

“Unnatural” Narrative Viewpoints: A Reexamination from a Cognitive Approach

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Abstract

Point of view in narratives is usually aligned with narrator(s) or character(s), but there are cases when such natural alignment is absent. In such situations, we have the seemingly “unnatural” points of view “owned” by nobody, or in our terms, Unclaimed Narrative Viewpoint (UNV). For decades, ample critical attention has been devoted to this extraordinary phenomenon, and prominent critics have given various names to it, such as *reflectorization* (Stanzel, 1984; Fludernik, 1996), *figuralization* (Fluderic, 1996), *empty deictic center* (Banfield, 1987), *hypothetical focalization* (Herman, 2002), *deputy focalizer* (Caracciolo, 2014), etc. Bearing in view discussions on this topic by some of these critics and drawing on new insights from cognitive research such as conceptual blending, this paper will set out to launch a reexamination of this phenomenon, and it will argue for the point that this seemingly strange phenomenon is nothing but a product of a basic mechanism or strategy lying underneath everyday human cognition and communication. This project will proceed in three steps: the first part will go through a thorough review of past critical treatments of UNV, and come up with a uniform classificatory system covering all types of its instantiation; the second part will put forward an explanation for its functioning mechanisms drawing on the theory of Conceptual Blending developed by Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, and try to demonstrate that the so-called *single-scope* and *complex* blending are in fact the key cognitive processes resulting in different types of UNV; the third part will provide a discussion of the results obtained in the previous step and explore their significance for narrative studies in particular and some other philosophical questions in general.

Keywords: unclaimed narrative viewpoint, conceptual blending, cognition, communication

Introduction

In processing a narrative, at least for most common readers, it is a default tendency to establish an alignment between a point of view with a certain narrator or character, to locate for it an anthropomorphic anchor. Despite such a strong tendency, there are situations in narratives where a viewpoint is invoked but no strict alignment with either a narrator or a character seems justified. It seems to be a viewpoint belonging to nobody, and for convenience, let’s call it the *Unclaimed Narrative Viewpoint* (UNV). For decades, this seemingly extraordinary phenomenon has attracted ample critical attention, and to it many prominent critics have dedicated much consideration while coming up with various terms for its accurate description. Being one of the earliest critics to focus on this phenomenon, Stanzel (1984: 169) noticed that in his triadic topology of narrative situations, sometimes there was a kind of irregular variance concerning the axis of mode: an “assimilation of a teller-character to a reflector-character”. He called this *reflectorization*, the result of which is a viewpoint belonging to neither the teller nor the reflector-character. Monika Fludernik

(1996: 148), in her influential *Towards a Natural Narratology*, besides providing a reexamination of *reflectorization*, analyzed a related textual phenomenon she labeled as *figuralization*. It is “the evocation of a deictic center of subjectivity in a reflector-mode narrative that has no figural consciousness attached to it”, but the linguistic signals associated with it “evoke a perceiver and experiencer, a consciousness (or SELF) on the story level” (ibid.). In addition, because of its dynamics and marked subjectivity, it should be discriminated from Banfield’s *empty deictic center* (1987). David Herman (2002: 309), in his *Story Logic*, again drew our attention to “narratives that prompt speculation about focalizing activity that someone who actually exist in the story world may or may not have performed”. He designated it as *hypothetical focalization*. Recently, Marco Caracciolo’s (2014: 159) book on narrative experientiality brought into critical attention once more mysterious focalizers nonexistent in the story world. This time they were designated *fictionalization*. Due to limited space here, we should not go on listing all critical treatments of this phenomenon. Bearing in view their contributions and respective drawbacks, this paper will set out to begin a reexamination of it drawing on insights from cognitive psychology such as conceptual blending. It will demonstrate that this unusual manner of focalization, here locally labelled *unclaimed narrative viewpoint*, is but a product of a blending process lying underneath everyday cognition and communication. All this demonstrative process is centered on the following two research questions: i) is there a uniform pattern or intrinsic logic governing different instantiations of UNV? ii) what are the constitutive mechanisms underlying their functioning from a cognitive perspective?

Unclaimed narrative viewpoint zoomed in

Stanzel’s identification of *reflectorization*, an instance of our UNV, came as a result of his analysis of a paragraph from Katherine Mansfield’s *The Garden Party* (Stanzel, 1984: 170-171):

‘But we can’t possibly have a garden party with a man dead just outside the front gate.’

