

Focalization and Narrative Voice in George Orwell's Novel: *The Road to Wigan Pier*

Béchir Chaabane

Preparatory Institute for Engineering Studies of Sfax, Sfax, Tunisia

Email address

Bechir.Chaabane@ipeis.rnu.tn

To cite this article

Béchir Chaabane. Focalization and Narrative Voice in George Orwell's Novel: *The Road to Wigan Pier*. *International Journal of Art and Literature*. Vol. 2, No. 3, 2015, pp. 17-25.

Abstract

The problems facing genre during the period of the publication of *The Road to Wigan Pier*, that is, the 1930s, reflect the complexity of the situation, hence the problematic status of Orwell's text. It is problematic due to the ambiguity of its status as a literary genre and the way it deals with vital issues facing intellectuals as part of the social structure. The text is subversive on many levels, especially on that of the form. In order to show some aspects of the author's challenge of the conventional norms and methods of literary writing, a comparison between the writer's original diary of the journey to the industrial North and the present book could be of great import. This reveals the author's genuine intellectual ability to manipulate and rearrange the events and scenes of the story on the discourse level. The author's manipulation and rearrangement of the story (the journey) events and scenes clearly reveals his potential literary creativity and imagination. Consequently, the exploration of the novel from a structuralist perspective does not aim at the pure application of some literary and critical approaches on Orwell's text. This may be misleading since the investigation may fall in superficiality and simplicity. But each strategy deployed is actually a further contribution to the author's general argument and a manifestation of the novel's status as a creative and subversive text.

Keywords

Fictionality, Structuralism, Focalization, Narrative Voice

1. Introduction

The period of the production of George Orwell's book *The Road to Wigan Pier* (RWP) [1], the 1930s, was very crucial and critical on both intellectual and political levels. The book was published in 1937, that is, the period between the two world wars and after the Great Depression (1929). At that time both intellectuals and politicians were faced with vexed problems such as mass unemployment, poverty and democracy. Committed writers such as George Orwell took interest in the way to represent these problems at that critical moment of human history.

Orwell has deployed many strategies to fulfil this purpose. Each strategy is actually a contribution to the author's overall argument and at the same time it constitutes a further aspect of subversion. The main aspect of subversion lies on the level of form itself. The form of the book is effectively very challenging. Contrary to the conventional view of the fictional novel as an isolated entity, the study of Orwell's text based on Genette's model reveals his challenge of the basic novelistic

parameters. The novelistic ingredients such as setting, characterisation and plot development have been treated in a subverting way. Though not totally discarded, they have been manipulated for the purpose of the author's general argument, which is Socialism. For instance, characters in the novel are treated as types, that is, representatives of their class. Besides, the order of scenes and events has been rearranged for the purpose of foregrounding representative scenes like the description of the Brookers' lodging-house. The author's treatment of the material of the text is primarily based on his personal experience as an outside observer during his journey to the North.

The formal analytic tools will be supplied by Genette's model. Two main formal aspects of the text will be discussed, namely, the categories of mood and voice which will form the two essential parts of the study. These categories are the major constitutive elements in the structural analysis of a literary discourse. In order to achieve this task, only the pertinent tools will be selected from the aforementioned analytic angle, that is, the structuralist perspective. The aim of the prior discussion is to provide the necessary arguments for the central point which

is the revision of the notion of fictionality based on the study of Orwell's book. The narrow concept of fictionality which is based on the mere distinction between truth and falsity or fiction and reality is substituted by a broader view taking into account the interplay of both text and context in the study of any literary discourse. Being identified, this concept of fictionality will be applied to Orwell's text from a structuralist angle for more validation of the general argument of the research paper.

2 Gérard Genette's Model

Gérard Genette, in his book *Figures III: Discours du récit* [2], has made a rigorous structural analysis of Marcel Proust's text *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Given that both Orwell and Proust's texts are two "autobiographical" narratives, Genette's critical model may be of great help in the analysis of *RWP* from a structuralist perspective. Thus, in this chapter a synopsis of the main premises on which Genette's theory is based will be given. Then, in the chapter about case study, these concepts will be applied to the analysis of Orwell's text.

Genette makes a distinction between three levels of study: story, that is, the signified or narrative content; narrative, that is, the signifier, utterance, (énoncé) or narrative text itself; and narration or the producer's act, that is, the whole situation real or fictional in which it takes place. [2] (p. 72) So, the analysis of a narrative text, such as *RWP*, will take into account the relationship between the narrative and the events it relates as well as the link between the narrative text and the act which produces it, that is, the narration. The relationship between these elements reveals the author's creativity and his potential ability to rearrange the events of the story.

Genette proposes three classes for the analysis of a literary narrative discourse¹. They are : first, 'time' that is the temporal relations between narrative and story (diegesis); second, moods of narrative, that is, modalities –forms and degrees- of narrative "representation"; and finally, voice² with its two protagonists – the narrator and narratee – real or virtual. These three categories constitute the three levels of definition of a narrative: both time and mood are at the level of the relationships between story and narrative whereas voice represents at the same time the relations between narration and narrative as well as the relations between narrative and story. [2] (p. 75-76) Therefore, the structural analysis of Orwell's book will take into account only the last two categories of mood and voice which will constitute the fields of this study. These constitutive parts represent a whole which will be dismantled for the purpose of exposition. The exploration of Orwell's text from a structuralist perspective adds more

validity to the overall argument of the text.

