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Focalization and the First-Person Narrator: A Revision of the Theory

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Ever since Gérard Genette coined the term in 1972, the concept of focalization has been the subject of a great deal of debate, some of which has appeared within the pages of *Poetics Today*. *Focalization* is defined by Genette as a restriction imposed on the information provided by a narrator about his characters. His well-known triadic typology (*zero, internal,* and *external*) is based on a diminishing degree of access to the psychology of the characters. In the terminology of Mieke Bal, internal and external focalization refer instead to the intra- or extradiegetic locus of the focalizer, and have nothing to do with psychological penetration.[1] If we examine these and other theories with an eye toward retrospective personal narration, however, we find that a major revision is in order. Little attention has been paid to the problem of focalization in texts in which narrator and character are the same individual. Traditional studies on point of view have often failed to take into account the many possibilities open to the first-person narrator (FPN), who is of course a fictional creation and not a true autobiographer.[2] Even modern theory is often inadequate

1. This spatial dimension is already evident in one of Genette's (1983) models: Pouillon's "vision par derrière" and "vision avec" are based on the position of the subject of perception. Genette admits that a refinement of his original concept may be found in François Jost (1983: 195), who insists on its spatial dimension.
2. For example, Bertil Romberg (1962: 30) claimed that "all theoreticians of the novel are in agreement about the internal point-of-view of the first-person novel."

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to accommodate these possibilities. Since most theorists define internal focalization as the presentation of events by a character within the fictional world, they all locate personal narration in this category, presumably because an FPN is a fictional character. This definition seems most unsatisfactory because it equates, for purposes of focalization, an FPN with a focal character who perceives but does not narrate. It should be obvious that the personal narrator in fiction, like his autobiographical counterpart, has at least two possibilities at his disposal. He has his own, subjective point of view, and he can also, because of the duality of the subject, adopt the point of view of the hero, his earlier incarnation. Before pursuing these and other possibilities, we must review recent debates on the concept of focalization.

Genette distinguishes between three types of restriction. A nonfocalized text, or zero focalization, means that the narrator is unlimited spatially and unrestricted in psychological access to the characters. In internal focalization, the narrator is limited spatially but has access to the mind of the focal character. External focalization also involves a spatial limitation, but this time the narrator has no psychological privilege and is limited to the role of witness. Genette deals primarily with Proust as a study example, and he constantly differentiates between the older narrator and the young Marcel.[3] He points out that focalization can be performed either by the narrator or by the hero, but both are called internal ("focalisation interne sur le narrateur," Genette 1972: 214 n. 2). This is presumably because of the psychological dimension, because everything is presented through the mind of one character. Yet Genette has defined internal focalization as a situation in which the narrator says only what the character knows, and an FPN usually says *more* than his younger self knew at the moment of event, as Genette (ibid.: 210) himself points out: "Le narrateur en 'sait' presque toujours plus que le héros, même si le héros c'est lui." Evidence of focalization by the narrator may be seen in foreshadowing and other types of prolepsis ("We shall see later"; "I have learned since"), which emphasize the subsequent and greater knowledge of the narrator. Thus by Genette's own definition, focalization by an FPN cannot always be regarded as internal.

Nor can it be said to be nonfocalized, for no FPN can be omniscient or omnipresent. Genette states that an FPN is authorized to speak in his own name. While it is true that he can say more than any character knows, he too is subject to restrictions: "La seule focalisation qu'il ait à

3. W. J. M. Bronzwaer (1978: 6) criticizes Genette for not having stressed that these two I's are two distinct voices. Marjet Berendsen (1984: 142) responds that there is only one narrative voice but two focalizers, the narrator and the perceiving character.