That really was extravagant, for the little cottages were in a lane to themselves at the very bottom of a steep rise that led up to the house. A broad road ran between. True, they were far too near. They were the **greatest possible eyesore**, and they had no right to be in that neighborhood at all. They were little **mean dwellings** painted a chocolate brown. In the garden patches there was nothing but cabbage stalks, sick hens and tomato cans. The very smoke coming out of their chimneys was **poverty- stricken**. Little rags and shreds of smoke, so unlike the great silvery plumes that uncurled from the Sheridans’ chimneys. Washerwomen lived in the lane and sweeps and a cobbler, and a man whose house-front was studded all over with minute bird-cages. Children swarmed. When the Sheridans were little they were forbidden to set foot there because of the **revolting** language and of what they might catch. But since they were grown up, Laura and Laurie on their prowls sometimes walked through. It was **disgusting and sordid**. They came out with a shudder. But still one must go everywhere: one must see everything. So through they went.

‘And just think of what the band would sound like to that poor woman,’ said Laura.

According to Stanzel’s analysis, readers’ natural response to the middle paragraph here would be to attribute it to an authorial-teller supplying supplementary information bearing on the ongoing scene. However, considering the linguistic markers of negative evaluation disclosing social prejudice and lack of understanding (as indicated boldfaced words above), this decision on the reader’s side seems unjustified, since elsewhere in this narrative, the overall stance of the self-effacing narrator is more sympathetic towards the unprivileged class (Stanzel, 1984:171). On the other hand, it is also hard to attribute this paragraph to any

specific character, since the overall scope of information here clearly extends far beyond the experience of any single member of the Sheridans’, and the diction and tone is even too harsh for them. Stanzel’s diagnosis of this situation is that here the teller of the story is *reflectorized*, temporarily becoming “the collective voice of the members of the Sheridan family other than Laura, in which their lack of humanity and social conscience is audible” (ibid.). In this paragraph, the reflectorized narrator “experiences these deliberations as an event in which earlier experiences and observations of individual members of the Sheridan family are reflected” (ibid.). Or to borrow Fludernik’s words years later, the reflectorized teller here “is a construct, combining the *knowledge* of the narrator with the focalization and language of a character present on the scene, but is identical to neither the narrator nor a specific identifiable character” (1996:135).

Besides Stanzel’s *reflectorization*, Fludernik identified another different instance of UNV which she designated as *figuralization* (1996: 148). For demonstration, let’s see some exemplary paragraphs from Virginia Wolf’s *The Waves*:

And then tiring of pursuit and flight, lovely they [the birds] came descending, delicately declining, dropped down and sat silent on **the** tree, on **the** wall, with their bright eyes glancing, and their heads turned this way, that way; aware, awake; intensely conscious of one thing, one object in particular.

Perhaps it was a snail shell, rising in the grass like a grey cathedral, a swelling building burnt with dark rings and shadowed green by the grass. **Or perhaps** they saw the splendor of the flowers making a light of flowing purple over the birds, through with dark tunnels of purple shade were driven between the stalks.

Now, too, the rising sun *came in* at the window, touching *the red-edged curtain*, and began to bring out circles and lines. **Now** in the growing light its whiteness settled in *the* plate; the blade condensed its gleam. Chairs and cupboards loomed *behind* so that though each was separate they *seemed* inextricably involved. **The** looking-glass whitened its pool upon the wall. **The** real flower on the window-sill was attended by a phantom flower. Yet the phantom was part of the flower, for when a bud broke free the paler flower in the glass opened a bud too.

Examined in isolation, the use of temporal/spacial deictic expressions, definite articles, and modal expressions would strongly encourage the projection of an experiencing consciousness on the scene, a “deictic center of observation” (Fludernik, 1996: 145). As we know, however, this novel by Wolf consists of two roughly separate bundles of sections, with one devoted to the human characters, the other to the description of the seaside view and its change. Our excerpt is from this second group of sections, having almost no direct, explicit relation with the characters’ worldly pursuits. Therefore, the evoked deictic center in the text cannot find any human anchor on the scene. But upon closer examination, we would find it is more than an “empty” deictic center in Banfield’s sense, for some kind of movement could be detected of this deictic center. As Fludernik noticed, “no mention is made in the text of physical movement away from the window (only somebody close to the windows could have observed the sea and the birds) to the inside of the room (the reflection in the mirror and of the flower against the window glass could have been perceived only from such a position farther inside)” (ibid.: 145). So here we have a situation where the linguistic expressions evoke a perceiver or experiencer on the scene, but at the same time there is no character available for this perceiving or experiencing position to be aligned with. Fludernik called this phenomenon *figuralization*. A similarity between this textual phenomenon and *reflectorization* is that both situations involve the authorial narrator’s evoking a viewpoint other than its own. But the crucial difference between the two lies in

the kind of viewpoint evoked: the latter evokes a viewpoint that has no existence in the narrative, resembling a neutral observer’s point.

