a judgment on (24a) and (24b), what does retrospective judgment or "jelling context" do for judgment on (24c) and (24d)? Chatman does not

say, so presumably they are still floating in their "either/or/or both" disjunction.[13] Disarmingly, Chatman concludes that "this laborious and unnatural way of reading is not, of course, what the reader actually does but only a suggestion of what his logic of decision must be like" (ibid.: 206).

Theoretically, Füger is also interested in voice attributions; in fact, he begins by differentiating between "autophonic" focalization (focalization using the character's voice) and "allophonic" focalization (using the narrator's voice). However, turning to his focalization analysis of "Eveline," Füger in practice is more interested in determining the ranges and boundaries of focalized passages. The key elements here are the text's perception indicators (such as "watching," "in her nostrils was the odour of," and "she heard"), all marking transitions to figurally focalized passages. Although he is inclined to reject Chatman's (and follow Hart's) reading of the invasion metaphor, Füger accepts that the invasion passage is unresolvably "ambivalent" (1993: 53). Among the ensuing sentences, Füger understands (24b) to be clearly authorial, while (24c) and (24d) are again considered to be ambivalent. Like many of the following sentences, (24e) is seen as consisting of both figurally focalized sections ("man out of the last house") and authorial elements ("she heard"). In sum, according to Füger, some sections are authorial, some are figural, and some remain ambivalent; more globally speaking, the beginning of "Eveline" is found to exhibit a perpetual perspectival fluctuation ["ständige Perspektivenfluktuation"] (ibid.: 52).

At this point, Füger leaps out of the rut and asks whether any of this is relevant for "a reader." Surprisingly, his answer is no—at least, it is no for a "general reader" and a cursory reading. Unlike the professional narratologist, Füger claims, the general reader will perceive no fluctuations of perspective at all and simply read the text as focalized by Eveline. He does not say why this should be so; however, he does add that it is a reading attitude that agrees with Joyce's textual revisions (which were also noted by Chatman) and is aided by the principle of perseverance (which he details along the lines of (16a) and (19), earlier). Unfortunately, restricting this alternate reading scenario to a general reader and a cursory (presumably, not very attentive, not very relevant) reading skirts an important issue. As Culler (1975b: 120; 1975a: 127) has convincingly urged, one of literary theory's main tasks is to explain what a *competent* reader does.[14] What is at

13. In fact, the disjunction raises logical and psychological problems. First, it is not certain which type of disjunction (exclusive or inclusive) is involved. Second, it is doubtful whether assumptions created by "or-introduction" play any role in cognitive reasoning at all—see Sperber and Wilson 1986: 100.
14. Significantly, Culler (1975b: 128–30) criticizes Chatman's (1969) plot analysis of "Eveline" for its overreliance on retrospective judgment. Although Chatman concedes the point

issue then is to what extent Füger's general reader's reading, which rests on at least a smattering of cognitive principles, is inferior to a narratological reading that does not bother about cognitive principles at all (recall Chatman's assertion that "this . . . way of reading is not, of course, what the reader actually does" [1978: 206]). Füger's general reader's reading, far from being an idiot response, is an interesting and competent reading in its own right; perhaps it is even (perish the thought) a more competent reading than any of the narratological readings summarized above. Given the text's conspicuous figural triggers—referentless pronoun, familiarizing article, foregrounded reflectorial perception—(24) is nothing less than a typical figural incipit (Stanzel 1984: 160). It would be very surprising (and require careful explanation) if these triggers did *not* prompt the reader to select a figural frame, and if the attendant primacy effect did *not* turn the invasion metaphor into what Cohn terms a "psycho-analogy" (1978: 37). As for the supposedly explicit authorial elements ("she heard" etc.), these just evoke the Proteus Principle and the fallacy of attributive discourse (as discussed earlier).

   Ultimately, Füger's juxtaposing of a sophisticated narratologist's reading and a general reader's reading highlights in a rather unflattering way the detrimental effect of mainstream narratology's failure to account for what should be one of its prime considerations, the cognitive mechanics of reading. Stanzel, it seems, is right when he argues that any narratologist attempting to tackle the reading experience must first of all be prepared to commit a few "heresies" (1977: 243).

Conclusion

This article started out by attempting to combine the approaches of a number of theorists: Stanzel's narrative situations were cast into Bal's generic formula; Perry's frames were upgraded to Minskyan frames; Jackendoff's preference rules replaced Minsky's slot conditions; and Sternberg's Proteus Principle was used to develop the notion of protean definitions. The outcome is a flexible model of the processing of third-person narrative situations (theoretically also of first-person narrative situations), giving a principled account of the hermeneutic interplay between top-down (frame-determined) and bottom-up (data-determined) cognitive strategies. Although canonical features are taken to correspond to frame-theoretical "defaults," the model eschews essentialism because it uses a preference

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(1978: 56), his voice attribution analysis of 1978 is again largely based on retrospective judgment, assuming a tabula rasa beginning and postponed decisions.

rule system that not only defines standard cases but also conflicts and indeterminacies.

Despite the fact that recourse to readers, readers' intuitions, and reading plays an important role in narratological argument, the contribution of mainstream narratology to a dedicated cognitive approach is meager and often counterproductive. In the light of cognitive frames and preferences, much of mainstream narratology is preoccupied with bottom-up analyses, often assuming determinacies in violation of the Proteus Principle and indeterminacies in the presence of established cognitive preferences. This article has shown that a good deal of evidence exists that argues against the isolationist and evasive character of such critical practice.

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