2.1. Mood / Focalization

The first category deployed in the analysis of the structure of this narrative is 'mood', 'focalization' or what Brooks and Warren call 'focus of narration'. Jahn determines the function of focalization as "a means of selecting and restricting narrative information, of seeing events and states of affairs from somebody's point of view, of foregrounding the focalizing agent, and of creating an empathetical or ironical view of the focalizer" [3] (p. 29). Thus, for Genette, the relevant question is *who sees?* in the category of mood as opposed to the question *who speaks?* which concerns the class of voice.

Before tackling the main patterns of focalization, a definition of the term focalizer and its function seems of interest in the study of this class. As Jahn puts it in *Narratology*:

A focalizer is the agent whose point of view orients the narrative text. A text is anchored on a focalizer's point of view when it presents (and does not transcend) the focalizer's thoughts, reflections and knowledge, his/her actual and imaginary perceptions, as well as his/her cultural and ideological orientation. [3] (p. 29)

Three types of focalization can be distinguished ([3] Jahn 29, [4] Jouve 33 and [2] Genette 207).

2.1.1. Zero Focalization or Non-focalized Narrative

The narrative is not focalized on any character. There is absence of focalization since the narrator is neither selecting nor restricting narrative information in a non-focalized narrative. The only agent whose point of view orients and organizes the narrative text is the omniscient narrator.

2.1.2. Internal Focalization

The technique of presenting something from the point of view of a story-internal character is called internal focalization. The character through whose eyes the action focalizers are variously termed "focal characters" [3] (p. 9-29). The narrator adapts his narrative to the point of view of the character. Thus, there is restriction and selection of narrative information since the narrator conveys knowledge which is only authorized by the situation of character. The general effect of internal focalization is the identification with the character from whose perspective the story is presented [4] (p. 33).

Four main patterns of internal focalization can be distinguished:

- a) *Fixed focalization*: This form consists in the presentation of narrative facts and events from the constant point of view of a single focalizer such as in James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* or *The Ambassadors*. In these canonical examples, there is a constant point of view of the character [3] (p. 29).
- b) *Variable focalization*: This pattern consists in the presentation of different episodes of the story through the eyes of several focalizers. For instance, in Virginia

1 Tzvetan Todorov, in « *Les catégories du récit littéraire* », communications 8, divides the narrative into 3 categories ; "time", to express the relationship between time of the story and that of the discourse, category of "aspect", to express the way in which the story is perceived by the narrator; and finally "mode", that is, the type of discourse used by the narrator.

2 In French it is referred to as "situation narrative" or "instance narrative" Emile Benveniste refers to it as "instance de discours" in *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, V^e partie.

Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, the narrative's events are seen through the eyes of Clarissa Dalloway, Mr Dalloway, Peter Walsh, Septimus Warren Smith, Rezia Smith, and many other internal focalizers [3] (p. 29).

- c) *Multiple focalization*: It is a technique of presenting an episode repeatedly, each time seen through the eyes of a different (internal) focalizer. Typically, what is demonstrated by this technique is that different people tend to perceive or interpret the same event in radically different fashion such as in epistolary novels [3] (p. 29).
- d) *Collective focalization*: It is a focalization through either plural narrators ('we narrative') or a group of characters ('collective reflectors') [3] (p. 29).

2.1.3. External Focalization

It is a technique of presenting a story in a neutral way. While in zero-focalization the narrator knows more than the character and in internal focalization the former knows as much as the latter, in external focalization the former, the narrator, knows less than the latter, that is, the character. The restriction and selection in external focalization are much more significant than in internal focalization. The narrator does not know the interior of the character; he only grasps the external aspect of his milieu, that is, either of people or things around him [4] (p. 34). Thus, the image provided by the narrator in an external focalization is similar to that given by a camera.

Consequently, the narrator's choice of the type of focalization in a narrative, namely in Orwell's text, varies from one passage to another. In fact, a zero focalization may substitute an internal or external focalization and vice versa. The play with focalizations permits all types of effects on the reader. Focalization is another strategy adopted by the author, similar to order, so as to manipulate the material of the narrative and contribute to the general argument of the text.

2.2. Narrative Voice

The third category in the structural analysis of narrative is narrative voice or narrative situation. While the question in mood is "who sees?" the question in voice is "who speaks?" or "who is the text's narrative voice?" Vendryès defines narrative voice as "the aspect of verbal action in its relationship with the subject" (quoted in Genette [2] p. 223). The term subject refers to all those who participate in the narrative activity. What Benveniste calls subjectivity in language is the analysis of the relationships between these utterances and their uttering process (énonciation/instance productrice). In a narrative discourse the parallel term is narration, hence the significance of the role of the narrator or "narrative agency".

Narration is the way the story is related. The study of narration consists in identifying the status of the narrator and the functions he/she takes up in a narrative.

2.2.1. Status

What type of narrator? The status of the narrator depends on two fundamental criteria: his/her relation to the story and the narrative level where he/she is situated.