After Stanzel and Fludernik, David Herman made an even more nuanced distinction among various instances of UNV in narratives. Herman called it *hypothetical focalization* (HF), and further divided it into four situations according to two sets of parameters:

Table 1
David Herman’s Topology of UNV

	<i>Human anchor outside the story world</i>	<i>Human anchor inside the story world</i>
<i>Explicitly invoked</i>	Strong direct HP	Weak direct HP
<i>Implicitly invoked</i>	Strong indirect HP	Weak indirect HP

For strong direct HP, Herman presented his case with the following example from A. S. Byatt’s *Possession* (Herman, 2002: 313):

An observer might have speculated for some time as to whether they [Roland Mitchell and Maud Bailey] were traveling together, for their eyes rarely meet, and when they did, remained guarded for expressionless.

Here a perspective of an observer other than that of either the narrator or the characters’ is explicitly evoked, with the text “calling upon a virtual spectator to focalize the protagonists on their voyage” (Herman, 2002:313).

For Weak direct HP, the following example from Russell Banks’s *The Sweet Hereafter* may serve as a demonstrative case (Herman: 2002: 315):

The snow continued to fall, and **from the perspective of Risa and the others** back at the accident site, I must have disappeared into it, just walker straight out of their reality into my own.

Here the hypothetical perspective invoked is direct because, just as in the previous case, we have explicit linguistic markers helping readers identifying this perspective; it is weak in the sense that the perspective in question is invoked from inside the storyworld (belonging to Lisa and others, but these characters in question may not actually deploying their perspective at this moment). Since at least a possible human anchor in the story could be located for it, this situation consists of a less radical case.

For strong indirect HP, let’s see Herman’s demonstration by a paragraph from Steven Crane’s *The Open Boat* (Herman: 2002: 320):

In the wan light the faces of the men must have been gray. Their eyes must have glinted in strange ways as they gazed steadily astern. **Viewed from a balcony**, the whole thing would, doubtless, have weirdly picturesque. But the men in the boat had no time to see it, and if they had leisure, there were other things to occupy their minds... The process of the breaking day was unknown to them... It was probably splendid, it was probably glorious, this play of the free sea, wild with lights of emeralds and white and amber.

This paragraph consists of an indirect case of HP because there is no explicit mentioning of whose viewpoint is being employed here. Abundant employment of modal expressions creates an atmosphere of doubt and uncertainty, therefore pointing to the existence of at least one experiencing consciousness, but the text doesn’t mention with whom this consciousness should be aligned. Yet there are also linguistic clues indicating that this virtual perspective most probably belongs to someone outside the storyworld, as can be inferred from expressions such as “viewed from a balcony” or “this play of the sea”. These markers of a theatre metaphor strongly point to a viewpoint of an outside spectator, which is why this HP is also “strong”.

Finally, for weak indirect HP, a short excerpt from Elizabeth Bowen’s *Her Table Spread* can serve as an example (Herman: 2002: 319):

Dinner was being served very slowly. Candles—possible to see from the water—were lit now.

Like the immediately previous case, here no explicit invocation of someone’s viewpoint can be detected, but the prepositional expression “from the water” indicates that the implicit viewpoint probably belongs to the sailors on the water. Compared with a HP outside the storyworld, this employment of intra-storyworld HP is a less radical case, a relatively “weak” one.

Stanzel, Fludernik, and Herman’s treatments of UNV has by no means exhausted critics’ interest in this topic, and recently, Marco Caracciolo, drawing on theories on embodiment and enaction, provided a new delineation of this phenomenon. Basically, according to Caracciolo view, our so-called unclaimed narrative viewpoints are in essence “virtual bodies” which “can prompt readers to take on, in their imaginative engagement with the story, the fictional body of a character” (2014: 158). He labeled this phenomenon “fictionalization of the reader’s virtual body” (ibid. 159), and it can be subdivided into two classes. In the first case, such bodies are anchored to fictional characters. In the second case, “the reader’s embodiment is mediated by a persona (typically an anonymous visitor, or traveler), who has access to the fictional world without being a character in the story” (ibid. 163). He called such fictional personas *deputy focalizers*” (ibid.).

