# I. Theoretical Introduction

Narrative theory – or Narratology – has been one of the central concerns of international literary studies since the early nineteen-sixties (cf. Martinez/Scheffel 2007, p. 7). Narratology deals "with the general theory and practice of narrative" (Abrams 1999, p. 173), especially with different types of narrators and structural elements such as narrative levels. A fundamental interest of narratologists lies in the organisation and structure of the literary plot. To describe both, the sequence of events in time and their implementation into an organized plot, Gérard Genette develops a systematic terminology that utilizes the terms *discours* and *histoire* (cf. Genette 1988, pp. 13-15) in order to differentiate between what is narrated and how it is narrated. While *histoire* subsumes the "totality of the narrated events" (ibid., p. 13), the "discours du récit" is the actual realization of the *histoire* in the narration, be it oral or written.
For the distinction of narrative levels, Genette proposes a classification of the narrator in *extradiegetic*, *intradiegetic* and *metadiegetic narrator*. The *extradiegetic narrator* produces a "first narrative with its diegesis" (ibid., p. 84). He is potentially followed by an *intradiegetic narrator*, a character that appears in the first narrative, who goes on to produce a second narrative, and so on.
In principle, we follow the idea of Genette that a new narrative level needs a sufficiently marked "*threshold* between one diegesis and another" (ibid.). However, Genette ties a new narrative level to a new narrator. We would like to expand on this concept as, according to our understanding, literature has produced examples that show clear signs of being new narrative levels without exchanging the narrator (cf. Lahn/Meister 2013, p. 83). Still, new narrative levels need to have clearly distinguishable diegeses. Thus, the crossing of illocutionary boundaries, i.e. speech acts that introduce a new speaker (Ryan 1991, pp. 175-177), are in our understanding no change of narrative level. The extraction of direct speech is a separate annotating task that we will not apply within our *Annotation Guidelines* for narrative levels.

In order to understand and interpret a narrated literary text, we assume that it is necessary to analyze the structure and the form of the text to gain insight into the interrelation between form and content (e.g., Emil Staiger's "Gehalt-Gestalt-Gefüge"). Herein, narrative levels have a great relevance as there is an important dependency regarding different narrators and different narrative levels within a given literary text. Possible research questions based on distinguishing narrative levels can focus on structural elements of a text, e.g., an overview of the different narrators and the stories they tell, the relationship between frame and embedded stories, or the importance of a narrative level based on its length. But research questions can also address the content of narrative levels. Since narrative levels can be functionally related to each other, e.g., an embedded story that serves as an explanation for the frame story, it is important to interpret characters or the narrator's distribution of information with such interdependencies in mind. Furthermore, a more systematic analysis of crossovers reaching from one narrative level to another seems to be an interesting target that requires the recognition of narrative levels as base.

# II. Terminology & Concepts

In order to get a basic grasp of the terminology that is used in our *Annotation Guidelines* (IV), we try to explain some fundamental technical terms in a concise way.

This should help to get a clearer understanding of our guidelines and the underlying literary concepts:

1. **Narrative levels:**
   The terminology used to describe narrative levels is diverse and varies widely. Our basic approach is to define any new story that occurs within a given narrative text as a new narrative level (see III. 2 for a more detailed explanation). Narrative levels can be interlaced. Within the **frame story** (superordinate level), several **embedded stories** with a different degree can occur. As an embedded story can become the frame story for another embedded story, we use the terms **first-**, **second-**, **third-**, … **degree narrative** as an alternative terminology in order to avoid ambiguities (cf. Jahn 2017). Narrative levels can also be arranged sequentially. E.g., several embedded stories that belong to the same frame story are arranged next to each other.

2. **Homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narrator:**
   With regard to the distinction of different narrators and consequently the change of a narrator in a single text, it is useful to determine his position in relation to the story he tells. In principle, it must be determined whether the narrator is part of the diegetic world or whether he is not part of it. A **homodiegetic narrator** participates as a character in the story he tells. In contrast, a **heterodiegetic narrator** is not part of the story he tells. (cf. Genette 1980, pp. 244-245.)