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respecter se définit par rapport à son information présente de narrateur et non par rapport à son information passée de héros" (ibid.: 214). He can, of course, choose to suppress his subsequent knowledge and allow the hero to focalize, which results in a "hyper-restriction" (ibid.: 219). Sometimes, however, ignorance is shared by hero and narrator, precisely because some kinds of information are inaccessible to both. Genette's definition of *paralepse* as an infraction of focalization, by means of which the narrator makes incursions into the consciousness of other characters or describes something he could not have seen, further demonstrates the limits imposed on an FPN, who must justify his knowledge. Focalization becomes zero (omniscience) only when the FPN provides information he could never have known. Otherwise his field of perception is limited, albeit less so than that of the hero. The narrator knows more than the character, but his knowledge is not boundless.[4]

In external focalization, finally, the narrator says less than the character knows. In autobiographical fiction, this would seem to hold true only toward other characters and not toward the narrator's younger self.[5] An FPN could choose to withhold his own earlier thoughts and thus adopt an external focalization—an infraction that Genette calls *paralipse*—but, with respect to other characters in his world, he would logically have no choice. This restriction would be imposed by the homodiegetic voice, a phenomenon called "préfocalisation" (Genette

4. Genette's (1983: 51–52) rather paradoxical statement—that only the information of the hero at the moment of event strictly deserves the term "focalisation"—is followed by the admission that a homodiegetic narrator must justify his knowledge, and that this vocal choice consequently implies a modal restriction. His original position is summed up by Gérard Cordesse (1986: 45): "Le narrateur-personnage ne peut se voir attribuer encore tous les pouvoirs de l'auteur-narrateur en ce qui concerne la focalisation. Personnage, il ne peut disposer que de l'introspection (autofocalisation?) pour s'étudier lui-même et de la focalisation externe pour étudier les autres personnages. La focalisation zéro, apanage de la fiction, lui est bien sûr interdite."

5. Genette (1983) states explicitly that external focalization can occur (albeit rarely) even in homodiegetic narration, when the narrator is also the hero, so long as his own mental activity is not revealed. As examples of this phenomenon Genette (ibid.: 83–85) cites the monologue of Benjy in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, Hammett's *Red Harvest*, and Camus's *L'Etranger*. Genette's position here represents a contradiction of his own term. A distinction must be made between what the narrator can perceive and what he chooses to reveal, and the latter does not concern focalization. I would respond that the lack of introspection on the part of these narrators represents less a restriction on perception than a refusal to communicate their thoughts (or, in the case of Benjy, an inability to articulate them). I would refer to the theory of Pierre Vitoux: The FPN has the privilege of presenting the mind of the hero but is under no obligation to do so. In such cases, says Dorrit Cohn, the reader must look for the narrator's motivation for hiding his own mental activity (Cohn and Genette 1985: 106).

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1983: 52). Genette certainly implies as much about Proust. He points out that modal expressions (*peut-être, comme si, sembler*) are often indices of internal focalization that enable the narrator to say hypothetically what he could not otherwise affirm; and that various kinds of indiscretion (eavesdropping, spying) serve a similar function by enabling the hero to acquire knowledge about other characters. Could he not also say that these techniques are necessary devices of justification for the FPN, whose ignorance of others requires the adoption of external focalization? Internal focalization by one character logically implies an external view of the others who inhabit the same world.

The focal possibilities offered to an FPN thus contain elements of all three of Genette's types, but clearly no type alone is adequate to describe them. Such a narrator can limit himself to the perceptions of his younger self (internal). He is not, however, restricted to those perceptions, and he enjoys certain spatial and cognitive advantages resulting from his temporal distance. He therefore often says more than his younger self knew at the moment of experience (a characteristic of the nonfocalized type). Finally, toward other characters his perceptions should logically be those of a spectator (external), although here again his temporal distance allows for a certain psychological privilege, as we shall see.

Genette (ibid.) abandons the idea that focalization by an FPN is always internal. An attempt to illustrate the focal possibilities of the FPN may be seen in his paradigms of various narrative situations (ibid.: 88), but these paradigms also reveal certain inadequacies of the typology. He relates homodiegetic narration to zero focalization (Lesage's *Gil Blas*), to internal (Hamsun's *Hunger*), and to external (*L'Etranger*). Genette does not explain why he places *Gil Blas* under the zero type, as though the narrator of that text were omniscient or unrestricted. How, for example, is he different from Proust's narrator, whom Genette earlier identifies with internal focalization? How is he different from Des Grieux in Prévost's *Manon Lescaut*, a text that Genette also places under the internal type? It should be clear that the distinctions here no longer involve the narrator's psychological privilege, as they do in the heterodiegetic paradigms of *Tom Jones*, *Portrait of the Artist*, and Hemingway's "The Killers." They depend not on what the narrator *knows* but instead on what he chooses to *reveal* to the reader, a choice that does not involve focalization. Genette seems to have lost sight of his own definition of the concept as a restriction on perception.[6]

6. Nomi Tamir (1976: 417) agrees that the focalization adopted by an FPN need not be internal: "The personal mode often serves as a convenient excuse for limiting the focus of narration, but this does not mean that it cannot, as a principle, vary in focalization." It is clear, however, that she too defines internal and external according to whether the narrator "exposes or does not expose his or someone else's inner life."

