

Presentation 13: Narrative experience

Herbert H. Clark

1

Max Pulver's notes on K's reading



- ❖ Early on, one woman fainted and had to be carried out
- ❖ Later, two more fainted
- ❖ Many left the hall
- ❖ By the end, there was almost no one left

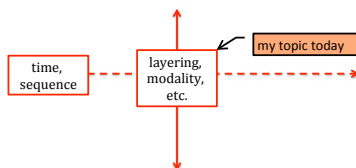
6

Genres differ in narrative experience

Genre of novel, movie	Emotion, experience
Action-adventure	excitement, arousal
Crime	forbidden enjoyment
Detective	surprise, curiosity
Fantasy	empathy, curiosity
Horror	fear, fascination, revulsion
Mystery	fear, curiosity, suspense
Realistic fiction	empathy, excitement
Romance	mild sexual arousal, happiness
Science fiction	suspense, arousal, curiosity
Western	excitement, curiosity
Comedy (film)	amusement, happiness
Pornography	strong sexual arousal

10

Two dimensions of the narrative experience



14

Kafka's "In the penal colony"



Reader: Franz Kafka
Place: Munich. A cold, dimly lit hall
Time: 1914, beginning of World War I

Kafka had traveled from Prague to give the first public reading of "In the penal colony"



11

Kafka's listeners experienced ...

As-if perceptions

Visual "it forced its *pictures* into me with razor sharpness"
Tactual "each new word, like a new thorn, *tore* slowly into [the listener's] back"
Smell "an indistinct *smell* of blood"
Taste "an extraordinarily *faint taste* settled on my lips"

As-if emotions

Revulsion Three women fainted
Many listeners left
Shock *Dénouement* of the story

7

But what is a narrative experience?

As-if perceptions?

As-if emotions?

Why feel things about *fictional* people, *fictional* events?

Vividness of experience

How achieved?

Compartmentalization

How do we keep the *story domain* distinct from the *discourse domain*?

11

Proposal re narrative experience

We *participate* in narratives at several layers of action

For some layers, we are intended to ...

1. *imagine seeing, hearing, feeling* objects and events in the story world
2. *imagine that* certain propositions are true of the story world

Narrators guide our imagination by ...

1. *describing* ("telling")
2. *depicting* ("showing")
3. *indicating* ("anchoring")

15

Kafka's "In the penal colony"



IN DER STRAFKOLONIE
IN DER STRAFKOLONIE
"Es ist ein eigentümliches Apparat", sagte der Offizier.
"It's a peculiar apparatus," said the Officer to the Traveler, gazing with a certain admiration at the device, with which he was, of course, thoroughly familiar. It appeared that the Traveler had responded to the invitation of the Commandant only out of politeness, when he had been invited to attend the execution of a soldier condemned for disobeying and insulting his superior.
Der Richter sah wenig Neugier für das Apparat und ging weiter. Die Zuschauer aber schienen unruhig."

4

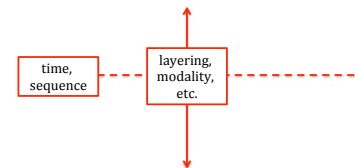
Kafka wanted his listeners ...

to "*comprehend*" the narrative

but also to *experience* selective aspects of the story world *perceptually, emotionally*

8

Two dimensions of narrative experience



12

Max Pulver's notes on K's reading



"With his first words, an *indistinct smell of blood* seemed to spread out, and an *extraordinarily faint taste* settled on my lips. His voice might have sounded apologetic, but it *forced its pictures into me with razor sharpness*, like icy needles of acute torment. It wasn't just that the torture and instruments of torture were described in the executioners' words of suppressed ecstasy. It was that the *listener himself was dragged into this hellish torture*. He lay as a victim on the gently rocking rack, and *each new word, like a new thorn, tore slowly into his back*. [HHC translation]"

5

Metaphors for narrative experience



We are *transported* into the story world (Richard Gerrig)
We get *engrossed, engaged, immersed* in the story world
We are *captivated by, riveted by, caught up in* the story world
"I *lost it* at the movies" (Pauline Kael)
"The writer's intent is that the reader *fall through* the printed page into the scene represented" (John Gardner)

9



"Narratives of personal experience" (Labov)

1. **Abstract** (brief summary of story)
2. **Orientation** (stage setting, the who, when, what, and where of the story)
3. **Complicating action** (what happened)
4. **Evaluation** ("the point of the narrative, why it was told, what the narrator is getting at")
5. **Result or resolution** (how the complicating action got resolved)
6. **Coda** (a signal that the narrative is finished)

13

Discourse vs. story (Chatman, 1978, 1990)

"Each narrative has two parts:

1. a **story** (*histoire*), the content or chain of events (actions, happenings), plus what may be called the existents (characters, items of setting); and
2. a **discourse** (*discours*), that is, the expression, the means by which the content is communicated."

