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**Enunciative Narratology:
A French Speciality¹**

Abstract

This essay is intended as an introduction to “French enunciative narratology” or the theory thus termed on the basis of a certain number of criteria presented in the introduction: the fact that it is produced by linguists; the fact that it aims to remedy the shortcomings of Genettian narratology in the domain of linguistics; the fact that it refers to the work of enunciative linguistics, applied to the corpus of fictional narratives. The first section of the essay concerns the historical and methodological relations, or lack of relations, between enunciative linguistics and narratology (in Genette’s sense). The second section examines the contributions made by enunciative narratology to narratology or narrative theory. This section looks, successively, at Laurent Danon-Boileau’s definition of an enunciative schema, Alain Rabatel’s linguistic (enunciative and textual) approach to point of view and the broad outlines of Rivara’s enunciative narratology. The third section focuses on the limits of enunciative narratology and argues that it relies on an erroneous or ambiguous concept of the narrator, which is inherited from narratology. This section concludes with several suggestions for moving beyond the limits of enunciative narratology by pushing linguistic-enunciative analysis even further and casting off the more debatable legacies of narratology once and for all.

1. Introduction

The term “enunciative narratology” is taken from René Rivara, author of *La Langue du récit: Introduction à la narratologie énonciative* (Rivara 2000: 13).² It refers to a study of the form or certain aspects of the form of fictional narratives (narrator, point of view, reported speech, etc.) with reference to contemporary enunciative linguistics. Indeed, Rivara remarks that narratology has borrowed almost nothing from the methods and concepts of structural linguistics and generative grammar.³ Perhaps to the surprise of narratologists used to speaking about “structuralist narratology,” this view is largely shared by the community of linguists (see, for example, Rabatel or Maingueneau 2004: 25).⁴ Rivara then postulates that

¹ Translated from the French by Anne Marsella.

² See also (2000: 46-47 and *passim*; 2004: 87-88). See also the title of De Mattia and Joly (2001). Due to length constraints, I have opted to reduce footnotes to a minimum (sources or clarifications deemed necessary by the editors). An extended version of this article can be found in Patron (2009: 263-283).

³ Two types of “non-enunciative” linguistics which precede the principal developments of enunciative linguistics in France.

⁴ Where not otherwise stated, all translations from the French are by the translator.

enunciative linguistics, as represented by the work of Antoine Culioli and his school of thought, is narratology's indispensable auxiliary:

[...] enunciative type linguistics which considers human discourse as an activity (the construction of meaning by a speaker to the benefit of an interlocutor) can, by treating literary narrative as a specific type of enunciation, allow for the elaboration or the clarification of properly narratological concepts (such as "interior monologue") and explain several fundamental properties of narrative. (Rivara 2000: 50)⁵

Alain Rabatel, author of *Une histoire du point de vue* (1997), *La Construction textuelle du point de vue* (1998) and numerous other works on point of view (referred to as POV in quotes) that build upon each other, never uses the term enunciative narratology when referring to his own work, yet clearly subscribes to the same scientific research programme. Rabatel states:

In many ways, our *propositions for a linguistic problematization of POV* [...] break with the Genettian "tradition." It seems to us that Genette's epigones remained imprisoned within a narratological system whose presuppositions they did not question [...], and yet they too often put up with a lack of linguistic indications likely to found a scientific theory of POV: it is this linguistic deficit for which we are trying to compensate, as far as possible and within the limits of this work. (Rabatel 1997: 14)

The enunciative model to which Rabatel refers is that of Oswald Ducrot. Essentially, this model makes a theoretical separation between the *speaker* (*locuteur*), responsible for the utterance, and the *utterer* or *enunciator* (*énonciateur*), responsible for a point of view or a position taken within the utterance of which he/she is not the speaker. Rabatel also builds on the work of Ann Banfield, without addressing the possible incompatibility of these two theoretical conceptions.⁶

Preceding the articles and works just mentioned, Laurent Danon-Boileau's, *Produire le fictif: Linguistique et écriture romanesque* (1982), can be seen as the first attempt to set the framework for enunciative narratology. In his introduction, Danon-Boileau uses the example of the idea of point of view to introduce this framework: "Properly speaking, this metaphor lacks an object. Indeed, a text only offers up letters to be seen. Moreover, it gives them to be seen by the reader, not by the character" (1982: 12-13). Nevertheless, he remarks that the notion of point of view or focalization can be tied in with linguistic concepts such as "levels

⁵ On interior monologue, see also Rivara (2008).

⁶ See namely Banfield (1991), which constitutes a response to the criticism of Ducrot (1984).

of discourse” and “modality supports.”⁷ He concludes with the following generalization: “This is the direction in which I am trying to work, bringing together interpretive intuition and linguistic explanation” (1982: 13). A little later in the text, Danon-Boileau specifies that “[t]he linguistic theory which will herein be practiced is that of Antoine Culioli, for it alone defines, not a ‘linguistics of states’ but a ‘linguistics of operations’” (1982: 13).⁸

Therefore, I will use the term *enunciative narratology* to designate a scientific research programme which is characterized by a set of methods, concepts and conclusions. To designate the particular form that Rivara gave this programme, I will use the expression *Rivara’s enunciative narratology*. One last remark concerning the title of this essay needs to be made: by presenting enunciative narratology as a French speciality, I do not wish to ignore the fact that works written outside of France have made scientific contributions to this programme (see, for example, Fleischman 1990, although Fleischman uses the term *pragmatics* rather than *enunciative linguistics*). However, I believe it is important to point out that Danon-Boileau’s, Rabatel’s and Rivara’s theoretical sources are all French (except Banfield). The issue of speech acts, which gave rise to the development of pragmatics in England and the United States, is given only cursory mention in Rivara’s work of and is totally absent in the other texts mentioned above.

2. Enunciative Linguistics and Narratology

This section contains a brief overview of the relationship between variations of enunciative linguistics and narratology. Linguistic works on enunciation are so diverse that it seems questionable to group them all under one heading.

