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TITLE: THE LANGUAGE OF THE NARRATIVE WRITING

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## Introduction

The present paper explores the peculiarities of narrative writing from the view point of its structure, functions and types. Narration is an act of telling a story. It is not just telling a story, but it is also telling a story of a sequence of real or fictional events - which seems to be a more natural activity for most people than, say, giving directions or describing a scene. Narration is the kind of writing that answers the question, “What happened?” The expression “narrative writing" covers an enormous territory. Narratives vary in length from a few sentences to long stories. Some narratives are based on actual experience, some are entirely fictitious, and others use a mixture of truth and fiction. Some narratives are meant to amuse, others inform or convey a message to readers. Narratives appear in many forms, including poetry, “regular” prose stories, and drama on the stage, in film, or on television. In short you are surrounded by narratives every day, some of them in print, many in the electronic media, and others passed along orally. Good narratives can be spoken just as well as written, but audiences expect more polish and structure in written work. Though narratives often make serious points, many narratives are meant to amuse. Most readers enjoy lighthearted or humorous stories, even if the experiences were not humorous to the people involved at the time. Some readers are also entertained by scary stories, which may be about narrow escapes and other frightening moments in the writers’ lives.

The paper consists of an introduction, two chapters, a conclusion and bibliography. Introduction reveals the general guidelines of the paper.

Chapter one presents the major techniques of narrative writing.

Chapter two concentrates on types and functions of narrative writing, signing out informing by narrating and entertaining by narrating.

Conclusion summarizes the results and outcomes we have come to in the course of the research.

## Chapter One. Techniques of Narrative Writing

No one knows for how many thousands of year’s people have been telling and listening to narratives, but we do know that every culture has a storytelling tradition; even it does not have a writing system. Well before Homo sapiens learned to read and write, they had evidently framed much of their wisdom in story form. Fiction has always been a natural vehicle for people to communicate their experiences, fantasies, and fears. Similarly, children delight in stories long before they are able to read or write. Almost as soon as a child has learned to talk, she can enjoy not only listening to stories, but making up her own as well. She may pretend, for example, that her stuffed animal is alive and wants a cookie, or she may scold a doll for some imaginary misbehavior. These baby stories become more elaborate as the child acquires more experiences to weave into her fiction, and she will often develop her own version of a story she has heard. We adults gossip, share jokes, complain about what happened to us this morning, speculate about the future. And in telling even these informal tales, we are likely to pay careful attention to the sequence of the events we are speaking about. Because stories create an order that life lacks, we naturally draw upon narrative. To make sense of our lives, we need to think of beginnings, middles, and endings, and we use these fictions to try to organize the past, the present and the future. (Surmelian 92)

Though narratives often make serious points, many narratives are meant to amuse. Most readers enjoy lighthearted or humorous stories, even if the experiences were not humorous to the people involved at the time. Some readers are also entertained by scary stories, which may be about narrow escapes and other frightening moments in the writers’ lives. Such stories may simply thrill readers, or they may be the basis for a serious point. Writers sometimes relate embarrassing moments, not necessarily to convey serious messages, but to amuse and to share those experiences with readers. Whether narratives convey a serious point or simply entertain, they express main ideas and back them up with supporting information. In other words, narratives follow the main principles of paragraph writing:

Present a topic idea (often in a topic sentence at the beginning)

Support that topic idea with the other sentences

In narrative writing, you will continue to apply these principles:

1. Select and refine the topic so that a main idea is stated clearly in the topic sentence. In narratives, the main idea will probably deal with conflict or emotional response to conflict.

2. Select appropriate, vivid supporting details. In narratives, the details will tell about time, place, actions, and people’s motives and reactions.

3.organize the information so that readers will be able to understand and follow the story. In narratives, chronological arrangement is normal. Any shifts in time (or place) must be made clear to the reader. (Karls/Szmanski 110-111).