3. **Exegesis and diegesis:**
   "[D]iegesis designates the level of the narrated world, and exegesis the level of the narrating" (Coste/Pier 2016a). As a consequence, a homodiegetic narrator (of a first-degree narrative) belongs to both levels: In his function as narrator, he belongs to the exegesis, but since he tells a story with himself being a character in it, he is also part of the diegesis (cf. Genette 1988, p. 84). A heterodiegetic narrator, however, belongs only to the exegesis; the narrated world which he is not part of is the diegesis.

4. **Narrating and experiencing "I"/self, experiencing space:**
   A homodiegetic narrator's "I"/self is split in a narrating and an experiencing "I"/self. While the narrating "I"/self is located in the exegesis or on the superordinate level of the current narrative level, the experiencing "I"/self is located on the current narrative level as one character among others (Lahn/Meister 2013, p. 70). As a heterodiegetic narrator is not part of the story he tells, there is no experiencing "I"/self in the story. Therefore, we opt for the term "experiencing space" as an alternative. The experiencing space subsumes features of the narrative level with regard to its time, its space and its characters. The distinction between narrating "I"/self and experiencing "I"/self or experiencing space can help to identify narrative levels (see III. 4).

5. **Projected teller role:**
   A projected teller role, i.e. "an agent whose sole involvement with the text is its material dissemination" (Ryan 2001, p. 151), always demands for an additional narrative level (even if this level consists of one sentence only). The most prominent example for a projected teller role is the editor figure.

# III. Premises

1. We search for all narrative levels in a given narrative text. Our basic assumption is that each text has at least one narrative level.

2. A new story[1] within a text calls for a new narrative level.
   a. A story is a self-contained action whose events and happenings are causally linked and cause a change of state. Accordingly, headlines are usually not part of the narrated world.
   b. Stories are mostly narrated in past tense. Rather rare exceptions are novels such as Christian Kracht's *Faserland* (homodiegetic narrator, present tense).
   c. Stories are mediated by the narrator and presented as "the oral or written discourse that undertakes to tell of an event or a series of events" (Genette 1980, pp. 24).

3. A change of the narrator results in a change of the narrative level. However, a change of the narrative level does not necessarily have to be accompanied by a change of the narrator (cf. Max Frisch's "Stiller": homodiegetic narrator, who tells a fairy tale within his own narration).
   ➢ **Attention:** In our understanding, not every character speech is automatically a story. For this to be true, the criteria according to (III.2) have to be met.

4. What is needed for a change of narrative levels:
   a. In a story that is narrated by a heterodiegetic narrator there is a clear distinction between the position of the narrator and the experiencing space of the characters.
   b. In a story that is narrated by a homodiegetic narrator there is a clear distinction between the narrating "I"/self and the experiencing "I"/self.
   c. In a new story that changes its narrator (e.g. a character telling an embedded story), there is a new narrating "I"/self. In a new story that does not change its narrator (e.g. an homodiegetic narrator telling an embedded story), the narrative "I"/self remains the same. Thus, for a change of narrative levels there has to be another experiencing "I"/self (experiencing space) seizable.
   d. Two of the following indicators, which point to a new experiencing space, must apply, if a new story – and thus a new narrative level – is created by the same narrator:
      o the presence of another set of characters,
      o a spatial distance to the first/current narrative level,
      o a temporal distance[2] to the first/current narrative level. However, it is also possible that a character narrates a storyline that takes place simultaneously. For this to be a new narrative level, the other two indicators (set of characters, spatial distance) have to apply.
   ➢ **Attention:** In certain cases the distance between the experiencing and the narrating "I"/self is seemingly removed (cf. stream of consciousness in Arthur Schnitzler: "Leutnant Gustl", Lahn/Meister 2013, p. 72).

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[1] Genette's term *histoire* is oftentimes translated as *story*. Our concept of *story*, however, does not coincide with Genette's *histoire*.
[2] If there is only a temporal distance to the current story, the phenomenon is called analepsis (flashback).

5. Embedded stories can be functionally related to their superordinate narrative level, their frame stories. Possible functions are (cf. Lahn/Meister 2013, pp. 83-84):
   a. explicative: The embedded story provides an explanation for elements of the frame story.
   b. actional: The embedded story is constitutive for the frame story.
   c. thematic: The embedded story is thematically related (analogies, correspondence, contrast, relationships) to the frame story.

