Review of Wolf Schmid. *Figurally Colored Narration. Case Studies from English, German, and Russian Literature* (De Gruyter, 2022)

Gaia Porrà
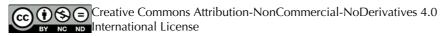Università del Piemonte Orientale

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Among the devices of speech and mind representation,[1] *free indirect discourse* (FID) has most often been the subject of academic studies. Indeed, since "both the orientation on L [actual speaker] and the orientation on L1 [original speaker] converge within the same utterance" (Garavelli 96, transl. mine)[2] in this "hybrid" narrative pattern, we can argue that FID represents the "novel's mode of expression *par excellence*" (Sini 146, transl. mine).[3] In particular, the peculiarities of free indirect discourse are the omission of *verba dicendi* and *cogitandi*, the maintenance of the expressive marks – of the "emotional functions," in Jakobson's terms –, and, especially, the blending of the narrator's and the character's deixis. In this regard, as Bice Mortara Garavelli points out in *La parola d'altri*, "it seems difficult to question the possibility to perceive free indirect discourse as a multi-voiced or polyphonic phenomenon. . . . The *natural heteroglossia* of free indirect discourse is the presupposition of its literariness" (Garavelli 87, transl. mine).[4]

According to a pragmatic perspective, in her essay she examines the manifestations of the *alien word* – "reported, echoed, alluded word" (87, transl. mine) –,[5] proposing an interesting re-interpretation of Baxtinian multi-voicedness theory. While focusing on the "multi-voiced and heteroglot discourse which is inherently citational" (48, transl. mine),[6] she emphasizes the "internal dialogism of the word" (Baxtin,[7] "Discourse in the Novel" 280). In this sense, the term "word" must be understood as a "living utterance," which, "brush[ing] up against thousands of living dialogic threads . . . , cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue. After all, the utterance arises out of this dialogue as a continuation of it and as a rejoinder to it – it does not approach the object from the sidelines" (276-277). Putting it another way, since each "concrete discourse" finds "the object at which it was directed already as it were overlain with qualifications, open to dispute, charged with value" (276), it thus fits within a dynamic

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[1] The term *mind* here means "the inner world of a character, including consciousness, emotion, and what Mixail Baxtin refers to with his term *smyslovaja pozicija*, which can be translated as *mindset*" (Schmid *Figurally Colored Narration*, 143).

[2] "Vengono . . . a collidere, all'interno della stessa enunciazione, l'orientamento su L [centro discorsivo di un'enunciazione] e l'orientamento su L1 [originario enunciatore]" (Garavelli 96).

[3] "Modalità espressiva romanzesca per eccellenza" (Sini 146).

[4] "Per il DIL sembra difficile mettere in dubbio l'efficacia di una lettura in termini di plurivocità o polifonia . . . . L'impronta *naturalmente* plurivoca del FID è il presupposto della sua letterarietà" (Garavelli 87).

[5] "Parola d'altri riportata, echeggiata, allusa" (Garavelli 87)

[6] "Discorso plurivoco e polifonico intrinsecamente citazionale" (Garavelli 48). Indeed, as Mortara Garavelli points out, "our discourses are an interweaving of others' discourses, quotations, and glosses" (1, transl. mine: "i nostri discorsi sono intessuti di riferimenti ad altri discorsi, di citazioni e di glosse a pensieri e a parole altrui").

[7] For consistency with the reviewed essay, we adopt its transliteration.

plot of voices that mention each other, and resonate with each other. Every utterance is in fact a *link in the chain of speech communication*: [8]

> [every speaker] is not, after all, the first speaker, the one who disturbs the eternal silence of the universe. And he presupposes not only the existence of the language system he is using, but also the existence of preceding utterances – his own and others' – with which his given utterance enters into one kind of relation or another (builds on them, polemicizes with them, or simply presumes that they are already known to the listener). Any utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances. (Baxtin, "Speech Genres" 69)