(a) *The Narrator's Relation to Story*: Is the narrator present or absent as a character in the world of the narrative? Jahn makes a distinction between two types of narrator. The distinction depends on how the presence of the narrator is signalled in the text. On the one hand, an overt narrator is one who refers to him/herself in the first person ("I", "we" etc.), one who directly or indirectly addresses the narratee, one who exhibits a 'discoursal stance' towards characters and events, one who 'intrudes' in the story in order to pass philosophical or meta narrative comments, finally one who has a distinctive voice. On the other hand, a covert narrator is one who exhibits none of the features previously mentioned: specifically, he/she is one who neither refers to him- or herself nor addresses any narratee, one who has a more or less neutral (nondistinctive) voice and style. Covert narration can be most easily achieved by letting the action be seen through the eyes of an internal focalizer [3] (p. 26).

Genette makes a parallel categorical distinction between two principal types, homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narrators and narratives. This distinction is based on the narrator's relationship to the story, that is, whether he/she is present or absent from the story: presence or absence of an 'experiencing 'I' in the story's action sentences.

A *homodiegetic narrator* is present as a character in the story, that is, the individual acts as a narrator and as a character on the level of action. A special case of homodiegetic narration is autodiegetic narration in which the narrator is the protagonist of his/her story. In a homodiegetic narrative one of its story-related action sentences contain first-person pronouns (I did this; I saw this), indicating that the narrator was at least a witness to the action [3] (p. 27).

A *heterodiegetic narrator* is not present as character in the story. The prefix 'hetero' alludes to the 'different nature' of the narrator's world as compared to the world of the action. In a heterodiegetic text all story-related action sentences are third-person sentences (she did this; this was what happened to him) [3] (p. 27).

(b) *Narrative level*: The second fundamental criterion for the determination of the status of the narrator is the narrative level on which he is supposed to be situated. The question is : does the narrator relate his story in the first narrative or is he himself the subject of a narrative produced by another as follows: "Any event told by a narrative is on a diegetic level immediately superior to that where the producer narrative act of this same narrative is situated" [2] (p. 238). Thus, a narrative can be embedded in another one. For instance, the anonymous narrator who recounts the story of Schéhérazade in *One Thousand and One Nights* is qualified as an extradiegetic narrator since he is subject of no narrative. Yet, schéhérazade is the intradiegetic narrator as she tells second degree narratives and she is herself the subject of the first degree narrative. While the anonymous narrator addresses an addressee who is absent from the story (an extradiegetic narratee); Schéhérazade addresses an addressee who is present in the story: the Sultan (an intradiegetic narratee).

Therefore, what are the consequences of the choice of the type of narrator in Orwell's text as first-person narrative both

on the author's argument and on the reader as well? In other words has the author chosen this natural form of first-person autobiographical narrative as a sign of direct autobiography or as a deliberate aesthetic as well as political choice? These questions will be discussed in the chapter about case study as they will clearly reveal the importance of the narrator's personal experience in the development of his main argument.

2.2.2. Functions of the Narrator

In addition to status, the other element in the study of narration is the functions that the narrator takes up in the narrative. Genette argues that these functions can be distributed in terms of the various aspects of the narrative to which they refer, namely, the story, the narrative text or the narrative situation [2] (p. 261-62).

Narrative function: This function refers to the aspect of story. It can be either implicit, which is the most frequent pattern, or explicit. Narration is the main role of the narrator. It consists in relating the events of the story either in the first-person if the narrator is present or in the third-person when the narrator is absent.

Governing function: This function refers to the aspect of the narrative text. It is as essential as the first one. It consists in adopting many procedures in the narrative, namely, analepses, prolepses, ellipses, oppositions, and symmetries; the narrator can either respect order to relate the events of the story or transgress it.

Communicative function: This function refers to the narrative situation. It is narratee-oriented. It permits the narrator to establish direct contact with his addressee. The narrator often addresses his/her narratee by means of the demonstrative 'you'.

Testimonial or attestation function: This function also refers to the narrative situation but it is narrator-oriented. The narrator informs the reader about the way he/she apprehends his/her narrative, namely, his feeling (emotion); his judgments (evaluation); or his information about the sources of the narrative attestation.

Ideological function: This function refers to the narrator's direct or indirect interventions with respect to the story. The narrator makes general judgments about the state of the world or human relations with reference to the gnomic present tense.

Consequently, the narrative, governing and communication functions project the narrative functioning while testimonial and ideological functions concern story interpretation. Focus on one of these aspects, namely in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, reveals the narrator's aims and purposes in the narrative-whether aesthetic or ideological. As a first-person narrative, the primary function of the narrator is ideological. Orwell is a committed writer; therefore, he obviously deploys various strategies, like the first-person narrator, to advance his general argument, that is, Socialism.

To conclude, a formal analysis of Orwell's text will include the study of the two categories of mood and voice. These are the two constitutive elements of a structuralist approach to Orwell's text. The study of the class of mood or focalization will involve the various strategies deployed by the narrator

including the following techniques: conjecturing-generalizing, exaggeration-mitigation, juxtaposition and augmentation. The second category is voice. It includes the initial narrator in Part One of the narrative and then the splitting process in Part Two: the younger narrator, the older narrator and the bourgeois social narrator. Thus the study of these inherent features will be based on sample passages arbitrarily selected from the text. The following table may clarify the checklist of the elements to be discussed from a Structuralist angle.