Émile Benveniste defines *enunciation* (*énonciation*) as “putting language to work through an individual act of utilization” (Benveniste 1974 [1970]: 80). The *enunciated* (*énoncé*) can accordingly be defined as the linguistic object which results from this utilization (it is worth noticing that these definitions undergo notable variations according to different enunciative theories). It is generally agreed that in all uses of language, an utterer, a situation in which an utterance takes place, and a definable relationship between the utterer and the addressee (called “co-enunciator” [“*co-énonciateur*”] in Culioli’s theory) come into play. Enunciative theories differ according to whether they have a narrow or expansive conception

⁷ The idea of levels of discourse relates to what is usually called “reported speech”; that of modality, to the opinion of the author of a judgment on that judgment; and that of modality support, to the author of the judgment in question (for example, Oedipus in “Oedipus said that his mother was beautiful”). The French term “*support*,” which occurs frequently in Danon-Boileau’s text, may also be translated by the English “source.”

⁸ The opposition between a “linguistic of states” and a “linguistic of operations” is borrowed from Culioli (1999 [1973]: 48).

of enunciative categories and operations. The enunciative categories may include formal categories, such as person or tense, or notional ones, such as the utterer's "responsibility" for the utterance; enunciative operations may encompass all the various operations which constitute the utterance (this is the case in Culioli's theory).

Narratology, understood here in the sense of Genettian narratology, developed over the same period as the increasing importance of the enunciative problematic in linguistics. Accordingly, Genette writes in *Narrative Discourse*:

We know that linguistics has taken its time in addressing the task of accounting for what Benveniste has called *subjectivity in language*, that is, in passing from analysis of statements to analysis of relations between these statements and their generating instance – what today we call their *enunciating*. It seems that poetics is experiencing a comparable difficulty in approaching the generating instance of narrative discourse, an instance for which we have reserved the parallel term *narrating*. (Genette 1980 [1972]: 213)⁹

In *Narrative Discourse* and in *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, we also find an entire vocabulary and a whole set of utterances directly borrowed from theories of enunciation. The vocabulary includes, for example, the "subject of the enunciating," the "subject of the statement," "situation," "instance," the "trace of the enunciating" (Genette 1980 [1972]: 28, 31-32 and *passim*); the utterances from this set include "any statement is the product of an act of enunciating," "the narrator can be in his narrative (like every subject of an enunciating in his enunciated statement) *only* in the 'first person,'" "every utterance is in itself a trace of enunciation," "any statement is itself a trace of the enunciating" (Genette 1980 [1972]: 26, 244; and 1988 [1983]: 99).

All this does not justify claiming that enunciative linguistics and narratology share a common methodology. Firstly because, as Rivara writes: "Genette always considers, whether explicitly or not, the grammatical facts as secondary" (Rivara 2000: 12). This is particularly the case in the passage where Genette criticizes the traditional opposition between first and third-person narratives and favors "narrative analysis" over "grammar."¹⁰ Secondly, because Genette is not a specialist of linguistics (as is shown, for example, by his sketchy analysis of verb tenses in narrative, which boils down to a few erratic remarks¹¹) and therefore does not approach or formulate problems in linguistic terms. Genette also neglects the fact that the

⁹ The American translator of Genette translates "*énonciation*" as "enunciating" and "*énoncé*" as "statement" or "enunciated statement." On the issue of "subjectivity in language," see Benveniste (1971b [1966b]: 223-230).

¹⁰ See Genette (1980 [1972]: 244).

¹¹ See Genette (1980 [1972]: 122, 131-132, 145-147, 151, 212, 219; and 1988 [1983]: 79-83).

phenomena he divides into the categories of “Mood” (“Focalizations”) and “Voice” are all enunciative phenomena which call into play the same enunciative categories: deixis, modalities, etc.

Two more points are of interest in the context of this section, which I will mention with a minimum of commentary. The first one is Genette’s revision of the opposition between *history* (*histoire*) and *discourse* (*discours*) posited by Benveniste (1971a [1966a]: 205-215). According to Genette, history, now named the “narrative” (*récit*), and discourse should not be opposed to each other; rather, the narrative should be seen as a “particular mode” of discourse, “defined by a certain number of exceptions and restrictive conditions” (Genette 1982 [1966]: 141); or again, as he wrote in *Nouveau discours du récit*, narrative is “only a *form of discourse* in which the marks of the enunciating [are] never more than provisionally and precariously suspended [...]” (1980 [1983]: 99). The result is that there is no longer any room, within the theory of narrative that Genette is putting into place, for the mode of enunciation which Benveniste designated using the term “history.” Paradoxically, the works which enunciative linguistics has devoted to narrative enunciation, that is, to historical or fictional narrative enunciation, have had the least impact of all on narratology.¹² The second point is the correspondence established by Ducrot between his own distinction of the *speaker* (*locuteur*) and the *utterer* or *enunciator* (*énonciateur*) and the Genettian distinction of the narrator and the focal character. This highlights the “polyphonic” character of Genette’s narratology.¹³ Nevertheless, it should be noted that Ducrot conceives of *history* similarly to Benveniste (and not like Benveniste revised by Genette), and his notion of the *speaker-narrator* of the narrative is closer to that of Benveniste than to Genette (cf. Ducrot 1984: 195, 209).

3. The Contributions of Enunciative Narratology

This section of my essay addresses the contributions enunciative narratology has made to narratology and narrative theory. I am not in a position to evaluate what enunciative narratology has contributed to enunciative linguistics. Nor do I believe that any “pure” (non-narratologist) linguists have expressed opinions on the subject.

An Enunciative Schema

¹² For fuller treatment of this issue, see Patron (2010).

¹³ Polyphony is a central concept in Ducrot’s enunciative theory, which describes enunciation “as a sort of crystallized dialogue, where several different voices collide” (Ducrot 1984: 9). Even if Genettian narratology only uses the term voice for the narrator, it is still polyphonic to the extent that it is based on a multiple enunciative instances.