17

Narratives: some basics

16

A spontaneous story

Sam let me tell you a story, - - -
a girl went into a chemist's shop, and asked
for, . contraceptive tablets, - -
so he said "well I've got . all kinds, and . all
prices, what do you want,"
she said "well what have you got,"
...
you may well have a baby.
Reynard Sam . you're a wicked fellow - that's very nice,
...

A spontaneous story

Sam let me tell you a story, - - -
a girl went into a chemist's shop, and asked
for, . contraceptive tablets, - -
so he said "well I've got . all kinds, and . all
prices, what do you want,"
she said "well what have you got,"
...
you may well have a baby.
Reynard Sam . you're a wicked fellow - that's very nice,
...

Chatman's discourse vs. story

discourse
represents story

"Discourse" "Story"

a girl went into a chemist's shop,
and asked for, . contraceptive
tablets, - -
so he said "well I've got . all
kinds, and . all prices, what
do you want,"
she said "well what have you
got,"
...
you may well have a baby.

Narratives appear in layers

Sam let me tell you a story, - - -
a girl went into a chemist's shop, and asked
for, . contraceptive tablets, - -
so he said "well I've got . all kinds, and . all
prices, what do you want,"
she said "well what have you got,"
...
you may well have a baby
Reynard Sam . you're a wicked fellow - that's very nice,
...

Narratives appear in layers

Sam let me tell you a story, - - -
a girl went into a chemist's shop, and asked
for, . contraceptive tablets, - -
so he said "well I've got . all kinds, and . all
prices, what do you want,"
she said "well what have you got,"
...
you may well have a baby
Reynard Sam . you're a wicked fellow - that's very nice,
...

Narratives appear in layers

Sam let me tell you a story, - - -
a girl went into a chemist's shop, and asked
for, . contraceptive tablets, - -
so he said "well I've got . all kinds, and . all
prices, what do you want,"
she said "well what have you got,"
...
you may well have a baby
Reynard Sam . you're a wicked fellow - that's very nice,
...

Narratives appear in layers

Sam let me tell you a story, - - -
a girl went into a chemist's shop, and asked
for, . contraceptive tablets, - -
so he said "well I've got . all kinds, and . all
prices, what do you want,"
she said "well what have you got,"
...
you may well have a baby
Reynard Sam . you're a wicked fellow - that's very nice,
...

Methods of narrating

discourse
represents story

"Discourse" "Story"

a girl went into a chemist's shop,
and asked for, . contraceptive
tablets, - -
so he said "well I've got . all
kinds, and . all prices, what
do you want,"
she said "well what have you
got,"
...
you may well have a baby.

Methods of narrating

discourse
represents story

"Discourse" "Story"

[telling]
a girl went into a chemist's shop,
and asked for, . contraceptive
tablets, - -
[showing]
"well I've got . all kinds, and . all
prices, what do you want,"
[anchoring]

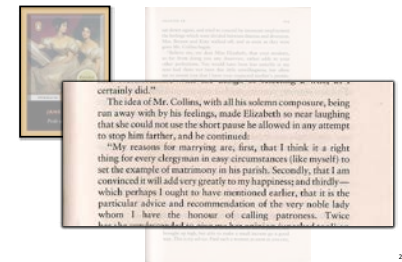
Methods of narrating

[telling]
[showing]
[anchoring]

Pride and Prejudice: Mr. Collins proposes



Pride and Prejudice: Mr. Collins proposes



Telling vs. showing in the novel (David Lodge)

Telling
"authorial report, description,
summary, commentary"

Showing
"direct speech of characters"

certainly did."

The idea of Mr. Collins, with all his solemn composure, being
run away with by his feelings, made Elizabeth so near laughing
that she could not use the short pause he allowed in any attempt
to stop him further, and he continued:
"My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right
thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to
set the example of matrimony in his parish. Secondly, that I am
convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and thirdly—
which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the
particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady
whom I have the honour of calling patroness. Twice

Anchoring (Clark)

Anchoring
indexes to objects, people
present in a domain

certainly did."