Table 1. The Elements of a Structuralist Mode of Text Analysis.

Categories and Strategies	
Mood/ Focalization	• Conjecturing-generalizing
	• Exaggeration-mitigation
	• Juxtaposition
	• Augmentation
Voice	* Initial narrator
	* Narrator's splitting process
	◦ Younger narrator
	◦ Older narrator
	◦ Bourgeois Socialist narrator

The aim of the investigation of the formal features in Orwell's text is to show the complexity of its structure, hence its literariness and the creativity of its author. This chapter has presented an overall view of the tentative analytic tools to be deployed in the next chapter on findings and discussion. As aforementioned, only the relevant tools are selected in order to be applied to the analysis of Orwell's text *RWP*. These tools are advanced to tackle the problem of fictionality in the text from two different angles for the purpose of more validation of the general argument. Each section of the chapter presents a checklist which identifies the different elements to be discussed.

3. Findings and Discussion

The analysis of *RWP* will be essentially based on the discussion of the analytic tools presented in the previous chapter. This investigation will be carried out from a structuralist perspective with special emphasis on Genette's model. This task consists in the study of the category of mood which will be discussed with particular focus on Hunter's suggested techniques, namely, conjecturing-generalizing, exaggeration-mitigation, juxtaposition as well as argumentation. Finally, narrative voice will be equally explored with main focus on Hunter's categories of initial narrator and narrator's splitting process. The latter includes the three classes of younger narrator, older narrator and bourgeois Socialist narrator. The general purpose of this analysis, which is based on the aforementioned approach, is to present more validity to the thesis proposed in this research paper.

Though there are differences between Proust's *A La recherche du temps perdu* and Orwell's *RWP*, this strategy consists in the deployment of a detailed formal analysis of Orwell's text. This method, although based on the conventional criteria of a narrative, may have the essential justification to permit an accurate determination of the points

on which such a text exceeds such norms. Therefore, the aim of this investigation is to show the extent to which this creative text has deviated from the fixed standards of a narrative, to show its ambiguity and complexity, hence its literariness and fictionality.

As has already been shown in the previous chapter about methodology, Gérard Genette's model applied to Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* will be adopted as the approach which best lends itself to the structural analysis of Orwell's book *RWP*. The two classes of mood and voice constitute the fields of study as well as the levels of definition of Orwell's narrative text. Therefore, the analysis of the narrative discourse consists in the study of the relationships between the original diary, the narrative text and narration.

3.1. Mood/Focalization

The second class or field of study which is subsequent to time is "mood" or 'focalization'. Brooks and Warren refer to it as "focus of narration". The main type identified in Orwell's text is external focalization. The focus of attention will be on the various strategies deployed by the focalizer, the external observer, to present a valid observation to his bourgeois socialist audience. Among the strategies adopted by the narrator there are the conjecturing-generalizing technique, exaggeration-mitigation technique, juxtaposition of ideas and images as a familiarizing technique and finally the process of augmentation. These strategies will be discussed to examine their effect on the focalizer himself as well as the reader he is addressing.³

3.1.1. Conjecturing-Generalizing Technique

Jahn states that the "primary candidate for a text's perspectival orientation is the narrator presenting an external focalization of the world of the story" [3] (p. 29). In fact, in a first-person narrative, namely, *RWP*, the events are presented from the point of view of the narrator who is usually the main source of information. The narrator's primary concern is to present knowledge of his surroundings. That is why he has adopted the strategy of detachment and conjecturing since his problem is to learn and report simultaneously. From the beginning, he emphasizes his conjectural state of mind: "I suppose there were factory whistles" [1] (p. 5).

Then, the narrator, in the process of his description of what he sees, moves from conjecturing to generalizing. He effectively includes himself with other lodgers of the Brookers' lodging house. Each scene he witnesses is presented in detail, measurement and precision focusing initially around a particular object as the bed in the bedroom or the table in the kitchen. After this careful and accurate description, the narrator provides a personal opinion or conjecture. In the first case, that is description of the bed, he proffers his personal opinion: "I believe all new-comers spent their first night in the double bed..." [1] (p. 6). Then, the narrator invites his bourgeois socialist reader to join him in his experience,

especially in perceiving the bad smell of the bedroom. In the second case, description of the kitchen table, he shows his conjectural state of mind "I suspect" [1] (p. 6). After that he moves to generalization "Generally the crumbs from breakfast were still on the table at supper" [1] (p. 7). Furthermore, the smell of the bedroom as well as the dirt of the kitchen are conveyed by the generalizing "you" as in "You did not notice it when you got up, but if you went out of the room [bedroom] and came back, the smell hit you in the face with a smack" [1] (p. 6). Also, further in the book he states "The smell of the kitchen was dreadful, but, as with that of the bedroom, you ceased to notice it after a while" [1] (p. 14).