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The focal difference between *Gil Blas* and *Hunger* corresponds to Dorrit Cohn's (1978: 145–61) dichotomy of "dissonant self-narration" and "consonant self-narration." A dissonant narrator views his younger self retrospectively, often distancing himself from past ignorance and delusions while providing a great deal of subsequent knowledge. A consonant narrator, by contrast, draws no attention to his hindsight and identifies with his younger incarnation by renouncing all cognitive privilege. Cohn explains the reasons for the relative scarcity of consonant self-narration. Narrators usually like to maintain their distance from the past they are recounting and therefore avoid total consonance. Total annulment of narrative distance, as it is found in *Hunger*, is rare. Moreover, in autobiographical novels the time of reflection is more often the present than the past, so the dominant consciousness usually belongs to the narrating rather than the experiencing self. This enables an FPN like Gil Blas to comment, with hindsight, on his past life. Dissonance and consonance are degrees, however, not absolutes. Although a narrator may be largely dissonant, he may choose at times to identify with the experiencing self. When consonance occurs, its characteristics are interrogatives directed to an unknown future, which have long since been answered; effacement of all marks of the present-past polarity; and focus on the experiencing self (ibid.: 167–71). In *L'Etranger*, finally, there is an almost total lack of introspection on the part of the narrator, who gives less information than even the experiencing self knows. We surely cannot say that Meursault "knows" less than Gil Blas. What we can say is that the reader knows less about the former than about the latter. In Genette's typology of homodiegetic narratives, the progression from types 1 to 3 involves a regression, not in the knowledge of the narrator but in the psychological access allowed the reader. In all three types, the knowledge of the narrator is equally restricted, and, theoretically at least, there can be no omniscient FPN. The all-important spatial dimension has been overlooked.

Genette (1983: 56) admits that an FPN is located outside the fictional events that he narrates: "Gil Blas est un narrateur extradiégétique parce qu'il n'est (*comme narrateur*) inclus dans aucune diégèse, mais directement de plain-pied, quoique fictif, avec le public (réel) extradiégétique." Moreover, he says, the autobiographical hero is often more an observer than a participant (ibid.: 69). Indeed, the extra- or intradiegetic locus of the focalizing subject is the key to distinguishing between dissonant and consonant self-narration. If it appears surprising that Genette does not explicitly take this fact into account, it is even more surprising that Mieke Bal does not, since her external-internal dichotomy depends solely on the diegetic locus of the *focalizer*, or subject of perception. Instead, Bal (1981: 47) links personal narration to internal focalization, and in doing so she changes her definitions.

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If the focalizing subject has no diegetical name, if his identity is not that of an actor in the story, then he is considered external; if, on the other hand, he bears the name of an actor in the story, he is internal. According to Bal, then, an FPN like Lockwood in Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* is always an internal focalizer, except when he listens to the hyponarration of Nellie Dean. The distinction between Lockwood-narrator and Lockwood-character is reflected through embedded focalizers (the former seeing the latter who sees Nellie Dean). Unlike Genette, Bal makes no explicit differentiation between the perceptual limitations of narrator and hero.

What Genette and Bal mean to say, surely, is that any FPN is limited in focalization. Unlike the impersonal narrator whose authority is generally beyond question, the FPN is theoretically limited, both spatially and psychologically, to what the hero (a character) has experienced. He has an advantage over his characters only temporally. It is precisely this temporal distance that affords the FPN a broader focalization than that of the hero. It authorizes him to provide spatial and psychological perceptions that the hero could not have provided at the moment of experience, although these perceptions should be justified by knowledge acquired subsequently. If focalization is defined as a restriction on perception, then it makes sense to say that everything presented by the FPN is focalized, or restricted to what this fictional human being could logically know. The knowledge of the FPN is thus an important criterion, though not the only one, in distinguishing focalization.[7]

Like Genette (1972) and Bal, Franz K. Stanzel (1984: 111–12) maintains that internal perspective prevails in what he calls the "quasi-autobiographical form of first-person narration." This is because the point of view is perceived in the main character, whereas omniscience always presupposes the external perspective of an "authorial" narrator ("external" meaning outside the diegesis). Stanzel prepares the way, however, for a different conclusion that he does not make explicitly, that external perspective can be adopted by an autobiographical FPN just as much as by a peripheral FPN or by an authorial narrator. Internal perspective, he says, depends on a low degree of mediacy, whereas in fact there is often a great deal of mediacy in personal narration.