The idea of Mr. Collins, with all his solemn composure, being
run away with by his feelings, made Elizabeth so near laughing
that she could not use the short pause he allowed in any attempt
to stop him further, and he continued:
"My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right
thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to
set the example of matrimony in his parish. Secondly, that I am
convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and thirdly—
which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the
particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady
whom I have the honour of calling patroness. Twice

Anchored to layer 2 Anchored to layer 3

Methods of communicating

Telling
"authorial report, description,
summary, commentary"

Showing
"direct speech of characters"

Describing
• nouns, verbs, adjectives
• syntax, semantics

Depicting
• quotations
• iconic gestures

Anchoring
indexes to objects, people
present in a domain

Indicating
• pointing, exhibiting
• "I" "you" "here" "now"

Telling vs. showing in Plato's Republic

Telling
Plato's "diegesis"

Showing
Plato's "mimesis"

simple narratives

stage plays, pantomimes

Anchoring
linguists' deixis

[no mention]

Telling vs. showing

(that is, describing vs. depicting)

34

Interpreting descriptions

(Kamp & Reyle, 1993)

[you hear]
A man faces a
man.
He hits him.

you create categories

[you hear]
A man faces a
man.
He hits him.

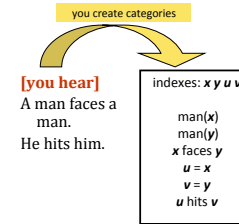
indexes: $x y u v$

man(x)
man(y)
 x faces y
 $u = x$
 $v = y$
 u hits v

35

Interpreting descriptions

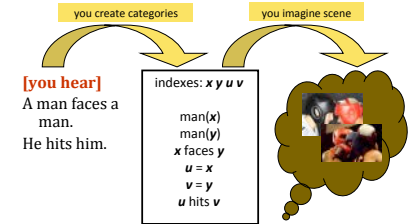
(Kamp & Reyle, 1993)



36

Interpreting descriptions

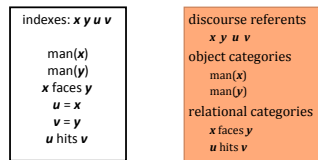
(Kamp & Reyle, 1993)



37

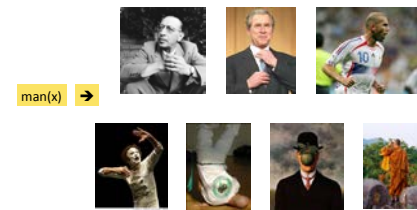
Categorical representations

(Kamp & Reyle, 1993)



38

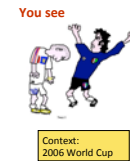
But what scene should you imagine?



39

Interpreting depictions

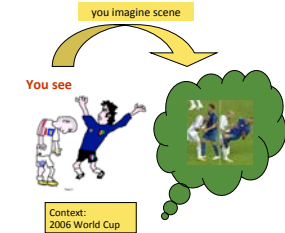
(Kendall Walton, 1991)



40

Interpreting depictions

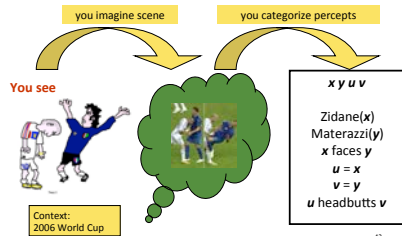
(Walton, 1991; others)



41

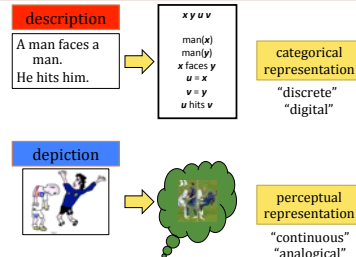
Interpreting depictions

(Walton, 1991; others)



42

1st-order interpretation of ...



43

So ...

Descriptions
direct, easy
inferred, hard

Depictions
direct, easy
inferred, hard

[representations]
categories, relations
perceptual appearances

[representations]
perceptual appearances
categories, relations

44

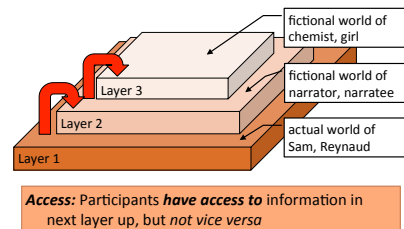
Layers of interpretation

A spontaneous story

Sam let me tell you a story, - - - **1**
a girl went into a chemist's shop, and asked
for, - contraceptive tablets, - -
so he said "well I've got . all kinds, and . all **2**
prices, what do you want,"
she said "well what have you got,"
...
you may well have a baby.

