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# Building a World from the Day's Remains: showing, telling, re-presenting

Jeremy Scott

University of Kent

Abstract
In the meta-discourses of creative writing, the terms 'showing' and 'telling' are often used to distinguish between different kinds of narrative effect. The distinction can be taken literally: in the former, the narrative creates the impression that the reader is being 'shown' the events that unfold, as if present in or witnessing the storyworld. In the latter, the reader will feel that they are being told about the events once removed. However, it is difficult to define, distinguish between and analyse the two terms in a principled manner. This is especially true in the case of first-person (homodiegetic) narration which takes place simultaneously with the events being mediated. In such narrative situations, the effects are blended more overtly, and foregrounded, because a homodiegetic narrator must both 'show' and 'tell' at the same time. This chapter will augment and extend a model outlined in Scott (2013) by arguing that the classical terms mimesis and diegesis together with taxonomies drawn from stylistic descriptions of discourse presentation (Short 2007) and Text World Theory (Werth 1999, Gavins 2007) can provide a robust means of exploring the difference between the two techniques of representation and their differing effects on the reader's processes of world-building.

Examples are drawn from Kazuo Ishiguro's Remains of the Day (1989) to illustrate the distinction, and it will be argued that more nuanced understanding of the processes involved at a stylistic and cognitive poetic level will be of benefit to both creative practitioners and critics.

'Time present and time past

Are both perhaps present in time future

And time future contained in time past.'

T.S. Eliot, 'Burt Norton' (2001/1943: 3)


## 1.      Introduction

This chapter is the most recent outcome of a series of linked investigations into the mutually-enriching relationship that exists between theoretical frameworks drawn from stylistic/narratology and creative writing practice – or what might be more specifically termed narrative technique. Accordingly, its interest is in the mechanics of narrative fiction in terms of the methodological and technical choices that a writer makes in the crafting of a fictional text, the resulting expressive effects on the reader (in the terms of this volume, how specific narrative techniques achieve aesthetic manipulation of the reader), and the ways in which stylistic analysis can draw attention to explain these facets of reading and writing. The focus here is not upon the pedagogy of creative writing as a taught subject, but rather an exploration of just one of the ways in which stylistics theory and creative practice 'at the coal face' can be in dialogue with another. It is an underlying principle of what follows that the practice of stylistics can and should directly inform and augment the practice of writing.

So far, research and discussion within this area has approached the topic from two distinct (but, it is hoped, ultimately complementary) approaches: first, from the vantage point of what Carter (2010) terms 'steam stylistics'. This perspective has explored how a critical taxonomy drawn from literary stylistics and its analysis of extant literary texts might improve practitioners' understanding of the effects of, for example, focalisation and point of view, figurative language, the presentation of character-generated discourse (speech, thought and writing), modality/attitude and syntactic choice (e.g. transitivity, nominalisation and

attribution of agency). Examples of this work include Nash 1980, Pope 2005 and Scott 2013. The second strand, both responding to and directly informing the cognitive turn across the Humanities (Garrett 2016), embraces perspectives drawn from cognitive poetics (Stockwell 2002 and 2009, Gavins and Steen 2003) exploring how a richer understanding of how readers actually read could inform creative practice. Facets of cognitive poetics under discussion in this connection include schema theory, empathy and engagement, the concept of fictional minds (e.g. Palmer 2004) and, in particular, Text World Theory (Werth 1999, Gavins 2007). Examples of this work are more recent and fewer in number, but include Dietz 2012, Freiman 2015, Scott 2016 and 2018 and McLoughlin 2016.

This chapter, as should now be clear, draws upon two theoretical and descriptive models drawn from each of these approaches with a view to combining their insights. The first is rooted in rhetoric and based upon corpus stylistic analysis of twentieth-century fiction in English to produce what is, to all intents and purposes, a complete linguistic description of the various strategies writers use to present the discourse of characters (Semino and Short 2004, Short 2007). The second, Text World Theory, is rooted in cognitive poetics and based upon the TEXT IS A WORLD metaphor. Short and Semino's updated discourse presentation taxonomy will be combined with aspects of Text World Theory and Phelan's (2009) cognitive conception of storyworlds to address a specific question of narrative methodology which arises in processes of first-person, homodiegetic (Genette 1983) narration, where the controlling entity of the fictional world is simultaneously a narrator and a character in that storyworld. This chapter will make use of Phelan's definition of a storyworld as follows:

> [Storyworlds are] global mental representations enabling interpreters to frame inferences about the situations, characters and occurrences either explicitly mentioned in or implied by a narrative text or discourse. As such, storyworlds are mental models

of the situations and events being recounted – of who did what to and with whom, when, where, why, and in what manner. Reciprocally, narrative artefacts (texts, films etc.) provide blueprints for the creation and modification of such mentally configured storyworlds. (Phelan 2009: 72-3)

This chapter will usually default to the term storyworld in this sense instead of Text World in order to capture the fact that the fictional worlds under discussion here are broader than those typically discussed in Text World Theory analysis; where the latter aims to map a reader's conceptual world-building processes at the level of sentence and paragraph, the concern of this chapter is mainly with the larger-scale worlds that fictional texts build in their entirety. That said, terminology and concepts from Text World Theory will be deployed as and where relevant to identify and analyse exactly how and where the switches between different worlds are achieved.