7. Seymour Chatman (1986: 194) contends that a narrator cannot have the focus of narration because he is outside the story: "The narrator's comments are not perceptions or conceptions of the same order as a character's and should not be confused with them. . . . A character can literally see (perceive, conceive, etc.) what is happening in a story because he/she is *in* the story. A narrator can only 'see' it imaginatively, or in memory if he/she is homodiegetic, that is, [if he/she] participated in the events of the story 'back then' when they occurred." While I agree essentially with Chatman's statement, I would argue that in the case of an FPN, the story is nonetheless "filtered" (Chatman's term) through a human subject with limited perceptual powers.

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External perspective, on the other hand, is dominated by a teller-character. Stanzel (ibid.: 149) points out that in personal narration, transitions between the teller-character and the reflector-character do not involve a shift from one person to the other but rather a change in the role of the narrator, from teller to reflector. In other words, there is a change from external to internal perspective. Stanzel (ibid.: 225) states that as the emphasis on the experiencing self increases, there is an increase in internal perspective, which logically implies that an increase in emphasis on the narrating self means an increase in external perspective. Elsewhere, Stanzel (ibid.: 208) refers to the phenomenon of "authorialization" of the FPN, defined as a striving for "the universality of the authorial narrator with external perspective and omniscience."

While omniscience always implies an external perspective, the reverse is not true. Stanzel rightly points out that the personal narrator is "embodied" in the world of the characters, and that since there is an existential link between him and his younger self, this corporeality characterizes the narrating self as well as the experiencing self.[8] He admits that an increase in the process of embodiment results in a restriction of the horizon of knowledge and perception of the teller-character, as well as that of the reflector-character. A similar restriction can exist in external perspective, when the narrator is embodied but is not the main character whom he describes. This peripheral FPN is an observer of the main character, perhaps as a close friend or admirer, and therefore, says Stanzel, his perspective is external; yet he is also an embodied character, and therefore his ability to perceive is limited. The same could be said of all personal narrators. Like the peripheral FPN, the autobiographical FPN is now extradiegetic, located outside the story in which he once participated. Stanzel stops short of concluding that perception and knowledge are also limited in the narrating self, as an embodied narrator, and that the perspective is external in that it is not limited to the point of view of the main character, or experiencing self.

Dorrit Cohn challenges the view that internal focalization dominates personal narration. She states that when the past space surrounding the experiencing self is presented from the retrospective vantage point of the narrating self, the perspective is essentially external (not to the mind of the hero, of course, but to the diegesis); when space is seen from the vantage point of the experiencing self, who is ignorant of what his future holds for him, the perspective is internal (Cohn 1981: 176). If an FPN says, "I thought she was lying," then the focali-

8. Cohn (1981: 164) contests the term *embodied* because most personal narrators remain disincarnated as narrators. Stanzel means simply that the FPN and his younger self are one and the same individual.

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zation is internal; the thoughts of the experiencing self are revealed, uncorrected by the narrating self, and the reader remains in doubt. If, on the other hand, the FPN says, "I did not yet realize that she was lying," then the focalization is external; the narrating self is calling attention to his retrospective viewpoint and "correcting" his earlier thoughts by revealing a truth he learned subsequently, that "she was indeed lying."[9] Essentially, then, the narrating self acts much like an impersonal narrator who relates past events and describes characters. Like Stanzel's peripheral narrator, however, he is also an embodied character and therefore subject, logically, to certain limitations.

Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan presents a synthesis of the theories of Bal and those of Boris Uspensky. Like Bal, she identifies external focalization with the "narrating agent," while the locus of internal focalization is inside the represented events. Following Cohn, Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 74) states that external focalization occurs in first-person narratives when the perspective is that of the narrating self rather than that of the experiencing self. She seems to lose sight of this important criterion, however, when she shows how the external-internal opposition manifests itself on each of Uspensky's planes, or "facets." She divides the perceptual facet into the components of time and space. Concerning time, "external focalization is panchronic in the case of an unpersonified focalizer, and retrospective in the case of a character focalizing his own past. On the other hand, internal focalization is synchronous with the information regulated by the focalizer" (ibid.: 78). This definition is consistent with the alternation found in a first-person narrative. In spatial terms, she says, the opposition takes the form of a bird's-eye view or panoramic view versus that of a limited observer. She divides the psychological facet into a cognitive and an emotive component. In cognitive terms, the external-internal opposition becomes one between unrestricted and restricted knowledge. In emotive terms, it distinguishes between attitudes that are objective, neutral, or uninvolved, on the one hand, and attitudes that are subjective or involved, on the other (ibid.: 78–81). All these facets pertain only to the focalizer. Rimmon-Kenan agrees with Bal that focalized human objects can be seen from within or without, and she makes no correspondence between subject and object. She again points out that an FPN can reveal his perceptions at the time of narration (external) and those at the time of experience (internal), yet her analyses of the various facets do not bear this out. Only the temporal component

9. Genette (1972: 260–61) points out that narrative statements such as "je savais," "je devinais," and "je compris" coincide with the "je sais" of the narrator. Indirect discourse of the character alternates without contrast with the narrator's discourse, because the two instances share the same truth.

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accommodates the focal possibilities of an FPN. Temporally speaking, he is external to his story and he views it from the future, as Uspensky (1973) points out. The other components require an intermediate category for the narrating self. Spatially, he is external to his story, located somewhere between the position of a limited observer and that of a bird's-eye view. Cognitively, he knows more than he did at the time of experience, but his knowledge is not unrestricted. Emotively, he may be less involved than he was at the time of experience, but he cannot be totally objective and neutral about the story of his own life. In short, to return to Genette's terminology, he does not have the same perceptual powers as the narrator of a nonfocalized text (perhaps we should add) at least theoretically.

Like Uspensky, Seymour Chatman (1978: 151–52) insists that the notion of "point of view" must be subdivided into several functions that are often confused. He labels these the perceptual point of view, the conceptual point of view, and the interest point of view. He later adds a fourth function and renames these functions "filter" (perceptual), "slant" (conceptual), "interest-focus," and "center" (Chatman 1986: 196–98). Chatman admits that the term *focalization* is adequate to express the first function, the perceptual point of view, but he ultimately rejects the term because it has spawned a proliferation of "wispy beings—*focalisateur, narrateur-focalisateur, focalisé, hypo-focalisé, focalisataire*—whose utility has yet to be demonstrated" (ibid.: 199). Like Genette, he also rejects Bal's concepts of embedding, layers, and levels. Aside from these criticisms, however, Chatman makes a most interesting point. A narrator, he says, does not have a perceptual point of view, because he is outside the story and cannot "perceive" anything about it. He reports events but does not "see" them as a character does. Chatman rejects the notion, proposed by Bal and adopted by Berendsen, Vitoux, Rimmon-Kenan, and others, that focalization always occurs, that someone always "sees" the events and characters of a story, and that the narrator focalizes if the characters do not. Focalization, he says, should not be used to refer to the narrator's role: "It makes no sense to say that a story is told 'through' the narrator's perception since he/she is precisely *narrating*, which is not an act of perception" (ibid.: 195). This also holds true for a retrospective narrator: "Typically, he is looking back at his own earlier perceptions-as-a-character. But that looking back is a conception, no longer a perception" (Chatman 1978: 155). In a first-person narrative, the perceptual point of view is that of the younger self, while the conceptual or ideological point of view belongs to the narrator. An FPN, like all narrators, is external to the world of the story, and, Chatman argues, he does not focalize (in Bal's sense of the term). Here he seems to be essentially in agreement with Genette (1983: 49), who writes, "A la différence du

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cinéaste, le romancier n'est pas obligé de mettre sa caméra quelque part: il n'a pas de caméra."[10] Genette does not treat focalization as an instance that occurs in every text fragment. Indeed, if we accept Genette's definition of focalization as a restriction on perception, then we can agree with Chatman's position and still refer to the perspective of the FPN. The FPN does not perceive, but his text is nonetheless focalized, because he is a human being who once participated in his story. He is now external to that story, but not as much as an impersonal narrator who never existed within it. Technically speaking, he is external to the diegesis, but not to the fictional world in which he still lives.[11]