Laurent Danon-Boileau's *Produire le fictif: Linguistique et écriture romanesque* centers around the relationship between enunciation and *referenciation (référenciation)*, i.e. the construction of the referent in texts of narrative fiction. The first chapter contains a critique of the "textualism" which was emblematic of the work produced by *Tel Quel*. I am essentially interested in chapter 2, which concerns the question of narrative voices and focalizations.

Danon-Boileau begins by distinguishing between *primary utterance and enunciation (énoncé et énonciation primaires)*, on the one hand, and *reported utterance and enunciation (énoncé et énonciation rapportés)*, on the other. This distinction forms the basis for the opposition between *primary narrators* and *reported narrators*. There are two types of primary narrators, according to Danon-Boileau: the *anonymous narrator* and the *explicit narrator*.

1. The *anonymous narrator*: he/she is the source (*support*) that we ascribe to primary utterances which do not contain first-person pronouns; for example, "*La marquise sortit à cinq heures*" ("The marquise left at five o'clock"). The anonymous narrator "constitutes the support for qualifiers and the basis for locating his utterance without having a referential identity. We do not know who he is: he does not refer to himself as 'I'; he is not designated by any name [...]; this is what the notion of "anonymous" imperfectly translates" (Danon-Boileau 1982: 38).¹⁴

2. The *explicit narrator*: this narrator is the support for modalities (*le support des modalités*) and the basis for locations (*l'origine des repérages*) for primary utterances containing first-person pronouns. Examples include "*Longtemps, je me suis couché de bonne heure*" (Proust 1987: 3 ["For a long time I used to go to bed early"]) but also "we hope, therefore, a judicious reader will give himself some pains to observe what we have so greatly laboured to describe [...]" from Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* (1960: 32; cited in Danon-Boileau 1982: 156, n. 15). The explicit narrator has a referential identity: in other words, he/she functions not only as a source (*support*) but as the subject of the utterance (*sujet de l'énoncé*). He/she can potentially describe him or herself, which is to say that he/she can claim certain qualities. Danon-Boileau writes, then, of a *represented narrator* (1982: 39). Danon-Boileau also specifies that the explicit narrator can be effaced from certain utterances, even from the totality of utterances that make up a novel: "It is perhaps in this category [the *effaced narrator*] that a novel like Robbe-Grillet's *La Jalousie* should be classified" (1982: 40).

¹⁴ The notion of location (*repérage*) is borrowed from Culioli's theory (see, for example, Culioli 2000 [1989]: 180 and *passim*). Danon-Boileau uses the term to refer to one of Culioli's three levels of location, that of enunciative location (see Danon-Boileau 1982: 154, n. 5).

3. The *reported narrator*, also called the *character-narrator*: this narrator functions as the source for the modalities of all reported utterances, whether they be made in direct, indirect or free indirect speech. Danon-Boileau points out that, contrary to the primary explicit narrator, the reference coupled with the reported narrator can be defined twice, once in the primary utterance (thanks to the name being mentioned), and again in the reported utterance (thanks to the presence of a first-person pronoun); this is the case, for example, in “*Lesable balbutia: ‘Je ne comprends pas. À quoi n’ai-je pas réussi?’*” [“Lesable stammered: ‘I don’t understand. At what did I fail to succeed?’”] from Maupassant’s “L’héritage” (1979: 40; cited by Danon-Boileau 1982: 41).

In addition to these different kinds of narrators as sources of utterances in the text, Danon-Boileau discusses two other possible sources of the enunciated and their role in linguistic and narratological analysis:

4. The *author*: he/she is the real, biographical person behind the text. He/she is of as little interest to linguistic analysis as he/she is to narratology.

5. The *writer*: “[...] for us, states Danon-Boileau, the *writer* constitutes the mechanism of production which results in the totality of the book’s utterances. In this light – it is what distinguishes him from the different types of narrators – he is never a ‘support for utterances,’ nor a basis for locations” (1982: 42; the quotation marks are Danon-Boileau’s). For instance:

(1) Il faisait un froid de canard. “J’ai la chair de poule”, soupira Pierre. (Example coined by Danon-Boileau 1982: 43)

It was freezing cold [literally, it was good weather for duck hunting]. “I’ve got goose bumps,” sighed Pierre.

In this example, the text creates a comic effect produced by the link between “*froid de canard*” and “*chair de poule*.” The problem is to determine who is responsible for this link. According to Danon-Boileau, it cannot be attributed to the anonymous narrator, since he/she is not responsible for the content of direct discourse. Nor can the link be attributed to Pierre, since he is only responsible for the content of the direct discourse. It is here that the notion of writer appears necessary, if we do not want to believe that the link between the two metaphors is simply a random one: “The notion of writer is thus dictated by a finalistic representation of texts and by noticing that the means they put to work to obtain their desired effects go beyond the search for the support for utterances” (Danon-Boileau 1982: 43).

A comparison needs to be made between Genette’s non-linguistic schema and Danon-Boileau’s model which takes linguistic mechanisms into account. Firstly, nowhere in Danon-

Boileau can a distinction be found which corresponds to Genette's differentiation between the "homodiegetic" narrator (who is present as a character in the story he/she tells) and the "heterodiegetic" narrator (who is absent). For Danon-Boileau the pertinent distinction is the linguistic one, between a narrator who refers to him or herself as "I," and a narrator who does not refer to him or herself as "I." In other words, where there is no reference to "I," there is no referential identity; from here it is only a small step to say that there is no narrator whatsoever (see Danon-Boileau 1982: 38; on the same page, Danon-Boileau cites S.-Y. Kuroda and Ann Banfield). Secondly, the conception of the effaced narrator proposed by Danon-Boileau is more workable than Genette's effaced narrator. For example, Genette's conception does not allow for a differentiation between the narrator of Flaubert's *L'Éducation sentimentale* and that of *La Jalousie*. Finally, the idea of the writer allows us to put an end to the permanent ambiguity in Genette between the narrator, as the creator of the text's style and organization, and the narrator who is created by the author and fictionally recounts events. It is worth noticing that Danon-Boileau makes the writer accountable for "play in relation to 'referential time' (prolepses, analepses, ellipses) and the choice between 'scene' and 'summary'" (1982: 43).