## 1.1 Selecting a Topic

For narratives, as for other kinds of writing, look for possible topics in your own life: your background, experiences, interests, and firsthand observation of other people. You will write best when you write about things that really matter to you: personal experiences, beliefs, worries, impressions, and knowledge in specific areas. You may begin with many possible topics. Brainstorming will produce related ideas, or sometimes lead you to an even better topic. Before writing, you must examine the possible topics and supporting ideas. The goal is to narrow your focus to specific instance. One way to narrow a broad topic is to limit the time and place to a few minutes (or maybe a few hours) and to particular place. For example, suppose you enjoy hunting, fishing, and exploring in parks and forests, you also work on a construction crew. You could tell many stories based on your experiences, but for a brief narrative, you would limit yourself to one brief time in one specific place. Ideally, you would select an episode that stands out in your mind as dramatic or memorable.

In this paragraph, the student writer limited himself to one brief but dramatic moment:

Last October, I was out in the woods with a work crew, cutting a surveying line for a gas pipeline. We got to a clearing and decided to take a break. Seconds after I found a tree to lean against, I heard the crackle of underbrush breaking. I turned to look and saw a huge bear racing right at me. I remembered that I was armed with only a machete and a walkie-talkie. I nudged a guy near me. We stood there helpless with our mouths open and our eyes the size of frying pans. The bear kept coming until it was about fifteen feet away. Suddenly it saw us. I had never before seen a bear with a surprised look on its face. Within a second, it lurched back into the woods. But before we could breathe a sigh of relief, another big bear came rushing toward us. When it got within about seven feet and saw us, it also dashed into the woods. Our hearts were pounding. When we recovered a little, we decided that the next time we work in the woods; we should go better prepared for the unexpected. (Karls J. / Szmanski R.112-113).

## 1.2 Selecting Details

When you have a workable topic in mind, some details will occur to you immediately, and others will spring to mind as you brainstorm and write your first drafts. You want to select the best details you can. That means selecting relevant, vivid details. At times, you may think of a dramatic moment, full of colorful details sure to grab your readers’ attention and hold their interest. If so, writing comes more easily, except that you may not have a main idea until you think about the story later. At other times, you may be writing simply to share an interesting or amusing experience; your main idea may be implied. Besides using details to make the scene vivid, you must provide the details readers need in order to understand the situation. When you write you first draft, you will put in some appropriate details; you may also end with some irrelevant ones. As you revise, you must consider which details really matter. You want to include details that help support your main idea. The goal in selecting details sounds quite simple and obvious: Tell the readers what they need to know, nothing more and nothing less. Telling the readers more than they need to know slows them down. Telling them less than they need to know leave them puzzling over the time, place, or situation. By including enough details, but only appropriate details, you will give readers the information they need.

In this paragraph, a student writer shares a dramatic and amusing moment.

I am a firefighter with the city fire department. Last fall, I responded to a fire call reported by a neighbor as “smoke in the house next door”. Upon arrival, we donned our self contained breathing apparatus and entered the house to do a primary search and rescue. We discovered that a meat loaf was burning in the oven, causing the kitchen and much of the house to fill with smoke. I quickly extinguished the meat loaf, then focus on searching for possible victims. I rushed around, hoping I wouldn’t find anyone home, but knowing I had to check everywhere to be sure. Upon entering the bathroom, I came upon a lady soaking in the tub. She was listening to loud music and apparently hadn’t heard a thing. I guess I must have looked like Darth Vader, because she screamed and threw a bottle of shampoo at me. Before entering the bathroom, I was worrying about possible victims, but seeing her like that embarrassed me so that I couldn’t concentrate on the job I needed to do. Everything worked out well, and it is the experience I will never forget. (Surmelian 65).