This procedure applies not only to the physical scenes the narrator describes, namely the bed, kitchen or tripe-shop; but also to the characters he portrays. For instance, when he describes the lodger Joe in the Brookers' lodging house, he shows his conjecturing state of mind by describing his meals outdoors: "...it was mostly slices of bread-and-marg and packets of fish and chips, I suppose" [1] (p. 9). He then moves to generalization by introducing "you" as in the description of the physical scenes. Talking about Mr. Brooker's dirty hands, he says "If he gave you a slice of bread-and- butter was always a black thumb-print on it" [1] (p. 7-8). Moreover, further in the text, he states "...at any hour of the day you were to meet Mr. Brooker on the stairs, carrying full chamber-pot which he gripped with his thumb well over the rim" [1] (p.11).

Therefore, this procedure has a twofold effect. On the one hand, the process of familiarizing and detaching himself makes the narrator in full control of the scene; while being familiar with the scene he depicts without committing himself. This technique allows the narrator to convey his opinion and make arguments of great weight. On the other hand, the narrator's identification with his reader facilitates interaction between them. Thus, this strategy allows the focalizer to record and describe precisely the objects of his focalization being either physical scenes or characters.

3.1.2. Exaggeration-Mitigation Technique

In addition to the process of conjecturing and generalizing, the focalizer tends to have recourse to the technique of exaggeration. But this exaggeration "is used only to be undercut" (Hunter 49). For instance, the narrator's horrific observations on the Scottish miner's injury is placed between parentheses as if it were a parenthetical statement used for merely additional information: "(a huge chunk of stone pinned him to the ground and it was a couple of hours before they could lever it off)" [1] (p. 6). Also, he describes the two old pensioners' horrible disease with the "throw-away" "cancer, I believe" [1] (p. 8). The narrator tries to downplay the implications of the scene with comments such as "curiously enough" [1] (p.8). Moreover, the narrator states that he has "heard dreadful stories" [1] (p. 8) about the tripe-shop; yet he follows them with balanced deductions, casting doubts on statements with "were said" [1] (p.8).

Therefore, the obvious effects of this process are:

First, the portrayal of an "unpleasant, alienating and disgusting" scene [5] (p. 49). The ultimate picture depicted by

3 These techniques are introduced in Lynette Hunter's book: *George Orwell: A Search for a Voice*.

the narrator is that of a lodging house which consists of squalid wreckage, an "unmistakable dusty" [1] (p. 12) tripe shop, "uniformly disgusting" [1] (p. 13) meals with an "unspeakable mass of stickiness and dust" [1] (p. 14), and the "dreadful smell" [1] (p. 14) of the kitchen.

Second, a further effect is that of "a group of people who are dirty and unthinking" [5] (p. 49). In addition to the dirt, smells and food, the narrator perceives "the feeling of stagnant meaningless decay, of having got down into some subterranean place where people go creeping round and round, just like black beetles, in an endless muddle of slovene jobs and mean grievances" [1] (p. 15). The dreadful thing that revolts the narrator is the Brookers disgusting habit of discussing things over and over again, and most of all Mrs. Brooker's "habit of wiping her mouth with bits of newspaper" [1] (p. 15). Later, he comes to the conclusion that the Brookers "exist in tens of hundreds of thousands" [1] (p. 16). However, the mitigation of these effects "by all judicious comments and well-balanced opinion leaves one appraising the narrator as valid while retaining the horror of the scene... The narrator is ineradicably alien to the situation, and so is his expected reader" [5] (p. 49).

3.1.3. Juxtaposition Technique

The question is how the narrator familiarizes himself with the situation by active experience and also familiarizes the reader by including him in response to the recreation of experience. The narrator's main concern is "how to make familiar a situation that lies outside the lives of most of his readers without imposing a private and dominating interpretation on it" [5] (p. 51). This aim is primarily achieved through the technique of juxtaposition of ideas and images. This familiarizing technique, therefore, consists in the statement of facts and images for the purpose of pointing up new ideas and connections as well as involving the reader in the activity of experience.

For instance, when the narrator describes the process of getting down the coal mine, he addresses his reader saying "...because of the speed at which the cage has brought you down, and the complete blackness through which you have traveled, you hardly feel yourself deeper down than you would at the bottom of the Piccadilly Tube" [1] (p. 22). Apart from the horrible depth of the coal pit shown in the previous situation, another image is suggested by the narrator to explain the process of travelling through the mine so as to reach the coal face. Trying to describe the effect of this dreadful journey on the miner, the narrator explains: "... before he [miner] even gets to his work he may have to creep through passages as long as from London Bridge to Oxford Circus" [1] (p. 22).

Therefore, the purpose of the creation of the experience of the mine is to show the narrator's as well as the reader's lack of experience and their learning process. The narrator constantly tries to involve his reader in the activity of the experience and familiarize him with any new situation by means of juxtaposing ideas and images. Besides, the other effect of the juxtaposition strategy on the reader is the reaction and great surprise at "the immense horizontal distances that

have to be travelled underground" [1] (p. 22). The narrator equally calls the reader to share his feeling by constantly referring to him "You do not notice the effect of this till you have gone a few hundred yards. You start off, stooping slightly, down the dim-lit gallery, eight or ten feet wide and about five high, with the walls built up with slabs of shale, like the stone walls in Derbyshire"[1] (p. 23). Thus, these recreated images make both the focalizer and his reader familiar with the reality of the situation- the object of the focalization. The ultimate purpose of this strategy, the mediated visual aspect of focalization, is to align the reader with the narrator, the external observer; and get him involved in the learning process. Both of them become aware of the suffering and hideous conditions of the working class and the unemployed people in the North.