In retrospect, our brief review of critical attentions given to UNV reveals some typological regularities among different delineations of this phenomenon. We can view Stanzel’s *reflectorization* and Fludernik’s *figuralization* as two polar cases, with the former including all the situations involving a viewpoint or several of them inside a storyworld, while the latter viewpoint(s) from outside a storyworld. In this framework, we would find Herman’s two cases of the stronger HP, direct or indirect, roughly corresponds to Fludernik’s *figuralization*, while his two weaker cases roughly Stanzel’s *reflectorization*. In the same way, the two distinct classes of Caracciolo’s *fictionalization* can also be accommodated into the same classificatory system: the one with potential storyworld anchors corresponds to reflectorization, while the other, deputy focalizers with potential extra-storyworld anchors, figuralization.

Although displaying such structural similarity underneath their respective classificatory system, these critics have resorted to different approaches to explain UNV’s functioning. For Stanzel, *reflectorization* consists of a derivation from an authorial-teller’s performance, and he has tried to normalize it back into his figural narrative situation. For Fludernik, the existence of both reflectorization and figuralization testifies to functioning of appropriating frames (in her words, frames of naturalization) underneath readers’ processing of narrative, and these two phenomena can be naturalized using some other experiential frames like OBSERVING other than more basic frames such as ACTING, TELLING, EXPERIENCING, VIEWING AND REFLECTING. As for Herman, different cases of the hypothetical focalization correspond to different degrees of epistemic certainty on the narrator’s side concerning storyworld existents, and he tried to tackle this problem with possible world semantics. Finally, for cognitive approach to narrative like Caracciolo’s, reflectorization would count as providing of intra-textual anchors for readers to virtually enact various storyworld experience, while figuralization would count as another kind of fictional anchors for readers to project their own experiential patterns into the storyworld.

Unclaimed narrative viewpoints and conceptual blending

In contrast to all these approaches listed here, this paper will come up with a demonstration of the functioning mechanisms of UNV from a different one, suggesting that

it is closely related to widespread and vital cognitive strategies in everyday life. Let's begin our analysis with cases all involving the invocation of an storyworld-external viewpoint, cases variously defined above as *figuralization*, *direct HP*, or *deputy focalizer* inviting an intra-storyworld projection by the reader.

UNV involving extra-storyworld observer(s)

While studying human cognition and language, psychologists and linguists noticed a common pattern underlying many processes where things in unfamiliar domains are conceptualized. This pattern consists of deployment of familiar frames from the everyday, bodily-perceptual level to accommodate unfamiliar situations. Here is an example:

The mountain range goes all the way from Mexico to Canada. (Fauconniers & Turner, 2002: 377)

Expressions like this kind is so widespread and entrenched that normally nobody would find this sentence bizarre or figurative, but, if made explicit, processing this sentence may actually require considerable cognitive work. In Mark Turner and Gilles Fauconnier's (2002) terminology, what is involved is a single-scope conceptual blending: this sentence selectively combines information from two separate domains and compressed them into a unique *blended space* possessing structure of its own. One of the conceptual domain combined (an *input space* in their terminology) is the natural world to be conceptualized with the mountain range and all its geographical features, while the other the world of human activities like walking, running, or travelling from one geographical position to another. Now different features and relations from these two domains are selectively combined to form a new blended space where the mountains can go from one location to another. Scenarios in the blended space are present in neither the natural domain nor the human domain, and they have back-washing effects on our conception of the original input spaces: now our understanding of the geographical features of the mountain range, assisted by the frame of human motion, becomes much more vivid and straightforward.

There are several points to be made clear about this blending process. Firstly, only certain important features or relations in the input spaces are projected into the blended space, and they must be relevant to the cognitive or communicative task at hand. For example, in the human input space, a man traveling from Mexico to Canada may vary his speed, need a rest from time to time, or not necessarily follow a straight route, but this feature is not included in the blend. Secondly, the blending is not a simple one-way mapping of frames or relations from one domain to another. Past theories of metaphors would delineate our example as a conceptual metaphor mapping vital relations from the human space onto the natural world, thus making it more conceptually accessible; but we must notice that the created blended space actually has a running logic of its own, with the mountain range literally possessing human kinetic abilities. Adopting terminology in cognitive psychology, we would say the blended space possesses some *emergent structure* of its own, and as has been demonstrated in other more advanced blending spaces, this kind of emergent structure could be much more salient and central than our example here. Thirdly, for the blended space, truth usually may not be the dominant value. As it is the case in our simple example, it is not important that the traveling mountain doesn't have a real-world reference, and what matters is that the inference drawn from the blended space can be projected back into its input space.