However, Danon-Boileau's enunciative schema also poses a certain number of problems, particularly concerning terminology. Danon-Boileau is well aware of this: the term anonymous narrator does not allow us to distinguish between a narrator who has no referential identity, for example, the narrator of *L'Éducation sentimentale*, and a narrator endowed with a referential identity whose name is kept hidden from the reader. An example of this would be the narrator of *À la recherche du temps perdu*, who is frequently referred to in critical works as an "anonymous narrator." Another terminological problem crops up with the reported narrator. The narrator is said to be reported because he/she is the source (*support*) for one or several reported utterances. However, not all reported utterances are narrative utterances. Here, Danon-Boileau confuses the "reported narrator" with the "reported utterer." Indeed, the terms "author" and "writer" do not stand in a biunivocal relationship to their definitions according, for example, to Rivara (2000: 25).

Danon-Boileau's enunciative schema also raises theoretical problems concerning the anonymous narrator. The anonymous narrator is defined as the basis for the utterances' locating (for the moment, I shall leave aside the question of qualifications). Danon-Boileau mentions the following example: "*Hier, la marquise sortit à cinq heures*" ("Yesterday, the marquise left at five o'clock"), and analyzes it as follows: "*hier*" only has reference in the event that the anonymous narrator speaks from a situation to which he implicitly gives the

value of ‘*aujourd’hui*’” (1982: 38). However, in the rest of the chapter, the anonymous narrator is associated with anaphoric locations:

The categories of the anonymous narrator and the explicit narrator are a realistic version (therefore convenient but fallacious) of a fundamental enunciative distinction. There are always two ways to tell a story: either you locate what you speak about (place, time, first or third person etc.) in relation to the situation you are in as an utterer [...], or you operate without taking into account this situation (you must then locate the text on its own terms). [...] The anonymous narrator [...] locates the objects of his discourse by calling on the text’s internal locations (anaphoric ones [...]). (Danon-Boileau 1982: 40-41)

This analysis disqualifies the choice of the example “*Hier, la marquise sortit à cinq heures*” as an illustration of the locating system proper to the anonymous narrator. Moreover, if the anonymous narrator is responsible for anaphoric location, it is difficult to make out what distinguishes him or her from the writer. Towards the end of chapter 3, Danon-Boileau writes that anaphoric location

is the silence of all voices, aponia; or rather with it, it is the fiction of voice that becomes specious. The notion of voice goes back to the source of a set of locations, but this source comes from the mouth of an utterer and from the situation of utterance. With the anaphora it is no longer the voice that locates; to borrow a *Tel Quel* style expression, by deviating it from its object, “it is the text that signs.” (1982: 62)

A Linguistic (Enunciative and Textual) Approach to Point of View

Alain Rabatel’s early works were devoted to the history of point of view and its linguistic theorization. The choice of the term “point of view” rather than “focalization” can be understood in one of two ways: firstly, it marks a break with the Genettian tradition and its tripartite division of focalizations; secondly, this choice evinces Rabatel’s attempt to achieve notional clarification. “*Focalisation*” in linguistics, also called “*emphase*” or “*mise en focus*,” has nothing to do with “*focalisation*” in narratology. In his early works, Rabatel also uses the expression “point of view-effect”; this represents a reformulation of the question of point of view in terms of a constructed representation (by the author) contrived to create a certain effect (on the reader). In his books and in most of his articles, Rabatel limits himself to the investigation of point of view in third-person narratives characterized by an anonymous narrator, to use Danon-Boileau’s term.

Point of view is first defined by Rabatel as “the expression of a perception, whose process, qualifications and modalizations are co-referential to the perceiving subject and express in a certain way the subjectivity of this perception” (Rabatel 1998: 13). The enunciative paradox contained in this definition compares point of view in Rabatel’s sense to free indirect discourse or “represented speech and thought,” as Banfield puts it. Moreover, Banfield has a concept of “represented perceptions” (see 1982: 199ff, 269). Curiously enough, Rabatel never alludes to the the no-narrator hypothesis, which is a key hypothesis in Banfield and is indissociable from her view of represented speech, thought and perceptions.

Rabatel then goes on to refine his initial definition of point of view (the first chapter in Rabatel 1998 contains six definitions in all). The idea of perception, associated with that of thought, remains central to his definitions and renders a purely linguistic definition of point of view impossible. See for example definition no. 3: “POV corresponds to the expression of a perception which always more or less links perceptive processes and mental processes; this intrication being one of the specific marks of POV’s subjectivity” (Rabatel 1998: 23). Compare also definition no. 6:

The linguistic basis for the expression of POV hinges on the expression of represented perceptions and/or thoughts. These perceptions and these thoughts are syntactically dependant on a subject and a process of perception mentioned in the foreground and/or semantically dependant on an agent or a process that the text does not mention explicitly and that the reader reconstructs by inference. (Rabatel 1998: 58)

The whole interest of Rabatel’s work lies in his identification of linguistic markers for point of view, some of which stem less from enunciative linguistics than from textual linguistics.¹⁵ Rabatel identifies four different groups of markers of point of view:

1. The development of parts and properties of a theme-title or of a selected element through thematization. This development is called “aspectualization” (“*aspectualisation*”; see Apotheloz 1998: 18-24) in the textual analysis of description.

2. An opposition between the foreground (*premier plan*) and background (*second plan*) of the text.¹⁶ Only the text’s background allows for the expression of point of view.

3. Consequently, verb tenses expressing the secant aspect are present, notably the imperfect (*l'imparfait*).

¹⁵ In Weinrich’s sense (1973 [1964]), Combettes (1992), Adam (1991) and (2004).

¹⁶ The concepts of foreground and background stem from Weinrich (1973 [1964]: 114-130) and were revised by Combettes (1992: 7-48). “According to Combettes, we consider the foreground, in a very restricted sense, as the succession of chronological propositions (in the simple past [*passé simple*]) the order of which reflects extralinguistic chronology; as such, it [...] determines the objective ground according to which the POV can be situated in the various backgrounds” (Rabatel 1998: 30-31).