3.1.4. Augmentation Technique

The process of augmentation is applied to many details concerning different aspects of mining life. The narrator moves from one detail to construct a complex picture of the economic structure such as shifts, wages, stoppages, health and compensations. All this knowledge is primarily based on facts and figures and eventually on interpretation with heavy reference to examples of specific people as a source for the narrator's information "Each area examined starts off with a prevalent assumption... and proceeds to break it down. But in no case is the assumption crudely denied. The exemplification and step by step logic pursue each concept to a clear weakness and provide a concrete alternative" [5] (p. 53).

For instance, the process is exemplified by the detail of wages and stoppages. In fact, the narrator starts by the prevalent assumption or illusion that miners are "comparatively well-paid" [1] (35). The narrator carefully constructs the beginning by saying "One hears loosely stated that..."; then, he tries to break down this assumption arguing that: "... the statement that a miner receives ten or eleven shillings a shift is very misleading" [1] (p. 35). After refuting the bourgeois assumption that the miners are well-paid, the narrator shifts to a concrete discussion of a Yorkshire miner's five actual pay-checks. Discussion is based on real facts "five pay-checks" as well as on figures collected from *Coal Scuttle* by Mr. Joseph Jones, Mayor of Barnsley, Yorkshire in 1936. Then, the narrator pursues a rational logic by showing that the figures, being averages, are only gross earnings. Finally, he comes to the conclusion that, after deductions of all stoppages and personal fees, the average net earnings is actually much lower and quite different from the initial reported wage.

This process of augmentation is equally applied to other details such as the description of mine accidents. The focus of attention is on a minor detail, yet it is very significant since it draws the reader's attention to the appalling working conditions of the miners and their unsafe jobs. As Hunter puts it, the result of this process of augmentation is:

First, to create an impression of inevitability and depression;

Second, to emphasize the points the narrator wishes to make by reaching conclusions that he then goes beyond;

Third, to alert the reader to the need for personal assessment and denial of the assumption [5] (p. 53).

To conclude, all these strategies through which focalization is made operative have had effects on the object focalized, on the reader and on the focalizer himself. The focalizer, who has opted for this type of external focalization, has a clear objective. His aim is to make an argument of weight through the creation of a disgusting picture of the hideous working conditions in the North to serve his ideology.

Table 2. *The Narrator's Strategies and their Effects.*

Part One	
Initial narrator	Strategies / Effects
	Strategy:
	Development of a learning / experiencing character
	Direct identification with bourgeois reader
Younger narrator	Narrative distance between narrating I and experiencing I (older and wiser narrating I)
	Effects:
	Bourgeois narrator's more understanding view of working class
	Fictionality of Orwell's narrative text
Part Two	
Splitting	
Younger narrator	Strategies / Effects
	Strategy:
	Developing younger persona with autobiographical references of 'George Orwell'
	Effects:
Older narrator	Creation of middle-class type not to attack reader directly
	Selective and curtailed autobiography not to allow reader full knowledge and understanding
	Detachment of reader from topic being presented to let him view and assess the specific case from the outside
	Strategy:
Bourgeois Socialist narrator	Development of a more external and personal voice : reflective and detached older self
	Unspoken identification between older narrator and middle class reader (reverse strategy of initial persona)
	Effects:
	Self criticism of older narratorial voice
	Criticism of middle-class reader without antagonizing him
	Strategy:
	Development of a fully-fledged character
	Withdrawal from older detached voice to fuse with this 'type'
	Asking reader to withdraw from personal to type
	Effects:
	Analysis of bourgeois socialist type
	Examination of party line of Socialism and its assumptions

3.2. Narrative Voice

Approaching *RWP* from a Structuralist angle requires, in addition to the study of the category of mood, the analysis of another feature, namely, narrative voice. While the question in mood is "Who sees?" the question in voice is rather "Who speaks?" In Genette's terms, Orwell's text can be identified as primarily a homodiegetic, or roughly, a first-person narrative. Therefore, the study of narrative voice in Orwell's text requires the examination of the different degrees of presence of this voice in the first part and its split in the second part, hence the effects it produces both on the narrator and the reader. Focus will be on the experiencing/learning I that is related to the whole first part, then there will be emphasis on

the splitting narrator, namely, the younger narrator, the older narrator and finally the bourgeois socialist narrator. These terms are borrowed from Hunter. In order to conduct such an investigation, drawing a table may be of use to illustrate the narrator's different strategies as well his levels of intervention in the text.

3.2.1. The Initial Narrator

An overall view of the above table sheds light on the different aspects of the narrator. As it is manifest through Orwell's text, the narrator is omniscient. He seems to know and manipulate everything in the narrative. He directs the action towards a specific aim. Thus, in order to study the different aspects and the progression of this narrator, the discussion will be divided into two main parts. The first division concerns the development of the initial narrator while the second will be interested in the splitting in the character. The purpose of this study is to show the relationship and complementarity of the two aspects of this omniscient narrator, hence the coherence of the text as whole.