## 1.3 Organizing Information

Most of the time, narrative writing is organized chronologically, meaning that events move forward in time. Sometimes, the writer changes normal order by using flashbacks. The writer describes an earlier event, disturbing the chronology but providing insight or explanation. Less often, a writer may jump forward in time. Ordinarily, straightforward chronology suits your stories, and it is easy for readers to follow. But if you want to jump back or forward in time, you can, provided you make sure your readers will understand what you are doing. There are some cases, when the writers organize information so as to build suspense or create a surprise ending. They withhold information so that the reader is lured along, picking up clues as in a detective story. Sometimes, writers give clues that lead to an amusing ending. Writers can use narratives for their own sake or as part of other kinds of writing. Narratives are among the most enjoyable kinds of writing - for readers and writers. The principles are more or less self-evident: select a narrow enough topics, select appropriate details, and organize so that the reader can follow the sequence of events. (Karls J. / Szmanski R.112-113)

In the following whimsical paragraph, the early statements entice readers, arouse their curiosity, and keep them reading until they come upon a surprise ending:

She was standing in the corner, the light reflecting off her soft brown hair. Her eyes were beckoning for attention. As I approached her, a gentleman asked me if I need some assistance, and so inquired about her. He said “She is 10 percent off this evening”. After asking if she was clean and in good health and being assured she was, I walked over to her. I held her in my arms, and she gave me a kiss. She looked longingly into my eyes, and I caressed her face. I asked how much she would cost, and the man said, “$55". I paid at once and took the cuddly rabbit home. Rabbits are lovable and inexpensive pets.

## Chapter Two. Major Functions of Narration

Narration has two major functions: informing (nonfiction) and entertaining (fiction) by narrating.

## 2.1 Informing by Narrating

Narrating is telling a story. Usually, you think of telling a story, you think of fiction - of novels and short stories. But fiction is only one kind of narrative. There are narratives that are true - accounts of real incidents and events. Because narration can be based on fact as well as on imagination, it can be used to inform as well as to entertain. For example, you can use narration to tell your reader about personal experiences - your first day on a new job - or historical events - the Apollo 13 space flight. You can use it to explain a process - how the body digests food - or the way to do something - how to play chess. If description is like a photograph, then narration is like a motion picture. Narration follows events through time. (Kharatyan M. / Vardanyan L.55)

There are singled out two types of narratives:

Personal narratives

Objective narratives

Personal Narratives

If you are going to write about something that happened to you, you will probably write a first - person narrative. You will say things like “I did this” and “We did that". This is your experience, so you will include your reactions to events, your feelings about them. But there is an important limitation to this approach. To be consistent, you can relate only what you know and feel or what others report to you - your point of view is restricted to your own thoughts, feelings, and observations. And since what happened has already occurred, you will probably do you are telling in the past tense. This is what the actress Shirley McLain has done in her autobiography. Here is an excerpt from it describing how she commuted to dancing class while she was in high school.

Rehearsals ended at midnight. I would rush for the bus, which it seemed, was always either late or early, but never on schedule. I’d stumble groggily from the bus an hour and a half later, and make my way down the quiet street to a dark and silent house. My dinner usually was saltine crackers smothered in ketchup and Tabasco and with them a quart of ginger ale. I always ate standing up, and then I’d stagger to bed, rarely before two o’clock…

It was a lonely life, for a teenager especially, but I had a purpose - a good reason for being. And I learned something about myself that still holds true: I cannot enjoy anything unless I work hard at it.

Sometimes, in a personal narrative, you will want to give the reader a special feeling of immediacy. You will want your reader to have a feeling of being there and experiencing what is happening along with you. Often you can covey this feeling by using the present tense. Here is a writer narrating an event that he experienced thirty years ago. But he uses the present tense. The event was the Allied invasion of German - occupied France. He was on one of the thousands of ships that crossed the Channel from England to Normandy. (Brown 61-62)

It is three am, it is four am. We are six miles off shore… By now the enemy must know what’s up. Bombers roar overhead. Flares drop inland. I am so wrought up I do knee bends. A thousand youngsters are on board almost as inexperienced as I. It is pathetic to hear them ask my opinion. Everything’s fine I say. Now we wait three miles off shore. All nine guns point at the beach.5: 30 am. There are yellow streaks in the cloud cover. Now! The guns go off and our ship the Quincy bounces. Down finds us on Germany’s doormat like the morning milk bottle.