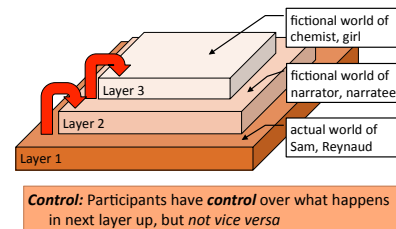
Reynaud Sam . you're a wicked fellow - that's very nice,
...

Layering is directional



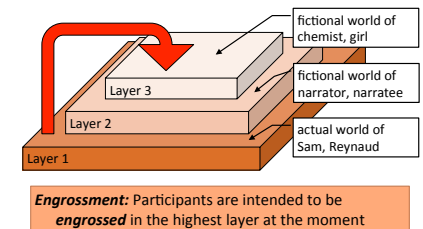
47

Layering is directional



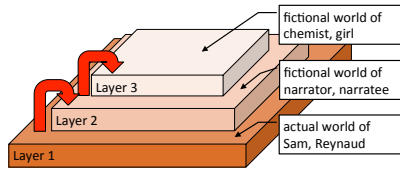
48

Layering is directional



49

Layering is directional



Appreciation: Recipients are to **appreciate** the producer's techniques in creating next layer up

50

Let us focus on one utterance per layer

Sam let me tell you a story, - - - **1**
a girl went into a chemist's shop, and asked **2**
for, . contraceptive tablets, - -
so he said "well I've got . all kinds, and . al **3**
prices, what do you want,"
she said "well what have you got,"
...
you may well have a baby.
Reynard Sam . you're a wicked fellow - that's very nice,
...

Depictions as free-standing contributions

From Laguna Beach (MTV)

My friend Gary really talked me into it.
"Come on. We gotta audition together. We gotta be on it together."
And I was kind of like, *"Whatever,"* you know. And um ...

55

Each utterance has distinct *I-you-here-now*

Layer 1. "Let me tell you a story"

Sam-Reynard-office-1964

Layer 2. "A girl walked into a chemist's shop"

reporter-reportee-Britain-recent

Layer 3. "I've got all kinds and all prices"

chemist-girl-chemist-shop-recent

Meaning: The person who *means something* by an utterance is in the current layer
Indexicals: "I", "you", "here", "now" are **anchored** to current layer

52

Questions:

- How do narrators signal the **entry into** and **exit from** the next layer up?
 - "he said," "she said"
 - change of voice, etc.
- How do narrators **engross** us in the highest layer? By ...
 - vivid descriptions
 - depictions
 - dramatization, etc.

53

Engrossment in spontaneous narratives

By the use of depictions

54

Embedded depiction of greeting

Report of "fake people" greeting

Note satirical intonation, head gesture

I can't stand fake people who are just like "Oh" you know "Hi." And it's like fake nice, and I can't stand that.

From Laguna Beach (MTV)

57

Depictions as embedded constituents

Report of conversation

Laura dramatizes friend's voice and face

And she's all, *"You'll never guess who's in the office."*
And I was like, *"Who."*
And she's like, *"MTV."*

From Laguna Beach (MTV)

Depictions help vivify narratives

Q: how did you come to be on TV? **1**
A: well, one day my friend Sue ... **2**
and she's all, *"You'll never guess who's in the office."* **3**
and I was like, *"Who."*
and she's like, *"MTV."*
...
Q: and how did you like it?

67

Narratives are themselves depictions

the problem of voices

68

Each layer has distinct participants, voices

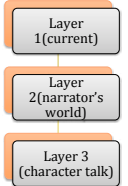
Sam let me tell you a story, - - - **Sam's voice**
narrator's voice a girl went into a chemist's shop, and asked
for, . contraceptive tablets, - -
so he said "well I've got . all kinds, and . all prices, what do you want,"
girl's voice "well what have you got,"
...
you may well have a baby.
Reynard Sam . you're a wicked fellow - that's very nice,
...