Bearing such characteristics of the blended space in mind, now we can better appreciate its role underlying our first class of UNV. The defining feature of this first class is the invocation of an anonymous viewpoint from outside the storyworld, just as in conceptualizing the natural domain, we borrow some relations from the domain of everyday human activities. Common to both kinds of processes is that on the one hand we have an

unfamiliar domain to be understood or communicated, with itself more or less structured (usually designated as the *topic space*), and on the other hand we have a familiar domain involve humans with their everyday bodily-perceptual patterns (unusually designed as the *source space*). In both cases we adopt frames or features from the second input space and combine them with key features or relations in the first one to create a blend, with its new emergent structure shedding light on our understanding of the input space to be comprehended. For UNV of the first class, a storyworld situation or state to be understood by its protagonists or readers serves as a topic space, while the extra-storyworld observing position or viewpoint invoked belongs to the source space. In Stanzel’s example about the description of the seaside view by Virginia Woolf, the natural world surrounding the protagonists in *The Waves* is itself a domain of nature indifferent to human fates and resisting human grasping. The projecting of a shifting, observing human viewpoint has made this world more accessible to human conception. But reflectorization should not be simply a mapping of this viewpoint onto the originally chaotic world, for in the narrative or the newly blended space, we now have a natural world presenting itself before our mind’s eyes, turning, approaching, departing to let different parts of itself get focused by our attention. The seaside natural world thus presented is able to display an effect of artistic impersonality yet at the same time looks highly impressionistic and original. Artistic impersonality is usually hostile to the partiality of human mind, while impressionism exalts in the kaleidoscopic textures of it. The covert process of conceptual blending now serves as a mediator between these two seemingly contrary esthetic ideals. Wayne Booth once disputed against artistic impersonality on the ground of its hidden value orientation and its being results of deliberate manipulation, but now we can see it is not at all incompatible with human values or artistic control.

With little efforts, we can extend our analysis of Stanzel’s example to other cases of UNV in the first class. In fact, the excerpt from Wolf’s work is an extreme case of blending in narrative. In other cases, the unfamiliar state or situation to be understood could be more pre-structured than Wolf’s seaside natural world, while the viewpoint to be projected from the everyday domain can be more specific and saliently present in the blend. For instance, Herman’s strong direct HP is concerned with an observing viewpoint saliently present in the blend, while his strong indirect case one only covertly present. Moreover, the viewpoint invoked in direct HP in Herman’s above example is more specific:

An observer might have speculated for some time as to whether they [Roland Mitchell and Maud Bailey] were traveling together, for their eyes rarely meet, and when they did, remained guarded for expressionless.

This viewpoint is with a more concentrated focus (relationship between two following travelers) and a more specific evaluative standard (eye contact as a sign of companionship).

UNV involving story-internal perspective

As demonstrated at the end of the previous section, the other sub-class of UNV involves some story-internal perspective(s), typically that of either the protagonist or minor character. The cognitive process lying underneath this kind of viewpoints is more complex than that of the previous kind, where all we need is a relatively simple blending of the everyday domain with that of the storyworld. Here involved is what the psychologists called a *complex blending* (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 279). Complex blending can be of roughly two kinds, with one involving a blending of more than two input spaces, while the other a blending of input spaces which themselves may be the result of a blending. Conceptualization of our second subclass of UNV is related to this latter kind of complex blending displaying a hierarchical structure. On the higher level, we have a blending of a current storyworld situation or state with a viewpoint internal to the storyworld. But such a

story-internal viewpoint itself is a product of another blending process. Understanding of the higher level blending is roughly the same with the process demonstrated above, and the really harder problem lies in understanding of the lower level blending, which is responsible for the construction of a storyworld-internal viewpoint. The rest part of this section will focus on this issue.

Before setting out to demonstrate the inner mechanisms of this lower-level blending, it may be helpful to pay attention to what the philosophers or psychologists called counterfactual *reasoning*. Counterfactual reasoning happens when people using imaginary scenarios to think of their real-world problems. Our everyday language is abundant with examples of this kind of thinking:

If I were you, my friend, I would quit this company immediately.

This example obviously is a piece of advice given by the speaker to her friend, by hypothetically putting herself into the situation of that person. Like the previous example about the traveling mountain range, this style of speech is so ubiquitous and frequently employed that hardly will anyone realize the elaborate cognitive process involved in producing and processing it. In fact, this simple instance of counterfactual reasoning also has a blending process underlying it. This blending has the current plight of the speaker's friend as one of the input spaces, and the judgement and disposition of the speaker herself as elements of another one. In the blended space, it's "me" counterfactually acting in my friend's situation according to my own principles, and there I will quit the company immediately. It's no matter that the emergent scenario in the blended space doesn't actually obtain in the real world. The addressee is able to understand this sentence regardless of that fact.