6. Narrative levels can be interlaced (inclusion scheme) or arranged next to each other (sequential), see Fig. 1.
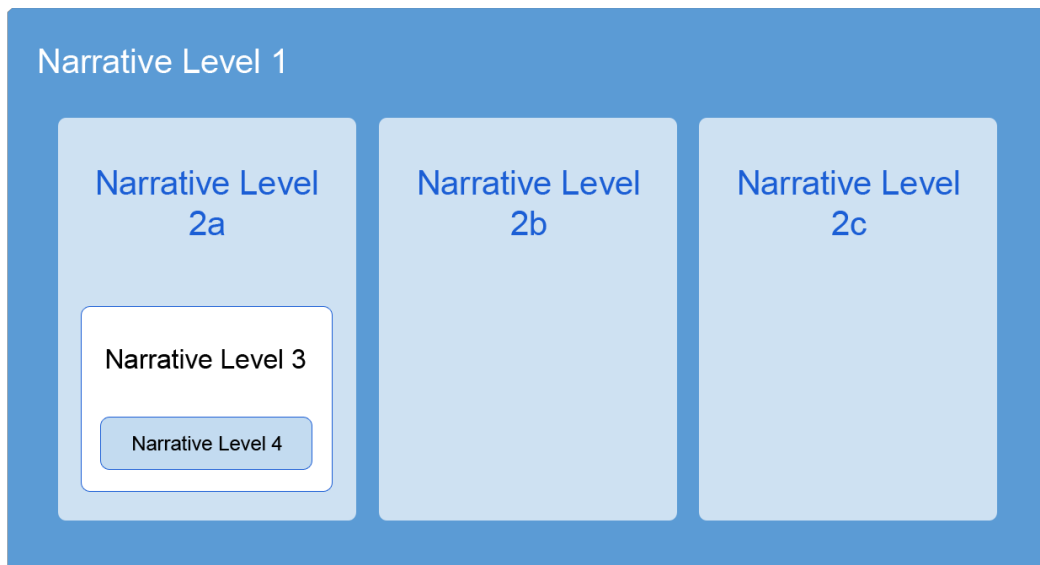


*Figure 1*: Interlaced and sequential arrangement of narrative levels within a literary text.

7. The location of the narrator (exegesis) in a first-degree narrative is no independent narrative level. Aphorisms, mottoes, comments, judgments, forms of address (fictitious recipient) and thoughts expressed by the narrator (cf. Schmid 2014, p. 7) form no new narrative level. They are part of the instantaneous narrative level. Regardless, it is still possible to annotate such expressions as part of the exegesis (for further details see IV.9).

# IV. Annotation Guidelines

Before starting to annotate the annotator has to read the entire text once. Following that, all narrative levels in the text are searched for according to the criteria defined in the *Premises* (III: 1-7). They are annotated according to the following points:

1. All narrative levels are annotated with square brackets (opening bracket at the start and closing bracket at the end of a narrative level).[3]

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[3] The annotation may be done in another way, too (e.g., with different colors marking the belonging to a certain narrative level), depending on the annotation tool that is used.

2. The narrative levels are annotated with numbers (1, 2, 3, etc.) as a first and letters (a, b, c, etc.) as a second differentiator.
   a. The numbers indicate the degree of the narrative level (inclusion scheme). E.g., **level 2** refers to a narrative level that is **embedded** into a superordinate level. Level 2 is a **second-degree narrative** or, in other words, an embedded story. Max Frisch's novel „Stiller" is one example: An embedded story (the fairytale of Rip van Winkle), is narrated by one of the novel's characters and enclosed into the **first-degree narrative** or frame story (level 1) (cf. Jahn 2017).
   b. Stories that are on the **same narrative level** (sequential arrangement) are identified by letters (a, b, c). Boccaccio's "Il Decamerone" is an example of sequentially arranged stories which contain several separate novellas on the same narrative level (series of embedded stories); see Fig. 1 (the arrangement of the individual novellas that are embedded in the frame story would correspond to the numbering 2a, 2b, 2c, etc.)