4. On the semantic level, a relationship developing out of associative anaphoras between represented perceptions in the background and the predicated perception of the foreground.

While presented in great brevity, these considerations allow us to become aware of the passages highlighted in example (2) below. This example is not quoted by Rabatel, but it has a privileged status in narratology:

(2) (a) Fabrice n'avait pas fait cinq cents pas que sa rosse s'arrêta tout court: c'était un cadavre, posé en travers du sentier, qui faisait horreur au cheval et au cavalier.

La figure de Fabrice, très pâle naturellement, prit une teinte verte fort prononcée; la cantinière, après avoir regardé le mort, dit, comme se parlant à elle-même: ce n'est pas de notre division. Puis, levant les yeux sur notre héros, elle éclata de rire.

– Ha! ha! mon petit! s'écria-t-elle, en voilà du nanan! Fabrice restait glacé. *Ce qui le frappait surtout, c'était la saleté des pieds de ce cadavre qui déjà était dépouillé de ses souliers, et auquel on n'avait laissé qu'un mauvais pantalon tout souillé de sang.*

(b) – Approche, lui dit la cantinière; descends de cheval; il faut que tu t'y accoutumes; tiens, s'écria-t-elle, il en a eu par la tête.

Une balle, entrée à côté du nez, était sortie par la tempe opposée, et défigurait ce cadavre d'une façon hideuse; il était resté avec un œil ouvert. (Stendhal, *La Chartreuse de Parme*; 1948: 59; italics mine)¹⁷

Fabrice had taken no more than five hundred steps when his nag stopped dead in its tracks; there was a cadaver, lying across the trail, which horrified the horse and the horseman.

Fabrice's face, naturally very pale, took on a very pronounced green tint; the canteen woman, after having looked at the dead body, said, as if speaking to herself; it's not from our division. Then, looking up at our hero, she broke out in laughter.

– Ha! ha! my dear! she cried out, now there's a lovely sight! Fabrice remained frozen. *What was disturbing him most strongly were this cadaver's filthy feet, which were already stripped of their shoes; he was only left with a bloody, ragged pair of pants.*

– Come on, the canteen woman says to him; get off your horse; you have to get used to it; come on, she shouts, he got hit in the head.

¹⁷ The highlighted passage (2b) is cited as an example of “perfect internal focalization” in Genette (1980 [1972]: 192). See also Danon-Boileau (1982: 46-47) and Rivara (2000: 265).

A bullet, entered next to his nose, had gone out the opposite temple and disfigured this cadaver hideously; he had been lying there with one eye open.

The reader intuitively perceives that the narration is told from Fabrice's point of view. The highlighted passage in (2a) makes the fact that this is Fabrice's point of view explicit by the expression "*Ce qui le frappait surtout*"; the highlighted passage in (2b) can be read as: "*il réalisa qu'une balle, entrée à côté du nez, était sortie par la tempe opposée,*" etc. ("he realized that a bullet had gone in through the side of his nose and come out his opposite temple," etc.). These perceptions and thoughts are represented, in Rabatel's sense; in other words they are developed and detailed (a process called "aspectualization"). They are expressed in the background of the text which contrasts with the "objective" foreground of the text. However, this extract does not contain predicated perceptions in the foreground (for example: "*Fabrice regarda le mort. Ce qui le frappait surtout...*," "Fabrice looked at the dead man. What was disturbing him most strongly...").

Any manipulation of the fore- and background of the text (by replacing the imperfect tense with the *passé simple*) brings about the disappearance of point of view. This can be verified by comparing (2a) and (2b) with (3a) and (3b):

(3a) *Ce qui le frappa surtout, ce fut la saleté des pieds de ce cadavre qui déjà était dépouillé de ses souliers, et auquel on n'avait laissé qu'un mauvais pantalon tout souillé de sang.*

What disturbed him most strongly were this cadaver's filthy feet which were already stripped of their shoes; he was only left with a bloody, ragged pair of pants.

(3b) ? *Une balle, entrée à côté du nez, sortit par la tempe opposée, et défigura ce cadavre d'une façon hideuse; il resta avec un œil ouvert.*

A bullet, entered next to his nose, went out the opposite temple and disfigured this cadaver hideously; he lay there with one eye open.

There is no longer any point of view represented in passages 3a) and (3b). I should add that the acceptability of passage (3b) is questionable to the French reader.

In the highlighted passages (2a) and (2b), we can also verify the presence of anaphoric relationships ("*ce cadavre,*" "*ses souliers,*" "*ce cadavre*") and associative anaphoras ("*du nez,*" "*la tempe,*" "*un œil*"). The point of view-effect is all the more pronounced, because the passages abound with convergent *subjective terms* (*subjectivèmes*): "*la saleté des pieds,*"

“*dépouillé de ses souliers,*” “*mauvais pantaloons,*” “*tout souillé de sang,*” “*d’une façon hideuse.*” However, Rabatel insists that subjective terms are not the decisive factor in determining point of view. We can see that, indeed, point of view-effects are not dependent on the use of subjective terms in examples (4) or (5). Here, no subjective terminology is employed, yet, Rabatel’s linguistic markers clearly identify this as Fabrice’s point of view:

(4) Une balle, entrée à côté du nez, était sortie par la tempe opposée; il était resté avec un œil ouvert.

A bullet, entered next to his nose, had gone out the opposite temple and disfigured this cadaver hideously; he had been lying there with one eye open.

(5) La tête était tournée sur le côté.

His head was turned on its side.