## 2.2 Objective Narratives

When someone else - not you - is the centre of your narrative, you will probably write in the third person. That is you will write “She did this” and “They did that". And since you are not the focus of the narrative, your feelings and reactions will be kept in the background or omitted entirely. This is what meant by objective narrative because objective narrative does not require a restricted, first-person viewpoint, you have an advantage. You can describe events going on in several different places, even when you are not a witness to them. Also, if you want to suggest a habitual action, an action that repeats itself, you may want to use the present tense in an objective narration.

Here is part of an objective narrative. The writer is explaining how a pioneer couple located their homestead on the Nebraska prairie in 1873.

George Cather hired a man with team and wagon, measured the circumference of one of the back wheels, tied a rag on the rim so they could more easily count the revolutions and started across the prairie. George had a compass to keep him going in the right direction. His wife sat in the back of the wagon, counted revolutions and computed mileage… When they had according to calculations, reached their homestead, they drove on a bit to what they judged to be the center of their property, just to make sure they were really on their own land - and pitched a tent for the night. (Karls J. / Szmanski R.115)

## 2.3 Anecdotes and Illustrations

Sometimes you’ll find that you need to support a general statement with a specific example to fully express what you mean. One way you can do this is with a brief story - an anecdote. Thus, you may include a small - scale narrative, or perhaps several, in a larger composition.

Here is an anecdote told about Jackie Robinson after his retirement from major league baseball. The writer uses it as an example to support his general statement about the character and strength of Jackie Robinson even in ill health.

He accepted the blindness and the limping with a courage born of beauty. At an old - timers’ game last season in Los Angeles, someone threw a baseball at him from the grandstands, ordering, “Hey, Robinson. Sign this”. The unseen baseball struck his forehead. He signed it.

An anecdote is a vivid way to back up a general statement. But you can’t count on always having one handy. And sometimes an anecdote just doesn’t seem to fit in. Then, rather than have your reader hang in the air with only a general statement, you should specify. You should back up your statement with an illustration. For instance, it isn’t enough to state; you need to go on from such a statement to illustrate what you mean, as this writer has done. (Karls J. / Szmanski R.120)

It happens all around us … It happened to me personally. My mother was from Poughkeepsie, New York, my mother from Marietta, Ohio, my stepmother from Washington, Pennsylvania. I was born in Wheeling, West Virginia, raised in Athens, Georgia, educated in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, Ithaca, New York, and Baltimore, Maryland, and I know work in Rabun Gap, Georgia. I’ve learned a lot from all of that, but still I have no more idea of where I fit in space and time and community than if I had just landed inside a meteor from Pluto. I make my home where I am.

## 2.4 Narrating a Process

Narratives which are directions and explanations not only answer the questions “What happens? ” but also “How does it happen? ” These kinds of narratives follow the movement of the process from one stage to the next. You may narrate a how-to-do-it process in the first person or in the second person. For example, you may write, “I begin with a few simple breathing exercises" or “You should begin with a few simple breathing exercises”. Using the second person has the advantage of sounding as though you were talking directly to your reader, having a face-to-face conversation.

But whether you choose the first or second person, you should “walk through" the steps of your directions in your mind to make sure that they are in the right order and that nothing has been left out. You may even want to number the steps, as this writer has done in explaining how to replace a fuse.

When the fuse blows, grope your way over to the flash-light and unplug the offending appliance (usually the last one turned on before the blow).

Get your spare fuses and open the fuse box door.

When you shine the flash on the fuses you will see one with its little glass window all black and burned looking. Replace this fuse…

Numbering the steps this way works well with brief, fairly simple directions, however, you may want to use transitional words like *first, then, next,* and *finally* as you move from step to step in the process. Also, you can use words like *if, when* and *after* to introduce the conditions required from the next step, as in “After the paint has dried, apply the second coat". (Karls J. / Szmanski R.124)

You may feel it necessary to illustrate your directions with diagrams or pictures. In that case, a word of warning. Do not depend on an illustration to make the meaning of your words clear. Write so that your reader can understand you even if there are not pictures or diagrams. Make sure your directions can stand alone.