To summarize, we have seen that the knowledge of the FPN is an insufficient criterion upon which to construct a typology of focalization. On the one hand, such knowledge is always limited to what one individual (narrator-hero) has acquired. The entire text is therefore focalized. On the other hand, the narrator always has access to the psychology of his younger self (although he may not reveal it), and never to that of others. What must also be taken into account is the passage of time, which creates a refraction of the subject into the experiencing self and the narrating self, each with its own deictic field. The knowledge, perceptions, and diegetic loci of one do not equal those of the other.

Now it is time to sketch out the criteria of focalization as they apply to personal narration. First, a word about terminology seems in order. My definitions will be largely those of Genette, with a few exceptions. Following Cohn and Rimmon-Kenan, I will use the terms "external focalization" and "internal focalization" to designate the vantage point of the narrating self and that of the experiencing self. It seems better to base this opposition on the diegetic locus of the perspective rather than on Genette's criterion of psychological penetration, for reasons already stated. Therefore these terms will refer only to the subject of

10. Chatman's criticisms of Genette's typology seem to lose sight of the latter's definition of focalization and to be based instead on Bal's, which he rejects (Chatman 1986: 200–203). He treats the zero type as problematic, for example, because he says it implies a narrator-focalizer. On the contrary, Genette labels this type "non-focalized," that is, "no one focalizes": There are no restrictions on the narrator, who can say more than any character could perceive. The term cannot therefore be equated with "variable internal focalization," as Chatman suggests. Moreover, Chatman proposes the need for terms to describe the useful concepts of "access to the mind of any character" and "access to information which no character has"—which are precisely the criteria for Genette's zero type.

11. Bal (1985: 112) changes her position and comes to this conclusion as well: "In a so-called 'first-person narrative' too an external focalizor, usually the 'I' grown older, gives its vision of a fabula in which it participated earlier as an actor, from the outside."

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perception, whom I will call, for the sake of convenience, the focalizer. The verb *to focalize* will mean "to be the subject of perception," as in "The narrator allows his younger self to focalize a certain event."

An FPN can present his story from essentially two vantage points:

(1) *Internal focalization.* The narrator can place the focus in his experiencing self, a participant inside the story, and allow the latter to focalize characters and events just as he perceived them at the time of the events. The focalization is delegated to the experiencing self, and the narrating self remains silent, provides no correction, and withholds all subsequent knowledge ("I believed," "I was convinced," etc.). Spatially, the subject's vision is limited to proximal objects, those found in his immediate environment. Psychologically, he is limited to his own thoughts and remains outside those of other characters. Any supposition on his part about the thoughts of others requires the use of modal expressions ("It seemed to me," "She looked angry," etc.). We can say that the experiencing self is the focalizer when a narrative statement contains nothing more than what he could have perceived or known at the moment of event. In such cases we follow him through the story as though events were being unfolded before our eyes. This is analogous to Benveniste's *histoire,* for there is no reference to the act of speech.[12]

(2) *External focalization.* The narrator can view events and characters from his present vantage point, as an observer in his here and now, outside the story he is recounting. Temporally, he is virtually unlimited, because he knows what has transpired since the moment of event and can provide subsequent knowledge. He can therefore intervene and manipulate the reader through discourse, which posits the existence of a speaker, an addressee, and a time and place of the communicative act. The narrator's utterance can be foregrounded through his discourse, when he describes himself, communicates his present thoughts, or refers to the narrative process ("as I have already told you"). The narrator's presence can be signaled not only by discursive elements but also by lexical items that the hero would not have used, and by grammatical elements that establish a present-past polarity. He can provide evaluative commentary ("Foolishly, I entered the room") as well as corrective commentary ("I did not know," "I could not have realized"). External focalization through the narrator is nonetheless a restriction on perception. Spatially, he is still limited to proximal ob-

12. Benveniste's famous distinction has been reformulated by Jenny Simonin-Grumbach. For Benveniste (1966: 239–45), discourse (*discours*) contains shifters, or words whose specific meanings depend upon a given speech event, whereas historical narration (*histoire*) excludes all shifters. For Simonin-Grumbach (1975: 100–103), discourse contains references to the speech situation (*énonciation*), and historical narration contains references to the narrated situation (*énoncé*), whereas shifters are common to both. See also Genette 1969: 61–69.