Of particular interest in this connection will be the intermeshing of the conflicting demands of mimesis in relation to diegesis, and how these twin demands are negotiated when the narrator is functioning as both represener (telling the story, setting the scene etc.) and represented (as the central protagonist of the storyworld). What will be termed the 'problem' of homodiegetic narration seems particularly acute when the narrative discourse is in the present tense, and the narrating voice appears to be 'floating' in an undefined context or conceptual space. The narrating entity must simultaneously represent what she or he is thinking, what she or he is doing and also what other characters are doing too. In short, she must mediate her own voice (mimesis) whilst at the same time mediating the storyworld: its contents, the movements of characters within it, what they say and do and so on (diegesis). It will be suggested here that, at times, this need to combine the two processes can have a detrimental effect on the world-building functions of the narrative, sometimes to the point of

alienating the reader. The challenge for the writer is to avoid that moment of arrest, the point where the storyworld, which should be authentic, and/or allow the reader experiential immersion, becomes too incompatible with the reader's understanding of the actual world. This moment of arrest can happen in the discourse world of homodiegetic narration, through various kinds of linguistic compatibility, or within the storyworld itself, when the homodiegetic narrative voice is required to fluctuate, with equiponderance, from one side of the mimesis-diegesis cline to the other. The discourse presentation scale combined with aspects of Text World Theory can illustrate and indicate how and where the 'problem' arises, and also, crucially, point the way towards a possible solution. Addressing a question rooted in stylistics will lead to a revealing answer to a question of fictional technique.

## 2. Key terms and concepts: mimesis and diegesis, discourse presentation and stylistic balance

It is no easy matter to define mimesis and diegesis in a rigorous manner, and the history of the terms' usage is fraught with contradictions, re-interpretations and new applications. The words are, of course, classical in origin, and semantic traces of their original meanings can be found in modern English verbs such as mimic, imitate, indicate and index. For Plato, diegesis was an overarching category that denoted the poet's[1] processes of world-building. Plato divided diegesis into three separate types:

1. Haple diegesis: 'plain' (or unmixed) diegesis in the voice of the poet.

2. Diegesis dia mimeseos: narrative through mimesis, i.e. in the represented voices of characters.

3. *Diegesis di' amphoteron*: 'mixed' diegesis which combines these modes, as in Homeric epic.[2]

Thus, in Plato's exploration of the concept, all verbal art entails diegesis: the building of a world through language. Any instance of narration is, by its very nature, diegetic. For Aristotle, on the other hand, all art (and this includes verbal art) is mimetic in that it inevitably and intrinsically imitates reality to a greater or lesser extent (Poetics, 3.1448a19-24); he does not use the term diegesis at all.[3]

In more recent literary criticism (see Lodge 1990, Genette 1983, Rimmon-Kenan 1989 and Chatman 1990), the terms have tended to be simplified and condensed as follows. Diegesis is used to refer to representation of action in the voice of a narrator; mimesis signals the representation of the imitated voices of characters. Mimesis 'represents', diegesis 'reports'. Mimesis 'embodies', diegesis 'narrates'. Mimesis 'transforms', diegesis 'indicates'. Mimesis knows only a continuous present, whilst diegesis looks back on a past. It could be argued, however, that Plato's approach was closest to the truth of the matter. All narrative discourse entails diegesis, as 'pure' mimesis in language is all but impossible. Even in the forms of direct discourse such as Free Direct Speech and Thought, textual representations of spoken (or 'thought') utterances can never be a perfect rendering of what exactly was said (or thought) and the manner in which it was spoken. Note too that mimesis always entails representation or mediation. In verbal art, this representation is enacted via the voice of a narrator. Rimmon-Kenan sums up this position as follows:

No text of narrative fiction can show or imitate the action it conveys, since all texts are made of language, and language signifies without imitating. Language can only imitate language, which is why the representation of speech comes closest to pure mimesis, but even here [...] there is a narrator who 'quotes' the characters' speech, thus reducing the directness of 'showing'. All that a narrative can do is create an illusion, an effect, a
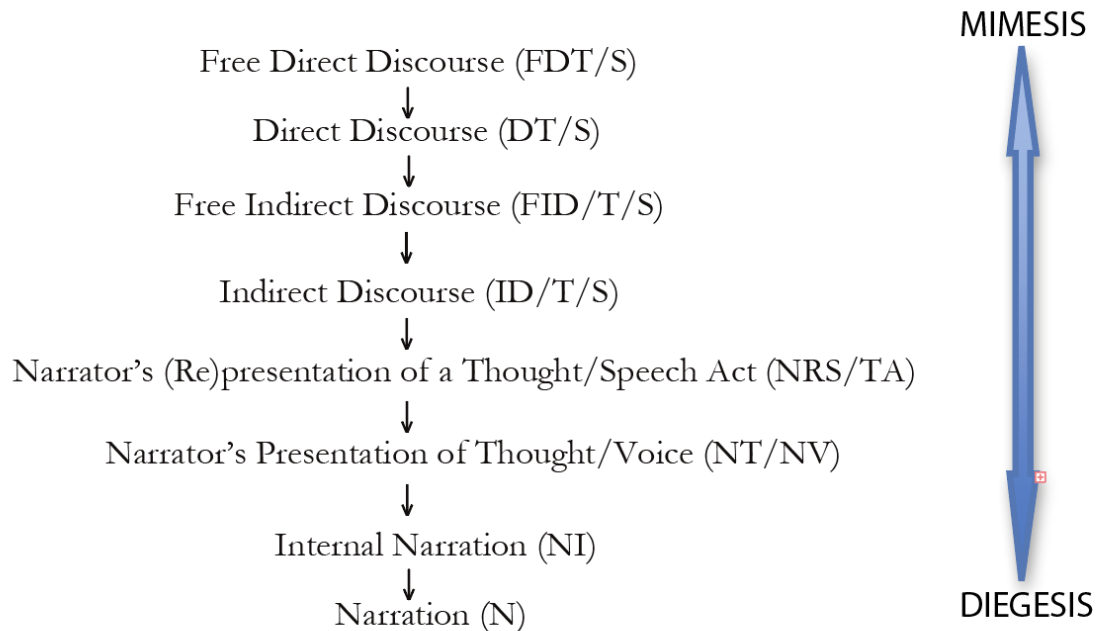
semblance of mimesis, but it does so through diegesis. (Rimmon-Kenan 1989: 108)