A point needs to be added about this example. It is a relatively "neat" case of blending, with the speaker's principles and behavioral disposition as content projected from one input space while her friend's present situation from another. But in a different case, more or less elements or relations from one input space may be projected into the blend. For example, another variation of our example is easily accessible:

If I were you, my friend, with three kids to feed and the mortgage to pay, I would also have to stay in this company.

In this version, the speaker is expressing her understanding of her friend's decision despite the possibility that such a decision may contradict her own judgement and principles. From this we can see elements from the input space concerning the friend may have more or less prominence in the blended space, and blending is definitely not a simple imposition of the speaker's behavioral pattern upon her friend's situation.

Now how can we apply our understanding of counterfactual reasoning to shed light on our construction of a particular hypothetical viewpoint? In a nutshell, a particular viewpoint, perspective, point of view, or whatever name you call it, is a result of a similar blending process. A viewpoint can mean a way of experiencing the surrounding world on the bodily-perceptual level, and it can also mean a relatively stable value orientation or cognitive style. In the first case, understanding of a viewpoint is a more straightforward process, it requires one to understand what it would be like to view or experience the world from a particular distance and angle. This particular bodily-perceptual viewpoint of someone is a product of a simple blending with roughly two input spaces. One of such input spaces consist of our own everyday patterns of bodily-perceptual response, while the other one consists of the experiential constraints imposed on that particular person by his surrounding environment at that particular moment. Now in the blended space, to experience the world as that particular person does, we have to activate our bodily-perceptual responsive patterns from our long-term memories, while simultaneously respect the unique constraints put on him, such as the particular location of that person. Quite like our simple example of

counterfactual reasoning, the blended space mainly consists of an interaction between our own behavioral dispositions and parameters of the current situation or state to be comprehended. The viewpoint in question is only a product of this process. What would the world feel for a certain person under certain circumstances is actually a blending of elements from two separate domains. But after this process, we tend to think it is a highly integrated way of viewing or experiencing, an essential viewpoint!

If we understand a particular viewpoint as a relatively stable cognitive style or value orientation of someone, its construction would be slightly more complex than the previous case. It is also a product of a blending process, but the input spaces involved are much more temporally extensive. One of them consists of our observation of various behaviors of a particular person: for instance, she has spent all her last month's salary within a day shopping clothes or cosmetics. The other one consists of patterns of our folk psychological inferences and wisdom: for instance, temperance is good. Now if we mix the relevant elements from these two input spaces, we will most probably arrive at a conclusion that this person probably has a bad habit concerning consumption, and also probably, she has an extravagant way of life. The more extensive the input space concerning this person's behavior is (the more frequently we observed similar behaviors), the more positive we would be towards our conclusion, and the more tightly the word “extravagance” would be a label attached to this person. Moreover, in the blended space “extravagance” would even become an inherent characteristic of hers, and we can even make many predictions concerning her future behaviors under similar circumstances based on it. So we can even say: “she would keep spending every penny she got and she would never know the meaning of thriftiness.” The modal expression *would* here indicates both a degree of counterfactuality and possibility. It doesn't matter that the situation or state described by the sentence does not obtain in the real world; what matters is the general disposition or value orientation expressed. By this example we have witnessed how viewpoint as value orientation got constructed, the same applies to viewpoint as a cognitive style.

To sum up, viewpoint as both a bodily-perceptual way of experiencing the world and a general value orientation or cognitive style is a product of a blending process. In fact, to comprehend a particular viewpoint other than one's own, this same process is required either in the real world or in a story. Almost everyone in real life is an expert in understanding another person's point of view, and most of the times we can perform this process so effortlessly that we tend to overlook the elaborate cognitive process involved. While reading a story, we covertly transfer this competence to our understanding of a viewpoint of its characters. Based on our understanding of a storyworld situation with the various constraints put on a character, we can activate relevant background knowledge of our own and counterfactually experience the current storyworld situation as he/she does. In effect, we have understood his/her viewpoint.