Rabatel’s approach to identifying point of view by an analysis of linguistic markers is interesting for several reasons. First, it is much more precise and workable than the narratological approach founded on the question of “who sees?” As Rabatel writes, “[t]hat which seems determinant, is no longer ‘who’ sees or ‘who’ knows, but the concrete analysis of the referentialization of what is focalized and, from here, locating the utterer responsible for the choices of referentialization” (1998: 58-59; *référentialisation* is the term used by Rabatel for “referenciation” or “construction of the referent”). Secondly, Rabatel’s approach to point of view can address problems that narratology recognizes but falls short in solving. As an example, let us look at the following extract (6):

(6) Elle le regarda boire et se troubla brusquement à cause de la bouche qui pressait les bords du verre. Mais il se sentait si fatigué qu’il refusa de participer à ce trouble, et il ne fit que serrer un peu les doigts blancs, les ongles rouges qui lui reprenaient le gobelet vide. (Colette 2005: 48-49)

She watched him drink and was suddenly confused by the mouth that pressed against the cup’s edges. But he felt so tired that he refused to take part in this troubling confusion, and only squeezed the white fingers, the red nails that took away the empty cup.

Up until “*ce trouble,*” this extract illustrates what Mieke Bal calls “second degree focalization” (1977a: 122; 1977b: 41) or “embedded focalization” (1981: 204). For Genette,

on the other hand, this passage contains an “embedding of looks, if one wishes [...], but not of focalizations” (1988 [1983]: 76-77). Yet he claims that he himself is incapable of demonstrating this phenomenon. The question, therefore, is: Is there a point of view-effect in this extract? According to Rabatel’s approach, the answer would be no; this answer can be justified on the basis of there being no aspectualization (no development of parts and properties) of focalized objects, no changes in foreground or background in the second sentence, and no subjective imperfect tenses. In this extract there is only one mention of perception or predicated perception – “*Elle le regarda boire*” – and descriptive or explanatory segments ascribed to the narrator, in accordance with Rabatel.

In the light of the analytic precision of Rabatel’s four types of linguistic markers of point of view, it seems to me that nothing is gained by moving on, as Rabatel does in his subsequent work, to an “extended conception of viewpoint” (2001: 151). Rabatel extends his conception of point of view by differentiating between two complementary modalities called “recounted point of view” and “asserted point of view” which are adjacent to the modality of “represented point of view” (see Rabatel 2000a and 2001: 151-152). “When POV indicates a report of perception developed in the background,” then, Rabatel states,

[...] we shall speak of “represented” POV [...]; when perceptive POV is limited to traces in the foreground [...], we shall speak of “embryonic” POV [...]. When it is mixed with the expression of words or thoughts, POV can be referred to as “assertive” and tie in with conventional forms of reported discourse [...]. (Rabatel 2003a)

In this quote, we notice the semantic dilution of the term point of view as well as the decreased importance accorded to the relationship between point of view and the text’s background.

Rivara’s Enunciative Narratology

An entire article could be dedicated to the work of René Rivara alone.¹⁸ In *Introduction à la narratologie énonciative*, Rivara envisions enunciative narratology as a discipline that employs concepts from both narratology and enunciative linguistics:

The act of narration is an act of enunciation whose specificity must be defined, but which arises no less from the general theory of language and enunciation. Enunciative narratology uses narratological concepts and linguistic concepts to fulfill this double task. (Rivara 2000: 310)

¹⁸ See Patron (2006), where I analyze this work.

Rivara draws up a list of six general “categories” (to use his own term), which seem to him to be the most applicable to all narratives; all of these, he claims, have an “enunciative correlate”:

1. The relationship of the narrative to the reader: for Rivara, all narratives constitute an act of communication. They therefore involve establishing a relationship with the addressee, or the reader in the case of the literary narrative. Rivara distinguishes two levels of communication: the level of the author-audience relationship and that of the narrator-reader relationship. Note that Rivara does not use the term “narratee,” but his concept of the reader includes both Umberto Eco’s “model reader” and narratology’s extradiegetic narratee.

2. The separation of the real world from the fictive world. This corresponds to the opposition between real utterances (literally, “utterances in the real mood”) and fictive utterances (“utterances in the fictive mood” [Rivara 2000: 312]). This separation can be transgressed as in *Tristram Shandy* or *Jacques le Fataliste*, for example.

3. The selection of one of two types of narrators, called the *anonymous* narrator and the *autobiographic* narrator respectively.

4. The treatment of tense: a succession of aoristic verbs (*passé simple* in French, preterite in English) occurs within the narrative which creates the impression of a succession of recounted events.

5. The relationship between the narrator and the characters, or relationship of “consonance” and “dissonance,” to use the terms that Rivara borrowed from Cohn (1978: 26 and *passim*). This refers to the relationship between primary utterances and reported utterances. Rivara – to be brief – presents the narrator as a *super-enunciator* (*surénonciateur*) in relation to the characters.

6. Point of view: this is defined as a contact between two “levels of enunciation.” This contact occurs between the narrator’s enunciation and the expression of an appreciative modality whose source (*support*) is a character in utterances that are not reported utterances.¹⁹

It is worth pointing out that the article entitled “A Plea for a Narrator-Centered Narratology” (2004) sets out to explore further the relationship between categories 3 and 6.

The main contribution of Rivara’s enunciative narratology, as compared with narratology, on one hand, and other forms of enunciative narratology, on the other, resides, it seems to me, in its analysis of verbal tenses in narrative. Rivara uses Culioli’s reflection on the *aoristic* to explain the contribution of verbal tenses to the temporal sequence on which all

¹⁹ This analysis of point of view closely resembles Danon-Boileau’s description of internal focalization. Note that Rabatel’s works are not mentioned in Rivara’s work.

narrative is based. He points out that the aoristic (*passé simple* in French, preterite in English) possesses two characteristics. In relation to aspect, it refers back to a “limited-closed” process (whose final boundary is closed, for example “*La marquise sortit à cinq heures*” vs. “*La marquise sortait*”). In terms of location, it is the object of a “disconnected” location (*un repérage “par rupture”*); for example, “*La marquise sortit à cinq heures*” vs. “*Hier, la marquise est sortie à cinq heures.*”²⁰ According to Rivara, “[t]he aoristic, limited-closed and disconnected from the present, leaves in its wake a temporal void, in which other processes with analogous properties can take place. We know that series of verbs in the *passé simple* are common and suffice to *create a fragment of narrative*” (2000: 80). For example:

(7) Il prit son chapeau, ouvrit la porte et quitta la maison. (Example coined by Rivara 2000: 80)

He took up his hat, opened the door and left the house.