Evidence: Professional narrators ...

introduce story in their **own voice** (layer 1)

dramatize **narrator's voice** (layer 2)

dramatize **characters' talk** (layer 3)

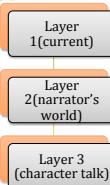


70

Dramatized characters

Winnie the Pooh (Chapter 5)

ONE day, when Christopher Robin and Winnie-the-Pooh and Piglet were all talking together, Christopher Robin finished the mouthful he was eating and said carelessly: *"I saw a Heffalump today, Piglet."*
"What was it doing?" asked Piglet.
"Just lumping along," said Christopher Robin. *"I don't think it saw me."*



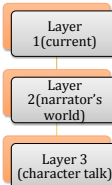
Dramatized 1st person narrator

Fionnula Flanagan reading "Brother" by Edna O'Brien

Flanagan's street voice, interviewing Edna O'Brien

Start of O'Brien's story (1st person) Maisie's thoughts

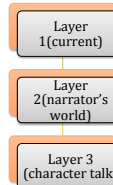
"Tootsie this" and "Tootsie that"



Dramatized characters

Fionnula Flanagan reading "Brother" by Edna O'Brien

"What's in Galway?" I said. ...
"I'll be good to you, Maisie," he said.
Good, a bag of toffee on a holy day ...

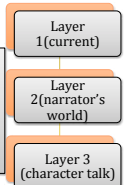


Dramatized 3rd person narrator

Fionnula Flanagan reading "An Enigmatic Nature" by Anton Chekhov

Flanagan's **own** introduction

Narrator's voice
On the seat opposite sits the Provincial Secretary of Special Commissions, a budding young author, who from time to time publishes long stories of high life, or *"Novelli"* as he calls them, in the leading paper of the province.



Dramatized thoughts

Protagonist's thoughts

He is gazing into her face, gazing intently, with the eyes of a connoisseur. He is watching, studying, catching every shade of this exceptional, enigmatic nature. **He understands it, he fathoms it. Her soul, her whole psychology lies open before him.**

Layer 1 (current)

Protagonist's speech

"Oh, I understand, I understand you to your inmost depths!"

Layer 2 (narrator's world)

Narrator's description

says the Secretary of Special Commissions, kissing her hand near the bracelet.

Layer 3 (character talk)



The problem of free indirect discourse

Direct quotation

And I said, "Do you mean for lunch or dinner?"

Indirect quotation

And I asked her whether she meant for lunch or dinner.

Free indirect quotation

And I said, #Did she mean for lunch or dinner?#

Free indirect discourse is often used for the thoughts of the main protagonist

Pride and Prejudice takes many forms



Printed novel



Graphic novel

Audio reading



Movie



Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice Opera by: Amanda Jacobs and Lindsay Baker

But narratives take other forms

Mr. Collins proposes



Each form engages us differently

Reading aloud

much about Elizabeth's thoughts
nothing about Elizabeth's and Mr. Collins' appearance or location

Graphic novel

little about Elizabeth's thoughts
some about Elizabeth's and Mr. Collins' appearance or location

Movie

little about Elizabeth's thoughts
much about Elizabeth's and Mr. Collins' appearance and location

Dramatizing free indirect speech

Elizabeth's private thoughts

Her affections had continually been fluctuating but never without an object. The mischief of neglect and mistaken indulgence towards such a girl—**oh! how acutely did she now feel it!** (Pride & Prejudice, Chapter 46)



Layer 1 (current)

Layer 2 (narrator's world)

Layer 3 (character talk)

Mr. Collins proposes

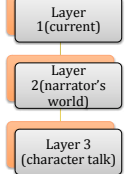


certainly did." The idea of Mr. Collins, with all his solemn composure, being run away with by his feelings, made Elizabeth so near laughing that she could not use the short pause he allowed in any attempt to stop him farther, and he continued: "My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish. Secondly, that I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and thirdly—which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness. Twice

Good story tellers dramatize and depict ...

1. Narrator's voice
2. Characters' speech
3. Characters' actions
4. Other events
5. Protagonists' thoughts

"free indirect discourse"



Mr. Collins proposes

"But before I am run away with by my feelings, allow me to state my reasons for marrying."

"First, it is the obligation of a clergyman to set the example of matrimony in his parish."

...

Marvel Comics



With this depiction



Watch the narrative

What do you imagine?

Miss Bingley got up and walked about the room. Darcy, at whom it was all aimed, was still inflexibly studious. She resolved on one effort more, and, turning to Elizabeth, said: "Miss Eliza Bennet, ..." Elizabeth was surprised, but agreed to it immediately.