3.2.2. The Narrator's Splitting Process

In Part One the narrator is present and directing response. He produces a special form, the documentary narrative, as a suitable means for realizing his own experience in literary terms. For this purpose he has created "an isolated observer going around and seeing for himself. This created character is then used to important effect in the second half, the argument about Socialism, where the man who has gone and seen for himself is contrasted with the jargon-ridden bourgeois socialist" [6] (p. 51). The essential link between the two parts of the text is then this 'outside observer', that is, Orwell. Thus, this section will deal with three main strategies deployed by the narrator: the development of a younger narrator with autobiographical references, the creation of a more external and personal voice, and finally the appearance of a 'fully-fledged' character. Each strategy will be analyzed along with its main effects on both the narrator himself and on his bourgeois socialist reader.

(a) *The Younger Narrator*

In Part Two of *RWP*, Hunter talks about a decisive split of the narrator: "... there is a younger persona who takes on the overt elements of 'Orwell's life and is presented in the same way as the initial 'type' narrator of Part One. The narrator suggests that it is this type of person, financially at the same level as the working class, who is most responsible for class differences because of the assumptions he breeds" [5] (p. 61). Thus, chapter eight, shows that the younger persona's social background has provided him only with prejudices and appearances. He lives a sort of 'shabby-genteel family' where "Practically the whole family income goes in keeping up appearances" [1] (p. 108). The younger narrator's genteel birth has not provided him with wealth. He has merely inherited the apparent bourgeois habits, instead.

In the following chapter, chapter nine, the younger persona's development is clear: "This persona provides a series of concrete examples for the theory of doublethink, the rhetoric of evasion and living on two levels" [1] (p. 62). For

instance, the younger persona's youthful development in 'both a snob and a revolutionary' was a common characteristic among young people as a direct result from the First World War: "We retained, basically, the snobbish outlook of our class, we took it for granted that we could continue to draw our dividends or tumble into soft jobs but also it seemed natural to us to be 'agin the Government'" [1] (p. 121). Thus, he was bourgeois by birth and education, like many of his middle-class peers, he considered himself as a revolutionary.

Another autobiographical element which has contributed to the development of the younger persona is his experience in Burma. It is effectively an additional detail of the author's life which is firmly attached to the persona as a middle-class 'type' and not to the learning narrator. For instance, he asserts that: "For five years I had been part of an oppressive system..." [1] (p.129). He also adds that he recalls "innumerable remembered faces-faces of prisoners in the dock, of men waiting in the condemned cells, of subordinates I had bullied and aged peasants I had snubbed, of servants and coolies I had hit with my fist at moments of rage..." [1] (p.129). All these details constitute part of the life of the younger persona of the middle-class type. Hunter contends that the attachment of these public details to the younger persona of bourgeois type has got a threefold effect:

First, the generation of a specific type is a strategy to make any criticism appear as not a direct attack on the reader.

Second, these public autobiographical details can never make it possible for the reader to 'know' or fully understand the writer, since "the nature of autobiography is to be selective and curtailed" [1] (p. 61).

Finally, the strategy of the development of a younger persona detaches the reader from the topic presented and allows him to discuss each specific case from the outside [5] (p. 61).

(b) *The Older Narrator*

In order to examine the second strategy, it seems essential to study briefly the different functions of the narrator. These functions can be classified according to the various aspects of the narrative to which they are related. The first aspect is the story. Thus, the main function of the narrator is to relate the story events, hence his narrative function. In fact, the different stages of the younger persona in the second part of *RWP* are recounted by the older narrator. This narrator seems to be omniscient, that is, he knows everything about the different aspects of the younger persona's inner life and ideas. The second aspect is the narrative text itself. Here, the narrator is in charge of the internal organization of the text's connections, articulations and inter-relations, hence his role as a text's organizer. The older narrator in Orwell's text presents the autobiographical elements in an orderly way. Since he is in full control of younger persona, the older persona is the dominant character in the narrative. The older narrator also seems wiser and superior to the younger persona. The difference of age authorizes the latter to treat the former ironically and with superiority.

The third aspect is the narrative situation itself which involves the two protagonists, the narrator, either present or

absent; and the narratee, that is, the addressee or reader. Given the great concern of the narrator about his reader and his relentless pursuit to establish direct contact with him, the communicative function seems the privileged one in Orwell's text. The reflective and detached older self constantly seeks identification with the middle-class reader/narratee. This strategy has a threefold effect.

First, the separation of the narrator from the persona in the second part of the narrative is a model for self-criticism. The development of a more external and personal voice in Part Two retaining the characteristic tone of the learning and aware narrator of Part One allows the reflective older persona to study and reassess his prejudices. Second, the older narrator, by presenting from a different perspective a character whom the reader already knows from Part One, turns the criticism of his persona into self criticism. Besides, the reader's identification with the narrator will turn by corollary into self-criticism. Finally, while the direction of criticism is mainly on the narrator, the reader may avoid its implication on himself. Despite his ideological function, the narrator does not impose his interpretation on his reader. His criticism of the middle-class reader is not carried out for the purpose of antagonizing him.