(8) Joseph était occupé dans une petite pièce noire à ranger du linge sale. Il dit à Germinie de venir l’aider. Elle entra, cria, tomba, pleura, supplia, lutta, appela désespérément... La maison vide resta sourde. (Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, *Germinie Lacerteux*; 1990: 86)

Joseph was busy in a dark little room, putting away dirty laundry. He told Germinie to come and help him. She entered, screamed, fell, cried, begged, fought, called out desperately... The empty house remained deaf.

Rivara’s work also contains an interesting analysis of *L’Étranger* by Camus, which shows how the author manages to reconcile the absence of aoristic verbal forms with the need to indicate a succession of events.

For Rivara, the fundamental distinction of enunciative narratology as he perceives it is its distinction between two types of narrator: the anonymous narrator and the autobiographic narrator. Taking up the term anonymous narrator from Danon-Boileau, he asserts: Danon-Boileau “says ‘explicit’ where we say ‘autobiographic’” (Rivara 2000: 22, n. 5). However, it is not difficult to show that the types of primary narrators distinguished by Rivara and Danon-Boileau do not match up. On the one hand, Rivara’s anonymous narrator does not usually refer to him or herself as “I,” but he/she has the potential to do so. In Danon-Boileau, the

²⁰ The presentation of disconnected location by Rivara corresponds exactly to Danon-Boileau’s description of anaphoric location (“disconnected,” i.e. from the moment of enunciation).

narrator who refers to himself/herself as “I” is not an anonymous narrator, but an explicit narrator. Moreover, Rivara’s anonymous narrator is compared to a fictional historian: “he has, in the story he recounts, a narratological status similar to that of the historian in the narrative of real facts,” etc. (Rivara 2000: 26), which does not mesh with Danon-Boileau’s view either. In general, Rivara’s anonymous narrator is much closer to Genette’s heterodiegetic narrator than Danon-Boileau’s anonymous one. As for Rivara’s autobiographic narrator, its name reflects the fact that he/she is supposed to tell a story in which he took part and which can even be presented as his own story. He/she corresponds exactly to Genette’s homodiegetic narrator. I wish to add that Rivara’s description of the powers and constraints of the anonymous narrator is not a linguistic description. Here, I am obliged to quote him at length:

The powers possessed by the anonymous narrator are of two types. Firstly, they concern the total *mobility* he enjoys, mobility in time and space, which certain authors use more than others. [...] admitting that the narrator does not need to have heard something said in order to report speech and that, apart from characters’ quotes, he is the sole manager of the narrative and the only utterer. He seems endowed with a *power that is totally inaccessible to a human speaker*: situating himself as he likes in time and space, at whatever distance, often variable, from the scene he recounts.

Secondly, he possesses the power to grant us access, if he so pleases, to the *minds of his characters*: according to different modalities, among which figure in particular the three types of reported speech, he can tell us what is happening in the minds of the people who inhabit his fictive universe [...].

These powers of the anonymous narrator, which largely surpass those that are put into play in the daily use of language, have nevertheless a flip side: the narrator submits to certain constraints due in part to his impersonal nature. The first of these constraints is that *he normally cannot refer to himself by the first person pronoun*, and even more so, *he cannot give himself a proper name* [...].

Added to this impossibility to name himself that limits the anonymous narrator is another constraint: having the power to move around freely in the fictive universe and to decide on everything that happens, even in the minds and in the past of the characters, *he does not have the right to express ignorance or any uncertainty*. (Rivara 2000: 150-153; Rivara’s emphasis)

The description of the anonymous narrator finds its counterpart in that of the autobiographic narrator:

The autobiographic narrator does not possess the powers and constraints that characterize the anonymous narrator. From the moment he presents himself as an individualized utterer, authorized to refer to himself in the first person, he can also name himself, describe himself, talk about himself. His narrative gives us access to his inner thoughts straight away, and when he cites or reports what others say, it means he has heard them. (Rivara 2000: 156)

Concerning the omniscient narrator, which Rivara brings back as the anonymous narrator, it is important to keep S.-Y. Kuroda's judgment in mind, according to which the omniscient narrator cannot be identified by a linguistic mechanism whose existence we can establish independently of the assumption of his existence in the way the autobiographic narrator can. The omniscient narrator has no linguistic basis in the way the autobiographic narrator does.²¹

4. The Limits of Enunciative Narratology

The objective of this section is to contest – and if possible to replace – a foundational postulate of narratology, one which is also found in enunciative narratology. This postulate is that of the narrator-in-all-narratives. Narratology takes for granted that there is a narrator, separate from the author, in all narratives and excludes the author from its field of investigation.

In a sweeping gesture, Genettian narratology endowed the narrator of all narratives with properties traditionally attributed to the narrator-character of first-person fictional narratives.²² These properties include the narrator's being designated with a first-person pronoun, the fictivity (or fictionality, a term that increasingly replaced the former one), and the narrator's distinction from the author as a real, biographical person. In Genette, the homodiegetic narrator and the heterodiegetic narrator possess the same properties; they perform the same function: the narrating, which is also allegedly fictional. Moreover, it is noticeable that Genette confuses the author as a real, biographical person – in other words, the author “in the biographical sense” – and the author “in the poetic sense.”²³ If it is legitimate to exclude the author in the biographical sense, or, at least to refuse to make of him the principal explanatory principle in the work, there is no reason to exclude the author in the poetic sense. This would be like studying the discourse of characters in a play without studying how this discourse constructs the identity of the characters, or the way in which they

²¹ See Kuroda 1973: 389.

²² For a detailed analysis of this move, see Patron (2009: 33-42).