It would be understandable, therefore, to arrive at the conclusion that the two terms are insufficiently distinguishable in any rigorous or principled sense to be of much utility in a discussion of narrative technique rooted in stylistics. This holds particularly true for novelistic discourse, which will often contain a plethora of character discourse presentation strategies and methods, and a continual blending of the two modes. However, this chapter will follow (and augment) the approach outlined in Scott (2013): that the terms can be made more rigorous by considering linguistic composition (or style) in addition to their aesthetic effect (the ways in which they manipulate the reader and inform the process of world-building). This means taking into account the extent to which a particular piece of narrative is dominated by character discourse or, conversely, by the discourse of the narrator, and/or a blend of both discourses, with reference to the discourse presentation scale as originally theorised by Semino and Short (2004) and revised and updated in Short (2007)[4]:

| Discourse Presentation | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Speech presentation* | | *Writing presentation* | | *Thought presentation* | |
| FDS | Free Direct Speech | FDW | Free Direct Writing | FDT | Free Direct Thought |
| DS | Direct Speech | DW | Direct Writing | DT | Direct Thought |
| FIS | Free Indirect Speech | FIW | Free Indirect Writing | FIT | Free Indirect Thought |
| IS | Indirect Speech | IW | Indirect Writing | IT | Indirect Thought |
| NRSA | Narrator's (Re)presentation of a Speech Act | NRWA | Narration's (Re)presentation of a Writing Act | NRTA | Narrator's (Re)presentation of a Thought Act |
| NV | Narrator's presentation of Voice | NW | Narrator's presentation of Writing | NT | Narrator's presentation of Thought |
| | | | | NI | Internal Narration |
| N | Narration | N | Narration | N | Narration |

A cline of narratorial influence can be traced between Narration, at the bottom of the table, where diegesis and the narrator's discourse are dominant, through to Free Direct Speech, Thought and Writing at the top, where the narrator's language is absent and the language of the represented character dominates (mimesis), with a mid-point occurring in Free Indirect

Discourse (encompassing writing, speech and thought), where the discourse of character and narrator blend. This can be represented diagrammatically as follows:

Free Direct Discourse (FDT/S)
↓
Direct Discourse (DT/S)
↓
Free Indirect Discourse (FID/T/S)
↓
Indirect Discourse (ID/T/S)
↓
Narrator's (Re)presentation of a Thought/Speech Act (NRS/TA)
↓
Narrator's Presentation of Thought/Voice (NT/NV)
↓
Internal Narration (NI)
↓
Narration (N)

MIMESIS

DIEGESIS

Until now, there has been no satisfactory analysis of how this taxonomy functions when applied to homodiegetic narrative situations of the kind to be discussed in this chapter: where the narrator is also a principal character in the storyworld, and where the action unfolds in the 'here and now' of the narration. The 'problem' should be summarised again here for the sake of clarity. A first-person narrator may be both, as it were, 'thinking aloud' (at the moment of narration) and narrating diegetically (i.e. telling the story, narrating events that are happening simultaneously with the act of narration or narrating past events). Surely, though, it is desirable for stylistic analysis to be able to distinguish between the two effects. The term Direct Thought (DT) implies a priori external discourse which is being re-presented by a fictional entity separate to the one that generated it. There must be an instance of external discourse to present; e.g. the narrator might present the speech (or, less often, their interpretation of the thoughts) of another character. However, the homodiegetic

character/narrator is certainly thinking (they are articulating their thoughts in the 'now' of the act of narration). In other words, they are representing their own thoughts, and no discourse presentation is taking place. These two different tendencies of homodiegetic narration (corresponding to the mimetic and diegetic aspects of narrative discourse as properly defined above) must work closely together to mediate the world of the fiction as effectively as possible, given the nature of the particular artistic project in hand. Concepts drawn from Text World Theory (and, more broadly, cognitive conceptions of storyworlds) can help to distinguish more rigorously between the two, and, perhaps, to pinpoint those moments of 'arrest' where particular ontological and epistemological frameworks are in danger of blending where they should be separate.

It will now be useful to provide some examples of this 'problem' of homodiegesis (a problem both of stylistic classification and of aesthetic effect on the reader) in action[5]:

[1] Vic slides the jar carefully back into the box. [2] It's eleven twenty by Slattery's clock and it feels less churchy. [3] There's more punters coming in. [4] Someone puts on the music machine. [5] Going back some day, come what may, to Blue Bayou… [6] That's better, that's better. (Swift 1996: 12)

The above short excerpt from the opening of Graham Swift's Last Orders (1996) attempts to mediate three aspects of the storyworld (almost) simultaneously. First, there is the diegetic description of what is going on around the narrator (this takes up sentences 1-4). Second, the song that starts playing on the jukebox, 'Blue Bayou', is represented via a snatch of its lyrics (sentence 5). Third, the thoughts of the narrator (a character called Ray), in this case his reaction to the music as it spreads around the pub, are presented verbatim in 6 ('That's better, that's better'). Were this an instance of heterodiegetic narration, with the

narrator occupying a conceptual and ontological space other than that of the storyworld, then it would be a relatively straightforward matter to classify this sentence as Free Direct Thought, or FDT (Short 2007: 232): the precise thoughts of the character are presented unmediated, as far as this is possible, by any intrusion on the part of a narrator, who is a separate entity to the character. However, Last Orders is an instance of homodiegetic narration (the narrator is of the storyworld), and so, as discussed above, the application of Short and Semino's discourse presentation scale becomes problematic. The discourse is 'generated' by the same fictional entity that presents it, and thus, in the terms of this chapter, mimetic and diegetic processes occur conterminously.