So much said of viewpoint other than our own, we can finally come to see the proper functioning of UNV of the second SUB-class. Herman's weaker cases of HF is a relatively simpler kind, and the examples he provided involve experiencing the narrative situation from a storyworld-internal viewpoint only on the bodily perceptual level. Comprehension of the current narrative situations consists firstly of a blending process which helps to construct the hypothetical viewpoint in question, and then using this viewpoint in turn as an input space to form a new blended space with a storyworld situation. By contrast, processing of Stanzel's example from *The Garden Party* is slightly more complex. There we must first construct a collective viewpoint of the Sheridans, and this hypothetical collective viewpoint concerns more about general value orientation. To obtain this viewpoint, we must first prepare an input space which include all the information so far in the narrative about all the members of the Sheridan family, including their language, experience, judgements, and

values, especially those concerning their interaction with the lower-class. In the other input space, we have our own knowledge about the social classes, possibly including the hypocrisy of the higher class. In the blend, we can simulate what the world appears to be for the Sheridans, but our language or judgements may be much harsher or more offensive, since we know how to “translate” their more tactful or euphemistic expressions into the franker ones of our own. For instance, the Sheridans, for social etiquette or hypocrisy, may not actually use the very words *sordid* and *disgusting* for an evaluation of their lower-class neighbors’ situation, even among themselves; but we know what they mean in using those much less offensive words: we know because we ourselves are competent actors in social interaction. Once this hypothetical collective viewpoint got constructed, the rest part of job, to blend this viewpoint with the current storyworld situation, would go smoothly, so here we will not be redundant, and the same also applies to Caracciolo’s *deputy focalizer* involving storyworld-internal personas.

Immediate and far-fetched implications

Drawing on conceptual blending processes to conceptualize UNV, we have come up with a more thorough understanding of this phenomenon, and we think there are several implications to be drawn from the above analysis.

The most immediate one concerns past appraisals of unclaimed narrative viewpoints. Although Stanzel, Fludernik, and Herman have all noticed the role of viewpoints of characters or outside observers underlying this phenomenon, their viewpoints on viewpoint is suspected of an essentialist nature. They failed to provide a principled demonstration of how such a viewpoint get off the ground in the first place. In contrast, our analysis enables us to see that a viewpoint is not an atomic property but a construct, a product of complex cognitive process. For Fludernik, *reflectorization* and *figuralization* present extra obstacles for narrative readers’ comprehension, because they cannot be easily “naturalized” using common frames identified by her such as VIEWING, TELLING, EXPERINCING, ACTING, and REFLECTING (1996:164). But our own experience of narrative tells us that such phenomena may be problems more for the critics than for common readers, and our analysis shows that readers often comprehend other people’s viewpoint effortlessly, and they readily use this everyday-life competence for processing narrative viewpoints. For Herman, whose analysis tried to establish a link between narrative viewpoints and modal semantics, different types of his HF can be mapped onto various degrees of certainty concerning storyworld existents. But our analysis shows that for the blended space, truth value is not that important, and what really matters is how counterfactual scenarios can shed light on comprehension of the topic space. Finally, for Caracciolo, his deputy focalizers in essence are like textual portals for the readers to transport themselves into the storyworld or projecting their own bodily experience onto the characters. But as our analysis shows, viewpoint frequently involves much more than bodily-perceptual patterns of response, so his model not be applicable to cases like Stanzel’s example.

A less immediate implication following this study is about the inadequacy of some past theories on narrative viewpoints. One strand of such theory once proposed an explanatory model of narrative perspectives on the basis of a distinction between “who sees” and “who speaks” (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 72; Toolan, 1988: 69). But from our analysis of cases like Stanzel’s reflectorization, one will find such a distinction is not at all neat as the critics imagined. Firstly, about “who sees”, the hypothetical collective viewpoint there doesn’t belong to any single character; it’s a synthetic product emerging from a blending process drawing on information from both the storyworld and the real world. About “who speaks”, one would find it almost impossible to separate the linguistic medium from the implied value orientation for a viewpoint. Evaluative words like “sordid” or “disgusting” both

belong and does not belong to the Sheridans, or more precisely, they are a kind of “translation” of the possible expressions the Sheridans would perhaps use. Upon further analysis, what lies underneath the past critics’ confidence in a neat distinction between words and thoughts is in fact an instrumental view of language. For this view, words are just convenient vehicles for thoughts, a neutral medium. However, before narratology’s rising into prominence in the academic world, the structuralists has long realized the inseparability between language, cognition and cultural values. Therefore, it is quite strange such a distinction in narrative studies could still have so many followers. Recent developments in cognitive psychology and linguistics have demonstrated the integral relation between linguistic forms and cognitive processes. Linguistic forms can be explicit prompts and guidelines for cognition, and they themselves may also be products of cognitive processes. If words could not be separated from thoughts, then how can we still maintain the distinction between who speaks and who sees?