Not every explanation of a process is a how-to-do-it. Often, you will need to tell how something happens - for example, how plants make food from sunshine. Such explanations are usually told in the third person. Sometimes, especially in explaining a process that is habitual, you will want to use the present tense, as this writer has done.

In warm weather the local thunderstorm takes its place as an important water producer. It comes chiefly as a result of temperature differences on the earth’s surface. There may be many causes for these differences. For example, the dark earth of a plowed field will absorb more heat than the surrounding forest, and over this warm field the air will rise. As it goes higher the moisture in the air begins to condense into water droplets, producing the towering cumulus clouds whose contours outline the movements of the rising air. Given the proper combination of heat, moisture and subsequent chilling, the cloud will at last build up to produce a thunderstorm.

Whether you are giving directions or providing an explanation, you may need to do some research to be sure of your facts - of the exact sequence of events, for example, and their cause-and-effect relationship, if any. And we must not forget the audience. If you are writing for someone completely unfamiliar with the process you are explaining, do not leave out a step assuming your reader can figure it out. Put it in, in the right place. You will also want to use the kind of detail and vocabulary appropriate for your audience. (Kharatyan M. / Vardanyan L.57)

## 2.5 Entertaining by Narrating

One major purpose of writing is to entertain - to bring insight, surprise, or delight to the reader. Language as art - literature - can inform and persuade, but its real purpose is to entertain, to bring enjoyment by a simulating the imagination. Literature, like informative and persuasive writing, stresses what is said. But literature also places great emphasis on how something is said. It demands that the writer find just the right words and express them in just the right order.

Much of literature - stories, plays, and poetry - is fiction. It includes facts about real people and actual experiences but really depends upon the writer’s unique imagination. Fiction also uses special devices, such as figurative language and dialogue. Some literature - like the future article - is nonfiction. Such literature demands that the writer present real-life situations in an interesting, entertaining way. Whether fiction or nonfiction, each literary form is unique. But all literary forms have the same basic goal - to entertain the reader through the artistic, creative use of language.

## 2.6 The Story

Writing a good story either in first and third person means describing a sequence of events in an interesting, lively way. A good story should consist of:

An interesting beginning to catch the reader’s attention and make him/her want to go on reading your story.

Good development in the main body. To develop your story you should use appropriate tenses, especially past ones, e. g. Past Simple to describe the main events, Past Continuous to set the scene, Past Perfect to talk about events which happened before the main events, etc.

A good ending, if possible an unexpected or unpredictable one, to surprise the reader and create a long-lasting impression of your peace. (Evans V. /Dooley J.43-44)

There were stories even before there was writing. And they were preserved orally and passed from one generation to the next. Even though there was fiction, they sprang from the experiences of the people who told them and listened to them. They reflected the people’s lives and values. Over the years many of the stories were lost.

The term function is applied to stories that tell about invented happening and people, not real ones. The problem with this term is that for many people it implies that such stories deal in the false and the untrue, that they have no connection with real life. But fiction, good fiction, while not a factual record of real life, is grounded in real life. Similarly, the stories you invent should grow out of your life - your experience, observations, the people and things you value. This is not to say that you can take an incident directly from life and record it without change. You have to let your imagination reshape your experiences. Change some details, add some detail, and subtract others. Rework your ideas until your story says exactly what you want it to say.

What is a story? Without attempting a formal definition we may say that a story is a coherent account of a significant emotional experience, or a series of related experiences organized into a perfect whole. The fiction writer re-creates human events, which might be external or mental, imagined or real, and are emotional experiences for the people involved in them. In more dramatic terms, a story is the imitation of an action - an action, complete in itself. By a complete action - at least in fiction - we do not necessarily mean the final answer to the emotional problem or the resolution of a conflict. But the action should be complete enough to reveal the underlying truth in the story, and what is important is this revelation. When we look upon fiction, as an art of revelations we may readily admit that the real story is the meaning of the event.