²³ I borrow this opposition from Dällenbach (1989 [1977]: 198, n. 5). The American translator of Dällenbach translates “*au sens poétique*” as “in the theoretical sense.” I prefer “in the poetic sense.”

connect with one another. Moreover, as Ducrot writes: “[...] we do not ascribe to the character in a play all the materiality of the text written by the author and spoken by the actors. If, for example, in *Les Femmes Savantes*, Molière and the actors express themselves in verse, it is clear that the characters represented normally speak in prose” (Ducrot 1984: 205; to be understood as “the characters represented speak fictionally in prose.” The same holds true, *mutatis mutandis*, in the case of novelistic narratives.

Therefore, in the term “narrator” Genette joins two narrative instances that I would call incompatible. These are the actual instance of the production of a narrative – this is the author in the poetic sense, from now on simply “the author” – and the fictive or fictional representation which can be given of this instance of the production in the narrative itself (for example the narrator of Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu*).

Enunciative narratology is founded upon the same erroneous or ambiguous concept of the narrator. Of the three authors mentioned, the one who compromises himself the least in his use of this concept is Danon-Boileau. His theory of the anonymous narrator is a theory of the absence of the narrator in a non-radicalized form. It is Rivara who compromises himself the most in his use of this concept. As for Rabatel, he offers a conceptualization of the character’s point of view which is not at all affected by the use of this concept; one only has to replace the term “narrator” with “narrative” in the quotations given here to obtain acceptable formulations. However, Rabatel also suggests a concept of the “point of view of the narrator” which borrows both from Danon-Boileau’s definition of the anonymous narrator and from narratology’s definition of the narrator. This concept raises certain problems, also on an intuitive level. Yet the best arguments against the idea of the anonymous or omniscient narrator can be found in the passages where Rabatel criticizes Genette’s concept of external focalization: “[...] there is nothing other than a problem with the management of narrative information”; “In other words the external vision of the narrator is explained by a communicational intention being at the source of narrative planning, and not by the supposed ignorance of an imaginary witness which is utterly devoid of linguistic reality” (Rabatel 1997: 259). Similarly, the omniscience that the texts displays is explained by a communicational intention being at the source of narrative planning, and not by the supposedly exceptional cognitive capabilities of an imaginary narrator which is utterly devoid of linguistic reality.

In the following paragraphs I wish to make several suggestions for moving beyond the limits of enunciative narratology. This involves making the author the arch-enunciator, as in theatre, or more simply the narrative’s real subject of enunciation. Rethinking the enunciative analysis of narratives from the position of the author would allow us:

– To reflect on the author’s *enunciative dis-inscription* (*désinscription énonciative*) in fictional narratives. In these narratives, as in other written linguistic productions, personal and spatial-temporal markers no longer, or, only very rarely, refer to their context of production.²⁴

– To think consequently about the author’s inscription of a fictive or fictional narrator in certain narratives. This inscription is made through the use of the personal pronoun “I” to refer to a character, whether this character be active in the story he/she tells or not. Literary history has favored the former case, for understandable reasons, and it has often been described in terms of formal *mimesis* (see Glowinski 1977: 106). But the latter case of the inactive character is both theoretically and practically conceivable.

– To also think about the vocation of certain narratives or certain passages of narratives so as to suspend the question of the enunciative source, namely the question of “who speaks (fictionally)?” In certain narratives or certain passages of narratives, the question is not raised; it is irrelevant.

This re-analysis would also allow us then:

– To pay attention to the context-sensitivity of the appreciative markers (Danon-Boileau’s “qualifications,” Rabatel’s “qualifications and modalizations,” Rivara’s “appreciative modality”). In the work of a narratologist, namely Gerald Prince, we find the best answer to the debate concerning the presence of qualifications and modalizations in third-person narrative. While lengthy, this response nevertheless merits being cited *in extenso*:

Note that some narratologists would consider the slightest “evaluative” adjective or adverb or the most discreet logical connection between events to be intrusions. Given
(24) John walked elegantly

and

(25) Bill was happy because he had just seen Robert

for example, they would regard “elegantly” and “because” as intrusive elements. Yet this is not a very convincing position; for there is nothing in (24) and (25) which indicates that perhaps John did not walk elegantly and perhaps Bill’s happiness was not the result of his having seen Robert; that is, there is nothing which indicates that the evaluation and the logical connection are the result of the narrator’s interpretation, the consequence of his special knowledge, the mere product of his subjectivity rather than well-established facts in the world of the narrated. Indeed, the elegance of John’s

²⁴ I have borrowed the term “enunciative dis-inscription” from Philippe (2002: 31), quoted by Rabatel (2003b: 40). However, neither Philippe nor Rabatel show interest in this aspect of the enunciative dis-inscription of the author in fictional narrative.

walk and the cause of Bill's happiness are given as incontrovertible and we take them as such when we read. (Prince 1982: 11-12)²⁵

The re-analysis I am proposing would further enable us to perform the following tasks:

– To reexamine the question of the author's or narrator's intrusions by not treating them as markers of enunciative continuity. This contradicts the very idea of intrusion. Instead, such intrusions would be treated from a "discontinuist" perspective. A great deal of work needs to be done on the demarcation of intrusions, that is to say, on the markers at the beginning and end of the intervention of the "I" in third-person fictional narratives containing "intrusions."

– To think, more generally, about *montage* or the narrative's local, rather than global, enunciative coherence.

5. Conclusion

It is clear that the type of analysis which I am proposing entails abandoning the framework that enunciative linguistics established for the study of oral communication. To say, as Rabatel does, "the co-enunciator (or the reader)" (Rabatel 2000b: 63; see also 52, 54, 58) is too cursory and does not allow us to reflect upon the role of the reader in this very particular form of communication: fictional narrative. This analysis also implies reestablishing properly enunciative markers as the basis for analytical work. For if everything is enunciative, then it is just as true that nothing is: the idea of the enunciative or of enunciation is thereby emptied of conceptual content. Respecting the specific characteristics of fictional narrative and casting off the postulate of the narrator-in-all-narratives in works of fiction, I believe that the future lies in this double reorientation for enunciative narratology – or rather the enunciative analysis of narratives.

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²⁵ On "the slightest 'evaluative' adjective," etc., see Genette (1982 [1966]: 141-142).

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