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jects, those that the experiencing self could have perceived, and it is this limitation that leads many an FPN to spy and eavesdrop. Psychologically, he must remain outside the thoughts of other characters.

The temporal distance that separates the FPN from the story he recounts is a tremendous advantage in that it allows him to acquire subsequent knowledge. His retrospective stance affords him the possibility of presenting objects that are spatially distal as well as proximal. In other words, he may not need to resort to eavesdropping in order to learn what happened when he was not present ("As I learned later, she had told him privately that she was in love"). Similarly, on the psychological plane, his subsequent knowledge of the characters allows him to reconstruct their thoughts and to present them more or less as narrative facts—something we all do when we tell a story. Uspensky (1973: 81–84) observes that we ordinarily use two methods in constructing our narratives: We can relate only our firsthand observations, or we can reconstruct the state of mind of those involved and the motives that governed their actions, even though these are unobservable. The technique of presenting characters from the narrator's present vantage point ("as I see them now" as opposed to "as I saw them then") is especially conducive to psychological reconstruction or supposition. The reader might expect these suppositions to be justified to a certain degree, and so too much knowledge might undermine the plausibility and credibility of the report. The boundary between perceptual possibility and impossibility is often nebulous. Nils Soelberg (1982: 91) defines it as follows: "Le JE-narrateur ne peut rapporter que le savoir du JE narré, soit son savoir au moment narré, soit—à condition de le préciser—un savoir qu'il a acquis ultérieurement (j'ai appris depuis que . . .). Raconter ce que le JE narré n'a jamais su, ou n'a jamais pu savoir, équivaut à transgresser la convention." Precision of the type "j'ai appris depuis" is not always necessary, however, because of the retrospective stance, and indeed may appear clumsy if used to excess. It might be better to say that the narrator's information must be justified explicitly, or justifiable implicitly. Otherwise we are faced with an infraction.

In a "neutral" sentence, one devoid of discourse or evaluative commentary, it is often difficult to distinguish between internal and external focalization: "I entered the room," as opposed to "Foolishly, I entered the room" or "As I said earlier, I entered the room." An attempt to distinguish between the narrating self and the experiencing self in such a case is probably futile because perception is simply not significant. The distinction is clearer, however, in sentences dealing with mental activity, depending on the presence or absence of corrective elements. These may be withheld for purposes of maintaining interest and suspense. The same is true for statements regarding

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other characters: Generally speaking, psychological access will be restricted in internal focalization ("She looked at me as though she knew the truth") and less limited in external focalization ("She knew I was lying"). Ambiguity can still prevail, however, since an internal focalizer may present another's thought as fact, while an external one may still be ignorant of what others were thinking at the moment of event.

(3) *Zero focalization.* There are occasionally times when an FPN clearly steps out of bounds and provides information he could never have known, either spatially or psychologically (as an example, Genette cites Marcel's narration of Bergotte's dying thoughts). If we continue to define focalization as a restriction on perception, we may call such passages nonfocalized, unrestricted to the perception of even the retrospective FPN, who then resembles an omniscient narrator. The term *paralepsis* will be reserved for this type of infraction, in which the narrating self says more than he could possibly know.

The opposite type of infraction, *paralipsis,* can occur in two ways. The first, in which the narrating self says less than he knows, is actually quite conventional and may not in fact deserve to be called an infraction. It occurs in internal focalization, every time the narrator refuses to tell the outcome of an episode in advance, every time he allows the perspective of the experiencing self to dominate. This kind of "hyper-restriction" means simply that the narrator becomes consonant with his younger self, who is allowed to focalize in ignorance of what the future holds.[13] A more extreme type of paraliptic infraction occurs when the narrating self withholds vital information that even the experiencing self possesses. This is sometimes done in order to trick the reader, as in a detective novel, but it rarely occurs in the autobiographical novel, or memoir-novel. In the latter genre, important information is more often provided when it becomes important for the story, obliging the narrator to inform the reader about something the experiencing self already knows ("I forgot to mention that I had seen her three times"). Nevertheless, this hyperbolic type of paralipsis should be included in a typology of focal positions available to the FPN. These positions may be schematized as follows, progressing from more to less restriction (NS = narrating self, ES = experiencing self):

Paralipsis	Internal	External	Paralepsis (zero)
NS < ES	NS = ES	NS = NS	NS > NS

In summary, NS may say less than ES knows (paralipsis); NS may say only what ES knows (internal, including conventional paralipsis); NS

13. Michal Glowinski (1977: 105) refers to this phenomenon as the "paradox of narration": A narrator rarely deviates from chronology or displays all his knowledge from the outset; rather, he reveals the story step by step.