This fact draws attention to the somewhat paradoxical nature of the narrative conventions which are in play here. The narrator, Ray, is also a character, and is attempting to present the storyworld for the benefit of the reader as it unfolds around him, simultaneously with the 'here and now' of the action. A blend of mimetic and diegetic functions can be identified, with sentences 1, 2, 3 and 4 corresponding broadly to the latter (setting the scene for the benefit of the reader in narrtorial mode, despite their being classifiable also as character discourse) and 5 and 6 to the former (his own thoughts and reactions to the scene). The character/narrator Ray's narrative voice seems to 'float' in undefined space: he is not writing in the fictional world of that novel, and neither is he speaking aloud. Also, he must represent the action of the world, construct it for the benefit of the reader, as well as represent his own thoughts and reactions to the events that take place within it. He is both actor and director in his own drama. The difficulty hinges on whether we treat homodiegetic narrators of this type first and foremost as narrators or as characters in the storyworld. They are both, of course – but it would be useful from the perspective of both stylistic analysis and the principled discussion of creative practice to be able to distinguish as far as is possible between the roles and effects of the two agencies.

A similar narrative situation occurs in Niall Griffiths's demotic novel Kelly + Victor (2002):

> I pick the kettle up to test its weight, see if there's enough water in it for a brew. There isn't, so I work the lead out of its attachment, take the kettle over to the sink – which involves, in this tiny kitchen, no movement other than a 180-degree spin – turn the cold tap on, hold the spout under the flow an keep it there for a count of three. Spin back, reattach the lead, flick the two switches; the one on the wall socket an the one on the kettle itself. I bend an put me ear to the kettle to listen for the rumble, I like doin this, I don't know why. (Griffiths 2002: 123)

In this example, the discourse of the character-narrator is occupied chiefly with diegesis: the description of activity in the storyworld. In contrast to the excerpt from Last Orders, the fact that the narrator is describing his own actions and movements as they take place rather than his surroundings seems to foreground the essential artificiality of the convention even more starkly. These words do not (re)present (or mediate) his actual thoughts, and are thus diegetic. The final two clauses, however, ('I like doin this, I don't know why') are mimetic in orientation, and do present the character-narrator's own thoughts about and reactions to what he is doing. Again, however, it would still not be appropriate to label these two clauses as examples of Free Direct Thought (FDT); the narrator's discourse is not being 'presented' as such; it occurs with and as part of the act of narration itself, in the 'here and now' of the storyworld. To emphasise this point, consider the excerpt if re-written as heterodiegetic narration:

> He spins back, reattaches the lead, flicks the two switches; the one on the wall

socket and the one on the kettle itself. He bends an puts his ear to the kettle to listen for the rumble, he likes doin this, he doesn't know why.

The first sentence and the first clause of the second are Narration (N). The last two clauses can now with confidence be labelled as Narrator's Presentation of Thought (NT). More arguably, 'he likes doin this' could be classified as Internal Narration (NI) with 'he doesn't know why' as NT. The introduction of NI into the thought presentation scale has proved problematic to some extent. Short (2007: 235) defines it as 'the narration of internal states and events'; in other words, as statements that a narrator makes about characters' inner worlds, rather than about the external storyworld of the fiction. However, Toolan (2001: 142) has argued that these kinds of statements are simply acts of narration (in the terms of this chapter, purely diegetic), and should thus be considered as outside the thought presentation scale. I would suggest that the crucial difference between NI and NT or NRTA is that instances of NI do not relate to a specific instance of internally-articulated discourse in the storyworld. Rather, they present emotions, feelings, reactions and so on (such as 'he likes doin this'). Further, mental states and emotions are, of course, not always simply articulable as coherent thought which can be 'translated into', or represented by, discourse. Thus, this excerpt illustrates both a problem of stylistic classification and a methodological problem: the essential artifice inherent in a character-narrator describing his own actions simultaneously with the moment in which they happen in the storyworld. The conditions of what Leech and Short, in reference to thought presentation, call 'a necessary licence' (2007: 70) have been violated.

The following final example of 'the problem of homodiegesis' is taken from Patrick McCabe's 1992 novel The Butcher Boy:

> [1] Or maybe you didn't know you were a pig. Is that it? [2] Well, then, I'll have to teach you. [3] I'll make sure you won't forget again in a hurry. [4] You too Mrs Nugent! [5] Come on now! [6] Come on now come on now and none of your nonsense. [7] That was a good laugh, I said it just like the master in the school. [8] Right today we are going to do pigs. [9] I want you all to stick out your faces and scrunch up your noses just like snouts. [10] That's very good Philip. [11] I found a lipstick in one of the drawers and I wrote in big letters across the wallpaper PHILIP IS A PIG. [12] Now, I said, isn't that good? [13] Yes Francie said Philip. … [14] Mrs Nugent, I said, astonished, that is absolutely wonderful! [15] Thank you Francie said Mrs Nugent. [16] So that was the pig school. … [17] I told them I didn't want to catch them walking upright anymore and if I did they would be in very serious trouble. [18] Do you understand Philip? [19] Yes he said. [20] And you too Mrs Nugent. [21] It's your responsibility as a sow to see that Philip behaves as a good pig should. … [22] I am a pig said Philip. [23] I am a sow said Mrs Nooge. (McCabe 1992: 60-1)

This extract contains a torrential blend of discourse presentation, yet still, crucially, enveloped within an overarching homodiegetic narrative situation. The following examples appear to be classifiable as Free Direct Speech (FDS): sentences 1-10, with the exception of the brief instance of Narration (N) at the end of sentence 7, 12-15 and 18-23. There is also an instance of Indirect Speech (IS): sentence 17. However, it is important to note that, in the storyworld, all of this action takes place in the character-narrator Francie Brady's imagination. It is a fantasy, and thus presentation, once again, of the narrator's own thoughts, not of anterior character-generated discourse occurring independently of the narrator. The lack of any speech marks bears out this observation. Once again, the discourse presentation scale is not applicable. In addition, the 'artificiality' (the foregrounding of an overly-

ostensible process of narration) of the approach taken in Kelly + Victor is avoided.