3. How to use the square brackets to separate the different narrative levels:
   a. The brackets are marked with the number and, if applicable, a letter on both, the opening and closing brackets. E.g. [1 … 1]
   b. Inclusion scheme: The superordinate narrative level (e.g. first-degree narrative) starts before the embedded level (e.g. second-degree narrative). The brackets of the superordinate level close after the brackets of the embedded level: [1 … [2 … 2] … 1].
   c. Sequential arrangement: The square bracket of the first sequentially ordered narrative level (e.g. 2a) closes before opening the square bracket of the second sequentially ordered narrative level (e.g. 2b): [1 … [2a ... 2a] … [2b .... 2b] … 1].
   d. Punctuation is not separated from the preceding word
      i. EXAMPLE:
         **[1** … **] [2** *"On a march in the Rhine campaign,* **2] [1** *began the officer,* **1] [2** *"I noticed, after a battle we had had with the enemy ..."* **2]** (Heinrich von Kleist: "Improbable Veracities")
   ➢ **Note:** Each text usually has at least one narrative level and a corresponding number [1]. Letters are only used to denote a sequential arrangement and therefore not always utilized.

4. As a rule, a narrative text starts with the first narrative level, level [1], and may have other narrative levels embedded (level 2 and so on).
   a. An exception to this rule are narrative texts with a projected teller role that requires its own narrative level. In this case, the projected teller role is annotated as a frame story (level 1), although this special case might only become visible at the end of the narrative text.
      i. EXAMPLE 1:
         **[1** *The Editor believes the thing to be a just History of Fact; neither is there any Appearance of Fiction in it: And however thinks, because all such things are dispatch'd,\* that the Improvement of it, as well as the Diversion, as to the Instruction\* of the Reader, will be the same; and as such he thinks, without farther Compliment to the World, he does them a great Service in the Publication*. **1]**

         ***The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe***
         **[2** *I Was born in the Year 1632,\* in the City of York, of a good Family, tho' not of that Country, my Father being a Foreigner of Bremen, who settled first at Hull. …* **2]** (Daniel DeFoe: "Robinson Crusoe")

    ii.    EXAMPLE 2:

DECEMBER 6.

**[2** *How her image haunts me! Waking or asleep, she fills my entire soul! Soon as I close my eyes, here, in my brain, where all the nerves of vision are concentrated, her dark eyes are imprinted….***2]**

*THE EDITOR TO THE READER.*

**[1** *It is a matter of extreme regret that we want original evidence of the last remarkable days of our friend; and we are, therefore, obliged to interrupt the progress of his correspondence, and to supply the deficiency by a connected narration….***1]** (J. W. v. Goethe: "The sorrows of younng Werther")

5. Paratexts (c.f. Genette 1997) such as book titles, chapter headings and genre indications must not be annotated. If the narrative level remains the same, the square bracket of the narrative level is closed before a chapter heading and reopened afterwards with the same label.

    i.    EXAMPLE:

**[1** *By reason of these things, then, the whaling voyage was welcome; the great flood-gates of the wonder-world swung open, and in the wild conceits that swayed me to my purpose, two and two there floated into my inmost soul, endless processions of the whale, and, mid most of them all, one grand hooded phantom, like a snow hill in the air.* **1]**

***CHAPTER 2. The Carpet-Bag.***

**[1** *I stuffed a shirt or two into my old carpet-bag, tucked it under my arm, and started for Cape Horn and the Pacific. Quitting the good city of old Manhatto, I duly arrived in New Bedford. It was a Saturday night in December. Much was I disappointed upon learning that the little packet for Nantucket had already sailed, and that no way of reaching that place would offer, till the following Monday.* **1]** (Herman Melville: "Moby Dick")

6. Headings that belong semantically and syntactically to a narrative level are exceptions to this rule. Those are assigned to the particular narrative level (normally to the superordinate level).

    i.    EXAMPLE:

**[1** *After this, hear the true and graceful* ***story of Lau, the beautiful water nymph.*** **1]**

**[2** *In Swabia, on the Alb, near the little town of Blaubeuren, close behind the old monastery, you can see beside a sheer rock face the big round basin of a wondrous spring called the Blue Pool...* **2]** (Eduard Mörike: „The story of Lau, the beautiful water nymph")

7. Narrative levels can be interrupted and thwarted by other narrative levels. E.g., in a second-degree narrative [2], inserts from the first-degree narrative [1] might occur. In this case, level 2 will be closed at the beginning of the insert and reopened after the insert with the same numbering.