The more far-fetched implication has something to do with artistic perspectivism. If Henry James has made perspective a central device for the novel, the Modernists after him has made it one of the golden rules for artistic creation. For narratives, the omnificent narrative viewpoint representative of Realism’s heyday soon lost its vogue, while limited point of view with self-imposed constraints began to dominate the scene. It seems a self-evident truth that everyone interacts with the world and its people from his own perspective with its various limitations or eccentric particularities. If art wants to remain true to life, it must embrace the rule of perspectivism. God is dead, thus spoke Zarathustra, also gone with Him is a point of view belongs only to God. As the modern world became a place of solitary, isolated individuals with their own particular viewpoints, artistic perspectivism became a constitutive rule for narratives. To be just, realizing the importance of perspective and its constraints should be a major progress for narrative artists and critics, but if pushed to extreme, perspectivism may become another kind of essentialism, treating perspective as an atomic ground-level concept, on the basis of which all knowledge is built. But our analysis has demonstrated that human viewpoint, either in stories or in the real world, is definitely not an unbreakable whole. A perspective is always a construct, a product of elaborate blending processes. A perspective may also consist of many aspects, including the bodily-perceptual, the cognitive, and the evaluative. There is another fallacy resulting from artistic perspectivism: if a person or character’s interaction with his world is inevitably correlated with his viewpoint, then the reverse is also true and a viewpoint must always be anchored to a person or character. That’s why the phenomenon of unclaimed narrative viewpoints so vexed some critics. But our analysis shows that in everyday life we constantly think from viewpoints other than our own, and we can easily transfer this competence to engagement with narrative viewpoints other than those of a narrator and his characters.

A final note is about human communication. Artistic perspectivism mentioned above has its counterparts in philosophy, linguistics, and anthropology. As Donald Davidson (2006: 196) nicely summarized:

Philosophers of many persuasions are prone to talk of conceptual schemes. Conceptual schemes, we are told, are ways of organizing experience; they are systems of categories that give form to the data or experience; they are points of view from which individuals, cultures, or periods survey the passing scene. There may be no translations from one scheme to another, in which case the beliefs, desires, hopes, and bits of knowledge that characterize one person have no true counterparts for the subscriber to another scheme. Reality is relative to a scheme: what counts as real in one system may not in another.

A severe consequence for perspectivism of various kinds, if pushed to its extreme, is that it may make interpersonal or transcultural communication seem impossible. The

incommensurability between different points of view, coupled with the tendency to map any particular viewpoint to an anthropomorphic anchor, will make successful communication between people with different mindsets seem almost a puzzling, unnatural achievement. But such swift communication puzzles only some philosophers or critics. It happens all the time everywhere in everyday life. Not only can people understand each other in real life, they can also understand beings in imaginary storyworlds, and they can understand the creators of such storyworld even though they may never be able meet each other in reality. From our analysis in the previous section, we should know how important cognitive processes like conceptual blending is for achieving mutual understanding. We should also bear in mind that people are not always stuck inside their own points of view. There are some points of view, such as those analyzed in this paper, which seem to belong to no particular person, but that doesn't mean they are necessarily cases of abnormal deviation and must be naturalized. They are viewpoints existing in the intersubjective domain, a domain not necessarily secondary to the world of lonely solitary subjects. In fact, there have been proposals long in the field that intersubjectivity may precede subjectivity (Mead, 2015: 222-226; Habermas, 2001: 44). It follows from such proposals that the ability to reach mutual understanding and social interaction may be the basis of self-identity development and individualization. If this is valid, then for narratologists the so-called unclaimed narrative points, constructed by and existing among interacting subjects, may turn out to be much more basic than their “natural” counterparts, the viewpoints tied to individual human anchors.

Conclusion

At first sight, unclaimed narrative points of view, not directly aligned with a narrator or character, appear to the critical mind as “unnatural” cases. After analyzing their functioning in narratives, we now come to realize them as results of elaborate cognitive processes fundamental to everyday thinking and communication. The reason why some of us would view them as “unnatural” is rooted in a common fallacy resulting from consequences of extreme perspectivism. As demonstrated above, realizing the importance of perspectives in our interaction with the world is definitely a progress for human kind, but treating perspective as an absolute ground-level concept runs into risk of becoming another essentialism. Perspectives themselves are conceptual constructs, and they can be broken down into lower-level processes, as they can also be combined to form more complex ones. Man certainly live in perspectives, but not necessarily always in his own particular one. Processing, constructing, and taking the viewpoints other than one's own is a crucial capacity for anyone confronting either the real world or imaginary storyworlds.

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