A final concept needs to be introduced that will be relevant to the ensuing discussion: stylistic balance. This is best envisioned as a (probably) Platonic (and thus) chimerical ideal where the mimetic and diegetic functions of narrative discourse as defined previously are working together harmoniously and effectively. However, it can be aspired to. In the examples discussed above, the two functions are, arguably, to a greater or lesser extent, at war with one another, with one function in the ascendance at one moment before switching abruptly to the other. In the terms of stylistics, and most obviously in the first two examples, less so in the third, there is a continual and at times disruptive fluctuation between what Phelan (2004: 115) calls 'telling' and 'representing'. Boulter (2007: 77) summarises the notion as follows, with two sentences that could be read as a summary of the central contention of this chapter:

Stylistic balance does not call attention to itself. It calls attention to the fiction.

This is the key concept: the 'correct' or most appropriate style for any individual piece of imaginative writing should, as far as is possible, call attention to the fiction[6]. The concept can be illustrated diagrammatically as follows:
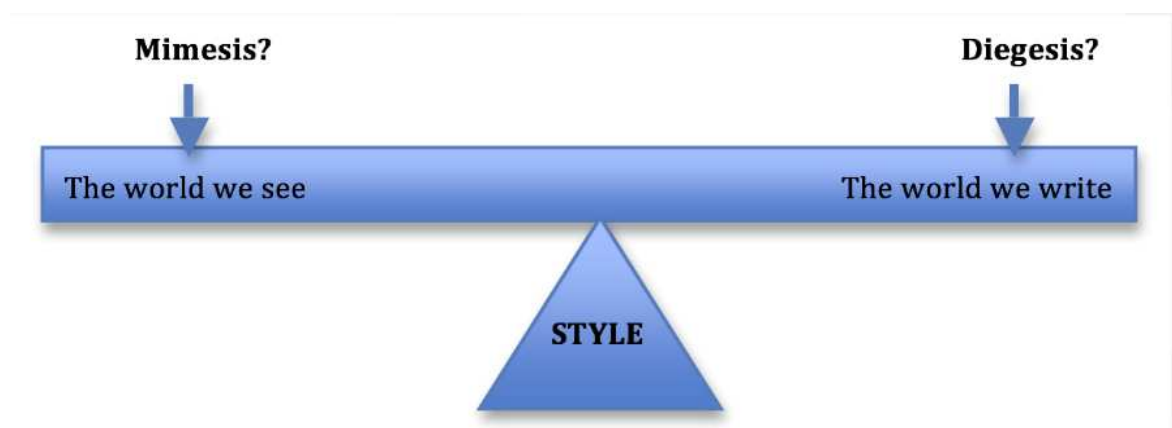
Greater emphasis on one side of the seesaw leads, inevitably, to a lessening of emphasis on the other. The canvas of a piece of imaginative writing is of a fixed size. It is the task of the writer to manipulate the balance between these two functions of narrative discourse in the most effective way possible. When this process is successful, the reader is engaged, empathetic, and experientially immersed (Toolan 2008: 106). When it fails, the reader is disinterested and alienated. This failure occurs when the homodiegetic narrator, by definition a character in his or her own fiction, unwittingly draws back the curtains at the side of the stage to reveal the author as puppeteer, crouching, no longer hidden.

It will be useful now to summarise the discussion thus far. In heterodiegetic narrative situations:

- mimesis and diegesis can be seen as occurring on a cline of influence between narrator and character (with FID as a blend of both perspectives);
- the discourse of the narrator will merge with the discourse of the character at the mid-point of the scale;
- character discourse will be ascendant in FDS/T and narrator discourse will dominate in N;
- the narrator discourse is representing (chiefly through N), character discourses are represented (through various discourse presentation strategies);

In homodiegetic simultaneous narrative situations:

- the character-narrator represents and is represented in the 'now' of the storyworld; there is no a priori discourse to be presented (only that of other characters, principally through speech/voice); therefore, the taxonomy defined in Short (2007) does not apply to the narrator's discourse;

- the 'epistemic space' around the narrator and mediator of the storyworld is smaller, more confined, and less flexible;

- the canvas upon which the writer paints is of a fixed size: there can be more character, less storyworld, or more storyworld, less character; the relationship between the two has been termed stylistic balance;

- this stylistic balance is delicately poised, and easily disturbed (the seesaw metaphor);

- sometimes, the character (mimetic) mode is dominant; at other times, the narrator (diegetic) mode is dominant;

- the same entity performs both functions, and sometimes this can be unwieldy, drawing unwitting attention to the narrative process and inhibiting engagement and immersion.

As a final example, the opposite ends of the seesaw can be seen moving up and down in turn in this further extract from Last Orders:

[1] She looks again at the water. [2] 'You know how when he had a change of mind, the whole world had to change too. [3] He said, 'we're going to be new people.' [4] She gives another little snort. [5] 'New people.'

[6] I look away across the garden because I don't want her to see the thought that might be showing in my face: [7] that it's a pretty poor starting-point, all said, for becoming new people, a bungalow in Margate. [8] It's not exactly the promised land.

[9] There's a nurse chomping a sandwich on a bench in the far corner. [10] Pigeons waddling. (Swift 1996: 15-16)

Sentences 1, 4, 6, 9 and 10 are Narration, pure diegesis ('the world we write'). 2, 3 and 5 are Direct Speech (the narrator presents the discourse of another character). 7 and 8 are the narrator's own thoughts, presented as they occur, and thus mimetic ('the world we see'); yet, they cannot be classified as Free Direct Thought since, once again, this is not an instance of a fictional entity presenting the a priori discourse of another. Note, in addition, the elision present in sentence 10, 'pigeons waddling', which attempts to mimic thought patterns in the manner characteristic of stream-of-consciousness techniques; syntactic or grammatical deviation of this type is virtually a defining feature of stream-of-consciousness writing (Scott 2013: 110). It must be remembered that these varying presentation types all occur within the overarching framework of a homodiegetic narration, and thus the narrative voice's status as a presentation of discourse is arguable. The narrator (Ray) is not representing another's discourse, but simply translating his 'thought' into words, i.e. in a general sense, he is narrating; there is no discourse external to his own consciousness to represent. However, this narration attempts to carry out two functions simultaneously: on one hand, it mediates action in the world for the benefit of the reader (in Phelan's terms, it tells); on the other, it represents Ray's idiosyncratic perception of that world. Thus, the extract constitutes a continual toing and froing between the extremes of mimesis and diegesis; stylistic balance as defined above is not achieved.