The disorder of life may be part of some supreme order and in a novel and short story, and in a play or poem too, it does become order: thus the writer overcomes in a measure the imperfections and limitations of mortality. The reader imaginatively enjoys these re-created events, which may have actually happened, and in this sense a story is a history, though not necessarily in its historic order. Or they might happen, and it is the pretended history, though not an improbable one, it should be convincing. Or the story may be a mixture of the two, the actual and the possible, or the probable, as it so often even in the most realistic fiction today. The perceptive writer searches for hidden meaning in human events and builds the stories around them. This freedom of imagination enjoyed by the writer is one of the characteristics of fiction - as distinguished from history - but in a good story imagination does no violence to reality and is based on reality. It is not reckless invention. (Surmelian 21)

From disorder to order (plot), from multiplicity to unity, from the particular to the general (theme), and back to the particular (through concrete correlates), from matter to form - this, briefly, seems to be the creative process in fiction. A good story represents a larger reality than itself, if it is, for instance, the struggle of a man and woman for happiness, or for sheer survival, the writer finds universal meaning in their struggle, and the moment he does that he has a story. The meaning of a story varies for each reader; it does not wholly lie in the story itself. Probably no work of fiction is exactly the same story for two readers. Each sees something different in it, what he himself is capable of seeing. These variations in reader response may be so great that a story becomes meaningless for one person, and highly significant for another. (Surmelian 1-4)

There are two ways of writing a story: scene and summary. Scene is the dramatic and summary the narrative method. Fiction is dramatic narration, neither wholly scene nor wholly summary, but scene-and-summary. If it were all scene, it would be a play, if all summary, more of a synopsis than a story.

## 2.7 The Setting

A story must happen somewhere - it must have a setting. Perhaps your idea for a story will start with an interesting place you know. What stories of interesting incidents could occur in such a place? Perhaps, instead, your story idea concerns some exciting action. In that case, you will have to supply a setting completely appropriate to and supportive of that action. In describing your setting, you should do so as quickly and vividly as you can. Long-winded place descriptions tend to clog the flow of a story and bore readers.

How you select the details will depend partly on your purpose. If you are trying to convey the feeling that a city apartment is a wonderful place to live, you might use such details as “a panoramic view of sleek gray skyscrapers,” “the cheerful laughter of children playing below,” “parsley and rosemary growing in small red pots in a sunny kitchen window." If the feeling you are trying to convey is that city apartments are unpleasant, you might use such negative details as “a view of dirty brick building," “children wailing and screaming in the next apartment,” “a small, cramped kitchen with a stained sink and a dripping faucet." Details of setting create a specific atmosphere in which the characters and their actions appear convincing and realistic. (Karls J. / Szmanski R.171-172)

## 2.8 The Plot

Something must happen in the story - a story must have a plot. But plot is more than a string of events. For example, a new article about a hotel fire deals with a string of events, but it has not plot because there is no conflict. To have a plot there must be conflict, problems that the characters must face and solve or fail to solve. Thus, the sequence of events making up the plot must be planned and arranged to present incidents that

introduce the conflict

build toward a climax *-* the point where a solution to the conflict is unavoidable

present the solution or resolution, of the conflict

There are many types of conflict you could use as plot starters. One type of conflict is the physical opposition of two characters - for example, the cowboy hero in a shoot-out with the villain. Does the hero win or lose? Why? On a more realistic level, you might have two students as finalists for a scholarship that only one could win. What happens?

Another type of conflict involves making an important decision. For example, a girl sees her best friend shoplifting - she must decide between loyalty and honesty. What does she do? Or a boy’s has been rejected by a group they both belong to, for a reason he consider unfair. He must decide if he should support his friend at the risk of also being rejected by the group.

