Narratology I: Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan (after Gérard Genette)

1. Focalisation and Narration

1.1. FOCALISATION: WHO SEES?
Position of the focaliser relative to the story:
- External focalisation vs. Internal focalisation
- View of the focalised from outside vs. from within

1.2. NARRATION: WHO SPEAKS?
Temporal relations between narration and story:
- 'ulterior narration' [after the events]
- 'anterior narration' [before the events]
- 'simultaneous narration' [during the events]
- 'intercalated narration' [narration and events alternate, e.g. in epistolary novels]

Narrative Levels:
- extradiegetic level: The level "immediately superior to the first narrative and concerned with its narration".
- diegetic level: "the events themselves" [diegesis = story]
- hypodiegetic level: "stories told by fictional characters [...] a second degree narrative"

functions of hypodiegetic narratives:
- Actional function: the hypodiegetic narrative contributes to the development of the plot.
- Explicative function: the hypodiegetic level offers an explanation of the diegetic level.
- Thematic function: the hypodiegetic narrative is in analogy to main narrative.

1.3. A TYPOLOGY OF NARRATORS

Narrators may be distinguished in the following respects:

By Narrative Level: extradiegetic narrators, intradiegetic narrators, hypodiegetic and hypohypodiegetic narrators.

By the Extent of Participation in the Story: Homodiegetic narrators are involved in the story, heterodiegetic narrators are not.

By their Degree of Perceptibility:
- Description of setting.
- Identification of characters.
- Temporal summary.
- Definition of character.
- Reports of what characters did not think or say.
- Commentary.

By Reliability: Signs of unreliability are:
- the narrator has limited knowledge;
- is personally involved;
- represents a problematic value-scheme.


Narratology II: Franz K. Stanzel

1. First-person narration (Ich-Erzählsituation)
- first-person narrator: the narrator is part of the world of the characters.
- tendency towards subjective / unreliable presentation.
- narrating self (erzählendes Ich) vs. experiencing self (erlebendes Ich).
- narrator-as-protagonist vs. narrator-as-witness.
- typical genres: diaries, letters, essays, (fictional) autobiographies.

Example: I shook my head at this unpleasant surprise, for indeed I should have anticipated it. I had it coming. It was always the same.

2. Authorial narration (Auktoriale Erzählsituation)
- third-person narrator: the narrator is not part of the world of the characters.
- tendency towards objective / ‘reliable’ presentation.
- ‘omniscience’
- omnipresence
- ‘telling’ rather than ‘showing’: intrusive comments.

Example: The paranoid shook his head at the unpleasant surprise – the way that whiny people always do – and he thought: “I had it coming.”

3. Figural narrative situation (Personale Erzählsituation)
- third-person narrator assuming the perspective of a character: perceptions, emotions, thoughts, vocabulary are the character’s, not the narrator’s.
- tendency towards subjective / immediate presentation.
- ‘showing’ rather than ‘telling’: no intrusive comments.

Example: The paranoid shook his head at the unpleasant surprise. Why on earth was it always him? Why him? Again and again! He had it coming!