A final caveat: it is, of course, perfectly possible to argue that the foregrounded tension between mimetic and diegetic function in the above examples is unimportant. The reader of these types of homodiegetic narration is happy to accept, through a kind of acculturation to literary convention or the acquisition and activation of narrative schema (Mason 2014), that the narrative voice comes at him or her from an undefined space. A comparison might be made with silent film or opera, for example; the audience is content to 'suspend disbelief' when dialogue is presented via flashcards or when a character bursts into

song. However, the central argument of this chapter is that discussion and analysis of these kinds of narrative situation lead the way towards important lessons for narrative technique and creative practice, as well as for the principled stylistic description of fictional discourse, and that there are other, perhaps more effective, ways of working with character narration that more successfully manipulate the reader's imagination.

### 3.       The Remains of the Day

An example of a novel which, it will be argued, achieves stylistic balance is Kazuo Ishiguro's Remains of the Day (1989). The text negotiates the interplay of mimesis and diegesis in homodiegetic narration simultaneous with action in the storyworld very effectively and manages to avoid an 'upset' in the processes of building a fictional world through a narrative technique which makes use of analepsis, or flashback. The novel is narrated by Stevens, a butler to, first, an English Lord and owner of the stately home Darlington Hall and, second, to his successor, an American businessman. There are two principal storyworlds to be mediated by Stevens's narrative: one in the 'now' of the act of narration (the year 1956) and the other in the past, in the run up to World War II, and built through flashbacks instigated by the narrator. The primary storyworld, as with the previous examples, is located in the 'now' of the act of narration; hence it is more mimetic in orientation, and associated with presentation of Stevens's train of thought. The various past storyworlds are cued up by temporal deictic shifts; hence, they can be construed as narrative in the conventional sense, and thus diegetic in orientation.

Of course, the situation is more complex than that and the novel as a whole has a very rich and varied texture. The past and present storyworlds intertwine and co-exist, and detailed Text World Theory analysis of the novel (for example Whiteley 2011) can unpick and deconstruct this texture to useful effect, capturing world-switches at a minute level, often

within the space of a single sentence. However, as already discussed, for the purposes of this more 'wide-angle' discussion of the novel's narrative technique it is sufficient to distinguish between two main storyworlds. One can be considered primary (July 1956 and the journey from Darlington Hall to the English West Country). This principal world is augmented by the series of past storyworlds (the run-up to World War II); this approach is justified through careful examination of the text, which shows that the world-shifts are indeed, primarily but not exclusively, temporal, constituting a simple tense shift, and the novel shows itself to switch between past and present worlds in a relatively simple, alternating pattern. The principal storyworld occurs at the level of the discourse itself and involves stylistic specification of the 'now' of the act of narration, while the past worlds occur at the level of 'story' and are dependent upon areas of character-narrator knowledge.

The first extract to be analysed comes from the opening of the novel:

[1] It seems increasingly likely that I really will undertake the expedition that has been preoccupying my imagination now for some days. An expedition, I should say, which [2] I will undertake alone, in the comfort of Mr Farraday's Ford; an expedition which, as I foresee it, will take me through much of the finest countryside of England to the West Country, and may keep me away from Darlington Hall for as much as five or six days. [3] The idea of such a journey came about, I should point out, from a most kind suggestion put to me by Mr Farraday himself one afternoon almost a fortnight ago, when I had been dusting the portraits in the library. In fact, as I recall, I was up on the step-ladder dusting the portrait of Viscount Wetherby when my employer had entered carrying a few volumes which he presumably wished returned to the shelves. On seeing my person, he took the opportunity [4] to inform me [5] that he had just that moment finalized plans to return to the United States for a period of five weeks

between August and September. [6] Having made this announcement, my employer put his volumes down on a table, seated himself on the chaise-longue, and stretched out his legs.

It was then, gazing up at me, [7] that he said, [8] 'You realize, Stevens, I don't expect you to be locked up here in this house all the time I'm away.' (Ishiguro 1989: 3)

Sentence 1 sets up the initial text-world, the primary world of the novel, and its temporal and spatial position is dual in that it occupies the moment of narration, made clear by a heading at the opening of the text: 'July 1956, Darlington Hall' (note the deictic 'now' which aligns the time of narration with that date), but also the future. In 2, the future tense becomes clearer, enacting a deictic world-switch, enactor-accessible, reflecting the narrator's perspective and inner thoughts about his plans for the journey. Here at the opening point of the novel, two worlds seem to co-exist: a present and a future, preparing the reader for the continual time shifts that come later. Almost immediately, in 3, another deictic world-switch takes place which introduces the first of a group of past text-worlds which, taken together, form the other of the two primary storyworlds of the novel. The initial storyworld of July 1956, while primary in that it contains the act of narration itself, is backgrounded to a great extent throughout the novel, and this is of course of thematic importance. The other, past world is cued up by a tense shift, and temporal deixis: 'The idea of such a journey came about, I should point out, from a most kind suggestion put to me by Mr Farraday himself one afternoon almost a fortnight ago…' The rest of the extract builds that second world in more detail, with another world-switch occurring with the Direct Speech (of Lord Darlington) at 8.