Another kind of conflict involves solving a problem or overcoming a handicap. For example, a boy whose parents are very poor needs to buy new clothes for a job interview. Or a young athlete has been crippled in an accident and must learn how to live a meaningful life. Real life is full of conflicts that can form the bases for story plots. It provides writers with a never-ending supply of material. You might also get ideas for conflict from magazine and newspaper stories. But remember to keep the conflict - and the plot - reasonably close to your own experience. (Karls J. / Szmanski R.172-173)

## 2.9 The Scene

The scene is a specific act, a single event that occurs at a certain time and place and lasts as long as there is no charge of place and no break in the continuity of time. It is an incident acted out by the characters, a single episode or situation, vivid and immediate. The scene is the dramatic or plays element in fiction and a continuous of a present action while it lasts. The scene reproduces the movement of life, and life is action, motion. As a moving picture the scene is a closer imitation of what of what happens in life than a summary of it would be. The pictorial quality of a story and its authority depends partly on scene, and the reader’s participation is greater in the scene. Seeing is more realistic and convincing. It shows the action. The reader can share an emotional experience more readily. We live “scenically". Life itself is dramatic in method. (Surmelian 1-2)

Ernest Hemingway in “The Sun Also Rises" introduces Robert Cohn with a few paragraphs of summary, followed by a scene.

Robert Cohn was a member, through his father, of one of the richest Jewish families in New York, and through his mother of one of the oldest. At the military school where he prepped for Princeton, and played a very good end on the football team, no one had made him race-conscious. No one had ever made him feel he was a Jew, and hence any different from anybody else, until he went to Princeton. He was a nice boy, a friendly boy, and very shy, and it made him bitter. He took it out in boxing, and he came out of Princeton with painful self-consciousness and the flattened nose, and was married by the first girl who was nice to him. He was married five years, had three children, lost most of the fifty thousand dollars his father left him, the balance of the estate having gone to his mother, hardened into a rather unattractive mould under domestic unhappiness with a rich wife, and just when he had made up his mind to leave his wife she left him and went off with a miniature-painter… We had several fines after the coffee, and I said I must be going. Cohn had been talking about the two of us going off somewhere on a weekend trip. He wanted to get out of town and get in a good walk. I suggested we fly to Strasbourg and walk up to Saint Audile, or somewhere or other in Alsace. “I know a girl in Strasbourg who can show us the town," I said. Somebody kicked me under the table. I thought it was accidental and went on: “She’s been there three years and knows everything there is to know about the town. She’s a swell girl". (Surmelian 25)

I was kicked again under the table and, looking, saw Frances, Robert’s lady, her chin lifting and her face hardening…

The scene reproduces realistically the very process of living, and each individual scene gives us a close-up of a particular act. It is a single specific moment in the plot, a single dramatic picture, and these single acts together give us the movement of the whole action. The modern tendency is to write the story as a series of single acts, scene by scene, and to give a dramatic or cinematographic imitation of life. The scene shows us the actors in action, but some narration is usually mixed up in it, and we hear the narrator’s voice also as he describes the gestures of the speakers and gives other stage directions which in a play would guide and inform the actors and not form part of the dialogue. In its pure form, with no stage directions, no commentary, the scene eliminates the narrator’s voice and is, as in an acted play, only character voice, and this heightens the illusion of reality. In the scene the burden of narration is shifted to the characters themselves and they do the work, they carry the ball.

In the scene the reader is taken through the process by which the result is obtained. The scene gives the story recentness or immediacy. We cannot narrate events that have not taken place, but the writer can give the impression that it is happening now, as though for the first time, and it is a unique event that means that you can start your story at a specified time, then go back in time and set the previous scene using the Past Perfect. Continue your story using normal past tenses, leading your readers up to the specified time, then go on to the end of your story. Using the flashback technique makes your story more exciting. (Surmelian 5-10)

The scene shouldn’t be cluttered with information, comment, biography, psychological analysis, description of the setting - the author introducing in third person. At its best it is somewhat stark, unfurnished. Ideally and by its nature the scene is action pure and simple, and should be freed of those elements in the story that do not quite belong to it, though necessary for the total picture. Much may be smuggled into a scene, especially if it is a long one, in small doses, a little there, and the reader will take it in with the action without pausing to distinguish the narrator’s voice from the character voices. There are few pure scenes in fiction, but the writer should clear the decks before he gets to the action and make it carry, if possible, the final punch. A good scene requires preparation and is the crest of the waves in the story line.

