

(1949); M. H. Abrams, "Wordsworth and Coleridge on Diction and Figures," in *English Institute Essays*, ed. Alan S. Downer (1952); and for a more general treatment, Owen Barfield, *Poetic Diction* (revised 1973).

Poetic Justice was a term coined by Thomas Rymer, an English critic of the latter seventeenth century, to signify the distribution of earthly rewards and punishments at the close of a literary work in proportion to the virtue or vice of the various characters. Rymer's assumption was that a poem (in a sense which includes dramatic tragedy) is a realm of its own, and should be governed by its own high principles of *Decorum* and morality, and not by the way things work out in the real world. Few major critics or writers since Rymer's day have acceded to this principle; it would, of course, destroy the possibility of tragic suffering, which exceeds what the protagonist has merited by his *tragic flaw*.

See Introduction to *The Critical Works of Thomas Rymer*, ed. Curt A. Zimansky (1956); M. A. Quinlan, *Poetic Justice in the Drama* (1912).

Poetic License. Dryden defined poetic license as "the liberty which poets have assumed to themselves, in all ages, of speaking things in verse which are beyond the severity of prose." In its most common sense the term is confined to *diction* alone, to justify the poet's departure from standard prose in matters such as grammar, word order, the use of archaic or new-coined words, and the conventional use of "eye rhymes" (wind—bind, daughter—laughter). The degree and kinds of freedom allowed to poets have varied according to the conventions of each age, but in every case the justification of the freedom lies in the success of the effect. The great opening sentence of Milton's *Paradise Lost* departs from the colloquial prose of his time in the choice and order of words, in idiom and figurative construction, and in grammar, in order to achieve a distinctive mode of language and grandeur of announcement commensurate with his great subject and the epic form.

In a wider sense "poetic license" is applied to all the ways in which a poet is held to be free to violate the ordinary norms of speech and of literal truth, including the use of meter and rhyme and the use of fiction and myth. A special case is **anachronism**—the placing of an event or person or thing outside of its era. Shakespeare dressed his Cleopatra in corsets and used a clock to stroke the time in *Julius Caesar*. Another case is the poet's departure from geographical or historical fact, whether from ignorance or design. It does not diminish our delight in the work that Shakespeare attributed a seacast to Bohemia in *The Winter's Tale*, or that Keats, in writing "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer," ignorantly made Cortez instead of Balboa the discoverer of the Pacific Ocean.

Point of View signifies the way a story gets told—the mode or perspective established by an author by means of which the reader is presented with the characters, actions, setting, and events which constitute the narrative in a work of fiction. The question of point of view has always been a practical concern of the

novelist, and there have been a number of scattered observations on the matter in critical writings since the eighteenth century. Since Henry James's Prefaces to his various novels, however—collected as *The Art of the Novel* in 1934—and Percy Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction* (1926), which codified and expanded upon James's comments, point of view has become a dominant concern of modern theorists of the novelist's art.

Authors have developed many different ways to present a story, and many extended works employ several ways within the single narrative. The simplified classification below, however, is widely recognized and will serve as a useful preliminary frame of reference for analyzing traditional types of narration. It establishes a broad division between third-person and first-person narratives, then divides third-person narratives into subclasses according to the degree and kind of freedom or limitation which the author assumes in getting the material of his story before the reader. In a third-person narrative, the narrator is someone outside the story who refers to all the characters in the story proper by name, or as "he," "she," "they." Thus Fielding's narrator begins *Tom Jones*: "In that part of the western division of this kingdom which is commonly called Somersetshire, there lately lived, and perhaps still lives, a gentleman whose name was Allworthy. . . ." In a first-person narrative, the narrator speaks as "I," and is himself a character in the story. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* begins: "If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll really want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap. . . ."

(1) Third-person points of view:

(1) **The omniscient point of view.** This is a common term for the *Conventional* in a work of fiction that the narrator knows everything that needs to be known about the agents and events; that he is free to move as he will in time and place, and to shift from character to character, reporting (or concealing) what he chooses of their speech and actions; and also that he has privileged access to a character's thoughts and feelings and motives, as well as to his overt speech and actions.

Within this mode, the **intrusive narrator** is one who not only reports but freely comments on his characters, evaluating their actions and motives and expressing his views about human life in general; ordinarily, all the omniscient narrator's reports and judgments are to be taken as authoritative, hence to establish what counts as the facts within the fictional world. This is the fashion in which many of the greatest novelists have written, including Fielding, Jane Austen, Dickens, Thackeray, Hardy, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy. (In Fielding's *Tom Jones* and Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, the intrusive narrator goes so far as to interpolate essays suggested by the subject matter of the novels.) Alternatively, the omniscient narrator may be **unintrusive**, or **impersonal**, or **objective**: like Flaubert in *Madame Bovary*, he for the most part describes, reports, or "shows" the action in dramatic scenes, without introducing his own comments or judg-

ments. Examples of the unintrusive narrator, who gives up even the privilege of access to inner feelings and motives, are to be found in a number of Hemingway's short stories, for example, "The Killers," and "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place." (See *showing and telling*, under *Character*.) For an extreme use of impersonal showing, see the comment on Robbe-Grillet's *Jelousy*, under *Novel*.