Note also the many epistemic modal markers and indicators of uncertainty in the extract – seems increasingly likely, should say, as I foresee it, I should point out, as I recall – which indicate a very obvious unreliability. This foregrounded modality lends the opening of

the novel a sense of being an epistemic modal world (this point will be returned to and expanded upon shortly). In any case, it is clear that the world of July 1956 is the primary storyworld, the one to which the reader is returned continually from the many flashbacks that occur throughout the rest of the novel, and Stevens is its enactor, both building it and indicating attitudes to it through modality.

When it comes to discourse presentation strategies: in the primary storyworld as introduced, briefly, at the opening of the extract (sentences 1 and 2), the discourse is oriented towards a mimetic function. It is a presentation of the thoughts of the narrator. Accordingly, Stevens is in this world functioning primarily as a character and thus it is acceptable to argue that the narrative discourse takes on the tone of presentation of thought (or direct thought) – even though there is no a priori discourse being presented.

Another extract from the primary storyworld will bear out this observation:

It would seem there is a whole dimension to the question 'what is a "great" butler?' I have hitherto not properly considered. It is, I must say, a rather unsettling experience to realize this about a matter so close to my heart, particularly one I have given much thought to over the years. But it strikes me I may have been a little hasty before in dismissing certain aspects of the Hayes Society's criteria for membership. I have no wish, let me make clear, to retract any of my ideas on 'dignity' and its crucial link with 'greatness'. But I have been thinking a little more about that other pronouncement made by the Hayes Society – namely the admission that it was a prerequisite for membership of the Society that 'the applicant be attached to a distinguished household'. My feeling remains, no less than before, that this represents a piece of unthinking snobbery on the part of the Society. However, it occurs to me that perhaps what one takes objection to is, specifically, the outmoded understanding of

what a 'distinguished household' is, rather than to the general principle being expressed. Indeed, now that I think further on the matter, I believe it may well be true to say it is a prerequisite of greatness that one 'be attached to a distinguished household' – so long as one takes 'distinguished' here to have a meaning deeper than that understood by the Hayes Society. (Ishiguro 1989: 119)

This section reads as thought 'set down', ordered and crystalised in language; note the predominance of mental processes in terms of transitivity and function-advancing propositions: 'It strikes me that', 'I have been thinking', 'My feeling remains', 'I believe' and 'it occurs to me that'. Of course, there is an enormous amount that remains 'unsaid' in Stevens's discourse; the reader will be constantly 'looking beyond' the surface of the discourse itself to the unstated truths about Stevens's inner life: his loneliness, his unfulfilled love for Miss Kenton, the devotion to his job which masks a deeper absence in his world and so on. This impression of reticence, or understatement, is, again, abetted by the foregrounded modality in the extract ('would seem', 'may have been' etc.). It is possible to argue that an epistemic modal-world is cued up which is reader-accessible, but not enactor-accessible; indeed, this narrative situation could well provide a workable definition of narrative unreliability. Stevens seems unaware of (or deliberately ignores) his own feelings, so removed has he become from them; or, if he is aware of them, he denies them, or, to use a slightly threadbare psychoanalytical term, he represses them. Thus, a primary thematic concern of the novel, which, arguably, branches out into an exploration of Englishness and a notion of peculiarly English mindsets, is reprised narratologically. In any case: in the primary storyworld of July 1956, in the 'now' of the act of narration, Stevens is articulating his thoughts (thought is being presented, perhaps by being written down in journal form, although this is never made completely clear). Thus, he functions primarily as a character

and the stylistic balance is orientated towards a mimetic mode.

The second extract to be analysed comes from one of the past storyworlds, cued up by a series of deictic world-switches. The narrative situation here is markedly different:

[1] The study doors are those that face one as one comes down the great staircase. [2] There is outside the study today a glass cabinet displaying various of Mr Farraday's ornaments, but throughout Lord Darlington's days, there stood at that spot a bookshelf containing many volumes of encyclopedia, including a complete set of the Britannica. [3] It was a ploy of Lord Darlington's to stand at this shelf studying the spines of the encyclopedias as I came down the staircase, and sometimes, to increase the effect of an accidental meeting, he would actually pull out a volume and pretend to be engrossed as I completed my descent. [4] Then, as I passed him, he would say: 'Oh, Stevens, there was something I meant to say to you.' [5] And with that, he would wander back into his study, to all appearances still thoroughly engrossed in the volume held open in his hands. [6] It was invariably embarrassment at what he was about to impart which made Lord Darlington adopt such an approach, and even once the study door was closed behind us, he would often stand by the window and make a show of consulting the encyclopedia throughout our conversation.

What I am now describing, incidentally, is one of many instances I could relate to you to underline Lord Darlington's essentially shy and modest nature. (Ishiguro 1989: 63)

The style here is characteristic of Narration (N), including one instance of Direct Speech in sentence 5. The tense in 1 and in the first clause of 2 is present, identifying the new world explicitly with the primary storyworld of the 'now' of narration. Stevens begins his

flashback, or analepsis, by providing us with a point of connection between the two worlds –
the way in which the study doors are still in the same place, but what is opposite them has
changed – before enacting a world-switch in the second clause of sentence 2:  a shift to past
tense (characteristic of N), using 'would' to indicate repeated action. In this extract, and in
other instances of the past storyworld, Stevens's primary function (or orientation) switches
from that of character as in the previous two extracts to that of narrator. Indeed, he is enactor
of the new text world and narrator, and, accordingly, presents the discourse of another
character. As already mentioned, there is an instance of Direct Speech in 4 and in 6 an
instance of Narrator's Representation of a Thought Act (NRTA); the discourse presentation
scale can be usefully applied. Uncharacteristically, the modal adverb 'invariably' lends the
discourse an air of certainty so often lacking from Stevens's discourse elsewhere.
Furthermore, in another linguistic feature characteristic of the narrative, diegetic orientation
of novelistic discourse, the function-advancing propositions in the extract are dominated by
material processes: 'stood', 'came down', 'pull out', 'pretend' and so on. As in the opening
of the novel, there is a strong sense of the two storyworlds, past and present, being
concomitant; again, this narratological conceit highlights another central theme of the novel:
the co-existence of past and present, and how we live and experience our lives both 'in' and
'out' of 'the now'.