    i.    EXAMPLE:

**[1** *The country gentleman was of the opinion that he knew how to choose well those stories that would verify his proposition.* **[2c** *"The third story,"* **2c]** *the officer continued,* **[2c** *"took place in the war of independence of the Netherlands, at the siege of Antwerp by the Duke of Parma. The duke had blocked the Schelde river by means of a bridge of ships and the Antwerpers were working on their side, under the leadership of a talented Italian, to explode the bridge by means of fire boats that they launched against it. In that moment,* **2c]** *gentlemen,* **[2c** *in which the vessels float down the Schelde to the bridge, there stands, observe well, a cadet officer on the left bank of the Schelde right next to the Duke of Parma …"* **2c]** *Go to the Devil! shouted the country gentleman. …* **1]** (Heinrich von Kleist: "Improbable Veracities")

8. In rare cases, a text does not allow the annotation of narrative levels. This will be the case, for example, if the narrative levels cannot be separated logically, a phenomenon that is called metalepsis (cf. Pier 2016b). In Italo Calvino's "If on a winter's night a traveler", the world of the reader/narrator (exegesis) is so closely interwoven with the story (diegese) that narrative levels can no longer be clearly distinguished from each other. In such cases, we do not annotate any narrative levels.

    i.  EXAMPLE:

> *I am the man who comes and goes between the bar and the telephone booth. Or, rather: that man is called "I" and you know nothing else about him, just as this station is called only "station" and beyond it there exists nothing except the unanswered signal of a telephone ringing in a dark room of a distant city. I hang up the receiver, I await the rattling flush, down through the metallic throat, I push the glass door again, head toward the cups piled up to dry in a cloud of steam. The espresso machines in station cafés boast their kinship with the locomotives, the espresso machines of yesterday and today with the locomotives and steam engines of today and yesterday. It's all very well for me to come and go, shift and turn: I am caught in a t rap, in that nontemporal trap which all stations unfailingly set. A cloud of coal dust still hovers in the air of stations all these years after the lines have been totally electrified, and a novel that talks about trains and stations cannot help conveying this odor of smoke. For a couple of pages now you have been reading on, and this would be the time to tell you clearly whether this station where I have got off is a station of the past or a station of today; instead the sentences continue to move in vagueness, grayness, in a kind of no man's land of experience reduced to the lowest common denominator. Watch out: it is surely a method of involving you gradually, capturing you in the story before you realize it's a trap.* (Italo Calvino: "If on a Winter's Night a Traveler")

9. In a heterodiegetic story, the narrator is not part of the narrated world. The place of the narrator (exegesis), therefore, does not form its own narrative level, unless it is already embedded in another story (see III.7). Thus, aphorisms, mottoes, comments, judgments, forms of address and thoughts (cf. Schmid 2014, p. 7) expressed by the narrator are annotated as parts of the current narrative level and are not regarded as an independent narrative level. Since it may be beneficial for some cases (e.g. comparing judgments of the narrator to the plot), we nevertheless annotate those expressions as part of the exegesis:

  a.  To annotate parts of the exegesis we use square brackets followed by the letter E. This indicates that the exegesis is no narrative level. Opening brackets are used to signal the beginning and closing brackets to signal the end of the expression.

    i.  EXAMPLE 1:

> **[1** *In the days when everybody started fair,* **[E** *Best Beloved* **E]***, the Leopard lived in a place called the High Veldt.* **[E** *'Member* **E]** *it wasn't the Low Veldt, or the Bush Veldt, or the Sour Veldt, but [...]* **1]** (Rudyard Kipling: "How the Leopard got his Spots")

    ii.  EXAMPLE 2:

> **[1** *That puzzled the Leopard and the Ethiopian, but they set off to look for the aboriginal Flora, and presently, after ever so many days, they saw a great, high, tall forest full of tree trunks all 'sclusively speckled and sprottled and spottled, dotted and splashed and slashed and hatched and cross-hatched with shadows.* **[E** *(Say that quickly aloud, and you will see how very shadowy the forest must have been.)* **E]** *…* **1]** (Rudyard Kipling: "How the Leopard got his Spots")

# V. Literature

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