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may say what NS knows (external); and NS may say more than NS could know (paralepsis, nonfocalized). It should be noted that as the narrator progresses from more to less restriction, the reader's knowledge of the characters increases.

The concept of the FPN is thus in serious need of revision, and Stanzel makes a most important remark in this regard. As conceived by many theorists, the FPN's role is to present only his own experience, whereas in literary practice the FPN often claims authorial privileges: "Many first-person narrators go far beyond transcribing that which they have experienced themselves by letting the narrative arise anew from their imagination" (Stanzel 1984: 215). As a teller of fictional tales, the FPN has many options that are not available to a true autobiographer. We can speak of his "infractions" because these are useful for characterizing and categorizing his narrative presentation, but they should in no way be interpreted as judgments on aesthetic value.

To summarize our findings, we can accommodate Genette's typology to the focal possibilities available to a personal narrator by redefining only his third category. (1) Nonfocalization is possible. The FPN may provide spatial and psychological information that neither hero nor narrator could logically possess. Such information may be more or less justifiable, and more or less noticeable to the reader.[14] (2) Internal focalization is possible. The FPN may efface all temporal distance and adopt the intradiegetic vision of the hero, who presents his own mental activity and his view of others at the moment of event. (3) External focalization must be redefined as extradiegetic, as a perspective that is midway between a nonrestriction and an internal restriction. When the FPN speaks about past events and characters from his present van-

14. Consider the following passages taken from eighteenth-century French memoir-novels but which contain no evidence of an FPN:

1. Cette idée, qui n'était pas sans fondement, la pénétra de douleur: elle voyait une femme sans moeurs, sans jeunesse, sans beauté, lui enlever en un jour le fruit de trois mois de soins: et dans quel temps encore, et après quelles espérances! (Crébillon 1985: 167)
2. Elle apprenait pourtant par là l'infidélité de son mari; mais elle ne s'en souciait guère: ce n'était là qu'une matière à plaisanterie pour elle. (Marivaux 1969: 21)
3. Elle ne pouvait espérer que G. M. la laissât, toute la nuit, comme une vestale. C'était donc avec lui qu'elle comptait de la passer! Quel aveu pour un amant! (Prévost 1965: 147)
4. La nuit suivante, lorsque tout le monde dormait et que la maison était dans le silence, elle se leva. (Diderot 1975: 237)

Even without a context, we can easily discern evidence of psychological penetration of the characters in Crébillon and Marivaux, of the expression of a character's point of view in Crébillon and Prévost, and of the description of a scene that nobody witnessed in Marivaux and Diderot.

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tage point, he is temporally and spatially external to his story. He knows more now than he did then, and he is less involved now than he was then. He is perceptually limited nonetheless because he continues to be a part of the same world in which he lived as the hero. His position, in short, is that of the true autobiographer.[15]

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15. Following Pierre Vitoux's (1982) concept of delegated focalization, according to which the narrator either retains the focalizing function or delegates it to a character, I would argue that heterodiegetic (third-person) texts require only two types of focalization. Zero or nonfocalization means that there are no spatial or psychological restrictions on the narrator's information. Internal focalization means that the function is delegated to the central character, who is limited spatially and, toward others, psychologically. What Genette calls the external type means that the unlimited narrator has chosen to act as a hypothetical witness, to limit himself intradiegetically although outside the mind of any character. This is still a case of internal (intradiegetic) focalization, but one performed by the narrator rather than delegated to a character. The narrator may have the privilege of "omniscience," but he is not obligated to reveal his knowledge, just as his first-person counterpart need show no signs of dissonance. In homodiegetic narratives, however, since the narrator simulates the role of autobiographer, the three types (internal, external, and zero) are necessary, even though the last may be considered a case of infraction.

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