## 2.10 The Summary

Not everything can, or need, be shown in fiction. The writer can also tell a story. Summary needs a teller and this is admittedly a weakness, it does not have the seemingly spontaneous movement of the scene, it is not something acted out before the eyes of the reader, who is listening to somebody tell him about it. But summary has its rightful place in the structure of the story and can be extremely useful. Summary brings in the author, or his alter ego, his spokesman, unless it is summary by character, in which case it becomes dramatic. There is a change in voice from scene to summary and from summary to scene, and the reader unconsciously prefers a character voice, because it means more mimetic writing. When the writer speaks through his own voice the all-important element of mimesis is definitely less and the reader’s interest decreases. Hearing is substituted for seeing and the ear is weaker than the eye in the creation in mental images. Nevertheless, no matter how scenic, a story requires a narrator. Omniscience may be eliminated, but not the narrator’s voice. We still hear it.

Summary, unlike scene, does not individualize characters through their actions and speech. It throws the whole burden of narration on the shoulders of the author or his narrator. It gives us experience secondhand. Scene is self-explanatory, in summary the narrator explains. Summary tends to be abstract, discursive, with something fanciful and “literary" clinging to it, in contrast to the concrete specific act of the scene. Scene at its best has the impact of life. In it, the characters are on their own; in summary they lack this independence. In scene, the reader also is on his own, judging the action for himself and interpreting it in his own way, in summary, the reader is guided by the narrator, who speaks in his own voice, whether or not the reader is directly addressed. Something is happening in the scene, in summary it has already happened. (Surmelian 16-18)

Summary makes for distance. It does not give us a close-up of the action as it occurs, it is along short. We no longer have the words spoken by the characters to others or to themselves. Summary may reveal the characters, describe their actions and thoughts and feelings, but it is not a close re-creation as in the scene. It does not have the power of dramatic imitation, and the reader is deprived of the pleasure of viewing the event for himself. Summary lacks the vividness of the scene, the immediacy, the recentness of the action acted out by the actors.

Yet summary does many important things in a story. It links the scenes together and gives the story continuity and unity. If we consider scenes the main building blocks, summaries are the cement in creative construction. The summaries that link scenes also disconnect them. Summary means a break in the action, a lapse in the continuity of time, or a change of place, but if it does not happen too often, the story keeps moving despite, and because of, these breaks. An extended summary, as when the author inserts an essay or biography or a long description in the story, would break the continuity of the action. It may be done in a novel.

## Conclusion

Having studied the recent achievements of the theory of narration, its point of types and functions we have come to the following conclusions.

Narration is an act of telling a story. It is not just telling a story, but it also telling a story of a sequence of real or fictional events - which seems to be more natural activity for most people than, say, giving directions or describing a scene. Narration is the kind of writing that answers the question, “What happened? ”

Some narratives are based on actual experience, some are entirely fictitious and others use a mixture of truth and fiction. Some narratives are meant to amuse, others inform or convey a message to readers.

The using techniques of narrative writing:

Select and refine the topic so that a main idea is stated clearly in the topic sentence. In narratives, the main idea will probably deal with conflict or emotional response to conflict.

Select appropriate, vivid supporting details. In narratives, the details will tell about time, place, actions, and people’s motives and reactions.

Organize the information so that readers will be able to understand and follow the story. In narratives, chronological arrangement is normal. Any shifts in time or place must be read clear to the reader.

There are two major functions of narrative writing: informing by narrating (fiction) and informing by entertaining (non-fiction). In the case of informing by narrating two types of narratives are singled out: personal narratives and objective narratives. The story is used as a main subtype, when applying informing by entertaining. The story consists of the setting, the plot, the scene and the summary.

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