

# CHATMAN'S SPECTRUM OF NARRATIVE VOICE

**DIRECT PRESENTATION**  
**nonnarrated story**  
**"pure mimesis" (showing)**  
 narratives purporting to be untouched transcripts of characters' behaviour  
 narrative records nothing more than the speech / verbalised thoughts of characters  
 sometimes uses minimal marks of narrative presence / tags (e.g. "he thought", "he said") but these may be deleted

**WRITTEN RECORDS**  
**copied text**  
 discourse pretends merely to transmit already written materials (e.g. letters, diaries)

**PURE SPEECH RECORDS I**  
**quoted dialogue**  
 gives the impression that someone has transcribed the speech of the characters (e.g. dramatic monologue or unmediated dialogue)

**PURE SPEECH RECORDS II**  
**soliloquy**  
 unmediated presentation of a character's speech (not thought); style is direct tagged (i.e. "she said") and passages appear in quotation marks (i.e. are directly attributable to particular characters)

**DIRECT FREE STYLE I**  
**interior monologue**  
 representation of a character's "consciousness" more mediated than a strict speech record  
 character speaks in 1<sup>st</sup>-person, discourse-time and story-time are the same, language (idiom, diction, words) are recognizably those belonging to the character; no audience is presumed or addressed

**DIRECT FREE STYLE II**  
**stream of consciousness**  
 a direct quotation of the character's mind; whereas interior monologue verbalises a character's thoughts, stream of consciousness also offers their non-verbal sense impressions, perceptions, unconscious thought processes etc.

**COVERT / EFFACED NARRATION**  
**minimally narrated story**  
 expresses a character's speech / thoughts in indirect form  
 uses indirect tagged ("he thought/said he had to go") or free style ("he had to go")  
 narrated monologue / interior monologue  
 might use a "neutralised" indirect free style (i.e. impossible to decide whether the words in indirect free form are the character's or the narrator's)

**INDIRECT TAGGED / FREE STYLE**  
**indirect report clauses**  
 (tagged, referenced) – tag = "she said that she had to go"; reference = "I have to go, she said"  
 indirect form suggests more intervention by a narrator – we cannot be sure that the words quoted/reported are precisely those spoken by the character  
 indirect free forms (as opposed to direct free forms above) do not suggest interior monologue – use of 3<sup>rd</sup>-person pronouns suggests the presence of a narrator

**PRESUPPOSITION**  
**"it goes without saying that..."**  
 the narrator presupposes that the narratee already knows/understands – thus establishes without directly stating – surreptitious narration behind the direct narration

**LIMITED AUTHORITY**  
**withdrawal of a narrator's authority**  
 the narrator may only be allowed to report one scene at a time, or s/he may be restricted to the contemporary story moment; there may be abrupt silences or cunning withdrawals of the narrator's inner view into characters' motivations

**SHIFTING LIMITED AUTHORITY**  
**dipping into the thoughts of different characters**  
 the narrator evokes a disparate group of individual characters and their thoughts by switching between characters; this is distinct from omniscient narration since it offers no teleological master plot but wanders from character to character

**OMNISCIENT MENTAL ACCESS**  
**all-knowing narrator**  
 the narrator's presence reminds us that no matter how different each character's minds may be, they all fit snugly into a master plot

**OVERT / MEDIATED NARRATION**  
**audible narration**  
**"pure diegesis" (telling)**  
 Narrator speaks using the 1<sup>st</sup>-person pronoun "I", makes interpretations, moral observations etc.  
 Narrator offers explicit / direct communications to the narratee (reader) (e.g. introducing a character through a formal introduction that conveys information)  
 Overt narrators may arrest story-time to offer summaries, commentaries, judgment, generalisation or description (ref. story-time / discourse-time)  
 Commentary may be implicit (ironic narrator / unreliable narrator) – i.e. communication between implied author and implied reader works at the expense of the narrator

**SET DESCRIPTIONS**  
**direct communication to the narratee**  
 the overt presence of the narrator is signalled by explicit description of existents (character, traits, setting); the narrator intends the narratee to know certain information

**TEMPORAL SUMMARIES**  
**arrest of story-time**  
 the narrator's overt presence can be asserted through the arrest of story-time whilst discourse-time continues; manipulations of time reveal the artifice of a narrator's intervention into the story

**REPORTS OF WHAT CHARACTERS DIDN'T SAY**  
**artificial narrative process**  
 the narrator reveals their covert presence within the narrative, assuming the power to report what a character didn't think or say

**COMMENTARY**  
**interpretation, judgment, generalisation**  
 the narrator comments upon the action, offering judgment or interpretation, and generalising events within the story – clear indications of an audible narrative voice