(c) *The Bourgeois Socialist Narrator*

By the end of chapter eight to chapter ten, a 'fully-fledged' 'bourgeois socialist' is established [5] (p. 63). As the younger persona has come closer to the older narratorial voice, the narrator withdraws from the older detached voice to fuse with this middle-class 'type'. Thus, it is essential to make a difference between two voices. The stance of the 'type' should be separated from the stance of a learning and reassessing individual voice. Otherwise, any conflation of the two different voices will lead to a blaming of the narrator for being too 'subjective' [5] (p. 63). As a first-person narrative, the authority of the homodiegetic narrator is obviously manifest, hence the great amount of his subjectivity in the text. Yet, the narrator's education of self-criticism prevents his reader from falling in this confusion and ambiguity.

In the final chapters of the book, chapters 11, 12 and 13, the narrator shifts from "the rather orderly narration explaining the prejudices of the younger persona", to the bourgeois socialist type or 'devil's advocate' strategy [5] (p. 65). Hunter argues that the narrator's intention of taking up this position and making explicit instructions is twofold. First, to ensure that the reader does not misread the section. It downplays the importance of the devil's advocate position he is taking up, in order to avoid antagonism. Further, make such an approach formal and artificial, hence more acceptable as criticism [5] (p. 65). Therefore, although the attack on the bourgeois socialist type is sharp, the logic is often undermined and understatement is used by always referring to his personal opinion and experience. The effect of this strategy is mainly "to force evaluation on the reader himself" [5] (p. 65).

Furthermore, the narrator not only criticizes the bourgeois socialist type but also the socialist propaganda since both of them hinder communication. Hunter contends that the narrator "is not trying to denigrate socialism, but also to alert socialists

to the impression they give other people" [5] (p. 65). After the analysis of the socialist type and later the close examination of socialism itself, the narrator withdraws from this type. His strategy of developing the middle-class socialist with whom he and his reader may identify is for the purpose of a subsequent withdrawal from it and hence for the necessity of self-examination. That is why the reader should realize and recognize that "This is simply part of the whole process of self-criticism that narrator is advocating" [5] (p. 66).

To conclude, the analysis of *RWP* based on Gérard Genette's structuralist model is invaluable in many ways. In fact, this study has revealed that this narrative has not a simple and plain form, but, on the contrary, it has quite a complex structure. The main constituents of this structure, namely, the categories of mood and voice, are the inherent features which constitute the literariness of the text. Besides, the author's deviation from the traditional literary norms and criteria not only has a defamiliarizing effect but also adds to the complexity of the text's structure and organization. Finally, the author's ability to reshape and reorganize the fictionalized events of the narrative is another proof of the text's literariness and fictionality despite its apparent documentary and autobiographical form.

4. Conclusion

The present paper has attempted to show the validity of the new definition of fictionality and its determining role in the profound analysis of literary discourse in general and the investigation of George Orwell's text *The Road to Wigan Pier* in particular. This new conception of fictionality has put into question the conventional ways of defining literature, tried to show its inadequacy and proposed analytical tools which are potentially applicable to the study of Orwell's text. The set of analytical tools selected for this enquiry are far from being exhaustive but only the pertinent ones are chosen from seminal areas of modern literary theory and criticism.

The seminal area which has greatly contributed to the advance of literary theory and criticism is the prominent field of Formalism and its salient figures such as Schklovsky and

Jakobson. Emphasis has been put on the internal elements of the text which constitute its literariness and show the author's potential creative abilities. Despite the ambiguity and absence of fixed border lines between different genres in the crucial period of the 1930s, the rigorous structuralist analysis of *RWP* has made it possible to trace fundamental literary traits in the novel.

Furthermore, the particular form of the text itself has shown the author's 'play' with genre and the subversive nature of the novel. In fact, the author's choice of this mixed genre which combines the real and the imaginative or the documentary and the fictional, the autobiographical and the journalistic, is actually a deliberate choice.

Besides, this research paper has attempted to proffer an authentic text-based analysis. Effectively, it is not an abstract study of theories and principles. Discussion has been essentially based on concrete examples and excerpts from the text itself. The research has also relied on tables for further illustration. Thus, the results are inferred from the logical discussion of these tables and selected passages.

References

- [1] Orwell, George. *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1982.
- [2] Genette, Gérard. *Figures III*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1972.
- [3] Jahn, Manfred. *Narratology: A guide to the Theory of Narrative*. 'http://www.Uni-koeln.de/ame 02 / pppn. htm' (04-11-2002).
- [4] Jouve, Vincent. *La pratique du roman*. Paris: Armand Colin, 2001.
- [5] Hunter, Lynette. "Communication and Culture." *George Orwell. The Search for a Voice. George Orwell. The Search for a Voice*. Stony Stratford: Open University Press, 1984. pp; 45-69.
- [6] Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977. (See also Williams, Raymond, ed. *George Orwell: A Collection of Critical Essays*. "Observation and Imagination in Orwell." Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974. pp. 52-61).