### 4.  Conclusions

This chapter has argued that homodiegetic narration which occurs simultaneously
with the unfolding of the story's action is prone to certain methodological paradoxes, the
most prominent of which is the 'upsetting' of a delicate stylistic balance due to the
requirement for the narrator (often) to be both narrating and thinking (diegetically telling and
mimetically representing) at the same time. If greater emphasis is placed on one side of the

see-saw, then, inevitably, less will be placed on the other. Pushing down on one end of the plank causes the other end to rise up in the air as the two ends are, of course, interdependent.

In contrast to some of the examples discussed earlier in this chapter, Ishiguro's novel avoids the conflict between the twin demands of diegesis and mimesis characteristic of homodiegetic narration through a deft intermeshing of the various storyworlds of the novel and the movement (or alternation) between them. The storyworld of July 1956, occurring simultaneously with the act of narration, is oriented towards mimesis. In this world, Stevens functions primarily as a character, and thus Short's (2007) discourse presentation taxonomy is only relevant inasmuchas the narrative discourse takes on the tone and texture of presentation of thought: Stevens's own thought. The storyworld built around the events leading up to World War II is orientated towards diegesis, and here Stevens functions primarily as a narrator; the discourse presentation scale applies in full. Stylistic balance is achieved by virtue of the fact that the twin effects of diegesis and mimesis are working with one another rather than competing for the reader's attention. The moments of arrest which can occur when particular epistemological and ontological frameworks blend and/or become entangled are avoided here through deft separation of their functions and effects.

The insights provided by this analysis for stylistics-based discussions of creative practice and fictional technique could be summarised as follows. Applying Short's (2007) discourse presentation taxonomy to homodiegetic narration can be problematic because its status as narration or presentation of thought of some kind is often uncertain; it is often difficult to say with certainty whether homodiegetic narrators of this type function as narrators first and foremost, or as characters in the storyworld. Of course, the answer is that they are both; however, from the perspective of creative practice, it is useful to distinguish between the two functions (or orientations). A clear distinction could help the writer in several ways. First: better understanding of the importance of stylistic balance (foregrounding

of 'story', or diegesis, versus foregrounding of 'character', or mimesis, and the interchange between the two) will allow the writer to make an informed practical decision about where on this cline her or his work should be positioned. For example, Lodge (1990: 44) has argued that the foregrounding of diegesis is a hallmark of postmodern fiction, describing it as '[characterised by a] revival of diegesis: not smoothly dovetailed with mimesis as in the classic realist text, and not subordinated to mimesis as in the modernist text, but foregrounded against mimesis.'

Second: careful consideration of stylistic balance can facilitate the acknowledgement of the epistemological framework within which a homodiegetic narrator operates. It allows the writer to become attuned to what knowledge about the storyworld the particular narrator has access to, and, indeed, what knowledge the reader will have access to which, as in the case of Stevens, the narrator himself might not. As mentioned previously, the existence of a reader-accessible epistemic modal-world which is not enactor-accessible could be advanced as a definition of narrative unreliability.

Third: in a similar vein, focussing on the particular function that a homodiegetic narrator is occupying at a particular point in the narrative can help with avoidance of what Graham Swift (quoted in Bernard 1997: 218) has described as 'the paradox of the invulnerable writer': the writer who 'insists on himself', meaning that a 'writerly' style or register (for example, overtly poetic, descriptive, even verbose or mannered) can ride roughshod over an authentic presentation of a character's idiolect[7]. In this case, the register of the character/narrator is in conflict with the register of the author. The latter can at times obscure and deform the former (Scott 2009: 137-144), with the character-narrator having access to lexis, style and register which seem inappropriate or out of context.

There is also an argument to be made that this kind of narrative method is in fact essentially realistic, and thus less demanding of a reader's acquiescence to particular types of

literary convention or narrative schema. Surely, this is indeed how we experience the world as we move through it, and how we mediate between the external and the internal. We are all narrators and writers of our own past at the same time as being characters in and interpreters of the here and now. We live our lives both in and through the day's remains.

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[1] For Plato, the word 'poet' designated the creator of the text and is used in that sense here; in modern terms, we might prefer 'author'.

[2] Plato famously cites the opening of The Iliad as an example of d*iegesis di' amphoteron*, which mixes the voices of the narrator and characters (Republic, 3.392c-3.398b).

[3] It should be pointed out, however, that interpretations of the relevant sections of Poetics are complicated and problematised by textual corruption and possible mistranslation (Else 1959).

[4] It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss and illustrate the discourse presentation scale in depth. In any case, it is hoped that many readers will be familiar with it already. For detailed discussion and examples, see Short 2007.

[5] In Plato's terms, all three of the examples here would be categorised simply as diegesis dia mimeseos (through the represented voices of characters).

[6] It is always possible, of course, to conceive of exceptions to this general statement. It is not advisable – nor desirable – to make completely hard and fast pronouncements about what constitutes 'good writing', although it is certainly possible to talk, as Toolan does, about 'excellence of technique' (1998: ix). However, in general terms I would argue that unnecessary ebullience or effervescence of style (where not called for explicitly by the particular aesthetic goals of the piece of writing) can create an undesirable impediment to the reader's world-building processes, and thus to effective imaginative engagement with the storyworld.

[7] This particular stylistic problem is termed 'The Morvern Paradox' (after Alan Warner's 1995 novel Morvern Callar) in Scott (2009). See this book for detailed discussion of the issue.