(2) **The limited point of view.** The narrator tells the story in the third person, but confines himself to what is experienced, thought, and felt by a single character, or at most by a very limited number of characters, within the story. Henry James, who refined this narrative mode, described such a selected character as his "focus," or "mirror," or "center of consciousness." In a number of James's later works all the events and actions are represented as they unfold before, and filter to the reader through, the particular consciousness of one of his characters; for example, Strether in *The Ambassadors* or Maisie in *What Maisie Knew*.

Later writers developed this technique into *Scream of Consciousness* narration, in which we are presented with outer observations only as they impinge on the current of thought, memory, and feeling which constitutes the observer's total awareness. The limitation of point of view represented both by James's "center of consciousness" narration and by the "stream-of-consciousness" narration sometimes used by Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Faulkner, and others, is often said to exemplify the "self-effacing author," or "objective narration," more effectively than does the use of an unintrusive but omniscient narrator. For in the latter instance, the reader remains aware that someone, or some outside voice, is telling us about what is going on. However, the alternative mode, in which the point of view is limited to the consciousness of a character within the story itself, aims at giving the reader the illusion that he participates in experiencing events that simply evolve before his eyes. For a subtle analysis, however, of the way even an author who restricts himself to a single character as his center of consciousness manifests his own judgments on people and events, and also controls the judgments of the reader, see Ian Watt, "The First Paragraph of *The Ambassadors*," An Explication, "reprinted in James' *The Ambassadors* (Norton Critical Edition, 1964).

(II) First-person points of view:

This mode, insofar as it is consistently carried out, naturally limits the point of view to what the first-person narrator himself knows, experiences, infers, or can find out by talking to other characters. We distinguish between the narrative "I" who is a fortuitous witness of the matters he relates (Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*, and other works by Conrad); or who is a minor or peripheral participant in the story (Ishmael in Melville's *Moby-Dick*, Nick in Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*); or who is himself the central character in the story (Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, Dickens' *Great Expectations*, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*). For a special case of first person narrative, see *epistolary novel*.

Two other frequently discussed narrative tactics, which cut across diverse points of view, need to be mentioned:

The **self-conscious narrator** is one who shows himself to be aware that he is composing a work of fictional art and takes the reader into his confidence about the various problems involved, or in some way flaunts the discrepancies between his artifice and the reality it depicts. This can be done either seriously (Fielding's narrator in *Tom Jones* and Marcel in Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*) or for comic purposes (Tristram in Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* and the narrator of Byron's *Don Juan*), or for purposes which are not clearly either serious or comic (Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, Nabokov's *Pale Fire*). See Robert Alter, *Partial Magic: The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre* (1975).

The **fallible or unreliable narrator** is one whose perception, interpretation, and evaluation of the matters he narrates do not coincide with the implicit opinions and norms manifested by the author, and which the author expects the reader to share with him. Henry James made repeated use of the narrator whose excessive innocence, or oversophistication, or moral obtuseness, makes him a flawed and distorting "center of consciousness" in the work. The result is an elaborate structure of ironies which, in some instances, frustrate the reader because he lacks sufficient clues to determine what the author intended as the facts of the matter, and standards by which these facts are to be interpreted and judged. (See *Irony*.) Examples of James' use of a fallible narrator are his stories "The Aspern Papers" and "The Liar." *The Sacred Fount* and *The Turn of the Screw* are works by James in which the clues for correcting the fallible narrator seem inadequate, so that the facts and evaluations intended by the author remain problematic. See, for example, the extraordinarily diverse critical interpretations collected in *A Casebook on Henry James's "The Turn of the Screw,"* ed. Gerald Willen (1960), and in *The Turn of the Screw*, ed. Robert Kimbrough (Norton Critical Edition, 1966). The critic Tzvetan Todorov, however, has classified *The Turn of the Screw* as an instance of **fantastic literature**, which requires the reader to remain in a state of uncertainty as to whether the events are to be explained by reference to natural or to supernatural causes. (*The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, translated Richard Howard, 1973.)

See *Fiction and Persona, Tone, and Voice*. On point of view, in addition to the writings by James and Lubbock mentioned above, refer to: Norman Friedman, "Point of View in Fiction," *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, LXX (1955); Leon Edel, *The Modern Psychological Novel* (revised 1964), Chaps. 3-4; Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961); Franz Stanzel, *Narrative Situations in the Novel*, translated James P. Puskas (1971); Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (1980).

Pre-Raphaelites. In 1848 a group of English artists, including Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Holman Hunt, and John Millais, organized the "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood." The aim was to replace the reigning academic style of painting by a return to the truthfulness, simplicity, and spirit of devotion which these artists found in Italian painting before the time of Raphael (1483-1520) and the high Renaissance. The ideals of this group were taken over by a literary movement which included D. G. Rossetti himself (who was a poet as well as a painter), his sister Christina Rossetti, William Morris, and Algernon Swinburne.