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Represented perception¹: A study in narrative style

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Abstract

Critics have long recognized a narrative technique variously called *style indirect libre*, *erlebte Rede*, or represented speech and thought, a technique which expresses a character's thoughts and speech in the authorial past tense and third person but also in the character's own emotive language. This style, an alternative to both direct and indirect discourse, is marked by specific linguistic features, both syntactic and semantic, and by formal cues in the narrative context. With this style, an author can directly represent, rather than present or report, consciousness with no implication of internal speech. This paper examines the use of a similar technique to express the lower levels of consciousness, namely, a character's perceptions of the external world. Termed ¹represented perception¹, it proves to have many of the linguistic features of represented speech and thought and some peculiarly its own. It functions importantly in blending the external and internal worlds in a fictional text: the physical world, as expressed normally in authorial description, becomes sense perceptions in a character's

consciousness. Represented perception also offers the only alternative to indirect report of a character's perceptions. As with represented speech and thought, an author can directly represent perceptions with no suggestion of internal speech. The paper concludes by recognizing represented perception and represented speech and thought as complementary parts of one coherent style. criticisms, suggestions and references.



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