Narratives take many forms

1. **Spoken narratives**
spontaneous vs. prepared
fact vs. fiction
brief vs. epic
prose vs. poetry
2. **Written narratives**
historical vs. fiction
short story vs. novel
3. **Film**
documentary vs. fiction
photographed vs. animated
4. **Stage plays**
prose vs. poetry
plays vs. operas, musicals
5. **Graphic narratives**
comics vs. graphic novels
drawn vs. photographed
with vs. without language
6. **Songs, ballads**
simple vs. epic

Discourse = carrier + dependents



Descriptive narratives

carrier
"authorial report, description, summary commentary" (telling)

dependents
"direct speech of characters" (showing)



Depictive narratives

carrier
audio-visual depictions (showing)

dependents
speech of characters depicted by actors (showing)

Discourse = carrier + dependents

Descriptive narratives

carrier = telling

1. Spoken narratives
2. Written narratives

Depictive narratives

carrier = showing

1. Film
2. Stage plays, operas
3. Graphic novels, comics
4. Songs, ballads

Narratives vary in their experience

	Appearances	Sounds	Emotions	
printed novel	skeletal	indefinite	subtle	most vivid (EVC)
audio novel	skeletal	clear voices	subtle	
graphic novel	clear, but crude	indefinite	crude	most vivid (HMC)
movie	lucid	lucid	strong	
opera	lucid, but stylized	lucid, but stylized	strong	



Interpreting depicted speech



Betty Hutton, *Miracle of Morgan's Creek*, 1944

Interpreting speech of animated cartoons



Wall-e speaking



Shere Khan, Kaa speaking

109

Interpreting films

Mixture of depictions, descriptions

Depictions of ...

visual scenes

voices

environmental sounds (Foley effects)

Descriptions in ...

voice-overs

intertitles, subtitles

How do we interpret these as intended?

110

Radio narratives

Audio recordings are *reproductive depictions*

Radio news stories are created entirely from reproductive depictions

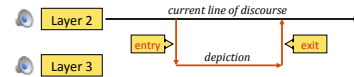
"Live": reproduced sound is happening *now*

"Delayed": reproduced sound was happening earlier

Radio news stories are created in layers

112

News reports as *embedded* depictions



Entry

Guy Raz: ... NPR's Margot Adler has the story.
Adler: Jenny Lee, Nim's surrogate sister, ...

Exit

Adler: ... Margot Adler, NPR News, New York.
Guy Raz: There's a video of Nim signing with ...



117

Perspective problems

Guy Raz

1. Raz speaks to us *through* a depiction of his speech
2. Raz *presents* us with a depiction of Adler's narrative

Margot Adler

1. Adler speaks to us *through* a depiction of her speech
This depiction is "delayed"
2. Adler *presents* us with depictions of people speaking about Nim Chimsky
All these are "delayed"



Simple radio quotations

Totenberg: Andrew McBride ... calls yesterday's court decision a "*stinging rebuke*" for the Bush administration and a "*watershed decision*."

McBride: *For the first time in history ...*

Totenberg: Georgetown law professor Martin Liederman puts it another way.

Liederman: *The court has decided that ...*

Totenberg: Reaction to the decision was swift. President Bush in Rome had this to say.

Bush: *We'll abide by the court's decision. [pause] That doesn't mean I have to agree with it.*

Layer 3

115

Perspective problems

Nina Totenberg

1. She speaks to us *through* a depiction of her speech
2. She *presents* us with depictions of selected speakers

Depicted speakers

1. Andrew McBride speaks to Totenberg *earlier*
2. Martin Liederman speaks to Totenberg *earlier*
3. President Bush speaks to audience in Rome *earlier*



116

Depictions embedded in sentences

Krulwich: But when Lucy's signal first left the earth, it was strong. It was louder than the echo of the big bang.
Chris Impy: *oh yeah*
Krulwich: until she was subject to a basic law of physics,
Chris Impy: *the inverse square law*,
Krulwich: right, which says,
Chris Impy: *basically uh the strength of the signal goes down as the square of the distance*
Krulwich: which means ...



117

Incorporated depictions

Krulwich: "We *standard quotation* *patient*," says Dr. Oliver Sacks, neurologist and author.

Sacks: *This is an intelligent very deaf woman*

Krulwich: who has a hearing aid now, a cochlear implant, but back when she was in her 60s,

Woman: *I had been steadily losing my hearing.*

radically incorporated quotation



121

Summary



"What is the use of a book," thought Alice, "without pictures or conversations?"

122



Roy Lichtenstein

123