Just as in real life each individual utterance is contaminated by the alien word, so, in the literary world, the *novel's word* is intrinsically heteroglot. Indeed, according to Baxtin's analysis,[9] characters live typically in *dialogism*.[10] In other terms, while heroes are continually mirrored in otherness – confronting each other within a relational and dialogic network –, they become infected by the *tones* and the *accents* of the other characters inhabiting the same story-world. Hence, "the well-known thesis for which the novel's style is constitutively an orchestration of voices . . . ; novel's language is never one, but it is a collection of heterogeneous and often conflicting languages" (Sini 141, transl. mine).[11] However, it must be added that this "discursive contamination" does not only concern the heroes' speech: in fact, even in the narrator's discourse we can often find countless traces of the alien word. In this respect, both the narrator and the characters speak a "language"[12] that "lies on the borderline between oneself and the other" (Baxtin, "Discourse in the Novel" 293): the word does not get out of their own "vocabulary," since it "exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions" (294). Therefore, in Baxtin's terms, this is a double-voiced utterance in which two accents and two axiological horizons coexist; a speech that incorporates two deixes, as well as two intentions. It is a – "double-accented, double-styled" (304) – *hybrid construction* that stands between the narrator's and the character's speech (or thought), i.e., "an utterance that belongs, by its grammatical (syntactic) and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two "languages," two semantic and axiological belief systems" (305). Referring to what has been argued, we finally understand the reason why in novels the *double or multi-voicedness* is often recognized in free indirect discourse: because in both cases – in the living utterance and

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[8] See Baxtin "Speech Genres"; see also Sini 96.

[9] See Baxtin *Problemy poètiki Dostoevskogo*.

[10] According to the philosopher Charles Taylor, the "crucial feature of human life is its fundamentally dialogical character" (Taylor 32): "my discovering my own identity doesn't mean that I work it out in isolation, but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others" (34); translated by Stefano Ballerio: "il fatto che sia io a scoprire la mia identità non significa che io la costruisca stando isolato: significa che la negozio attraverso un *dialogo*, in parte esterno e in parte interiore, con altre persone" (Ballerio 122).

[11] "La lingua del romanzo non è mai una, ma è un insieme di lingue eterogenee e spesso in conflitto fra loro" (Sini 141).

[12] As regards the concept of "language," Baxtin declares: "For any individual consciousness living in it, language is not an abstract system of normative forms but rather a concrete heteroglot conception of the world. All words have the "taste" of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour. Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions. Contextual overtones (generic, tendentious, individualistic) are inevitable in the word" (Baxtin, "Discourse in the Novel" 293).

in the novel's word – there is a clear *interference* between the narrator's and the character's speech (or point of view).[13]

Thus, if we conceive the novel as a "whole" (*celoe*), as a "phenomenon multiform in style and variform in speech and voice" (261), then we have to wonder how – and to what degree – the narrator's and the hero's discourses interfere with each other. In this respect, the underlying question of Wolf Schmid's recent study – *Figurally Colored Narration. Case Studies from English, German, and Russian Literature* (2022) – is the following one: in which ways can the narrator restore the *mind* of the character – adopting his or her typical stylistic and axiological traits – without actually transmitting the current content of a figure's consciousness? Using three different literatures, Anglophone, German, and Russian, Wolf Schmid then "deals with a hitherto neglected device in narrative texts: the intrusion of figural evaluations and designations into the narrator's discourse" (Schmid, *Figurally Colored Narration*, VII). The aim is to explore the multifaceted dialectic that is established between the narrator's and figural discourse, not insisting so much on the well-known reported speech patterns – such as direct speech, tied indirect and free indirect discourse, or psycho-narration –, but rather investigating the cases in which the narration – remaining basically narratorial – is "tinged by the characters' evaluations and expressions" (24). As a result, *Figurally Colored Narration* "is not about the narrative repetition or imitation of specific expressions of the characters, but about the adoption of axiological and stylistic features of the genotypical character's text, the mental subject sphere of a figure or a collective" (27).

As it is evident from these few quoted lines, among the devices of speech and mind representation, figurally colored narration is closest to free indirect discourse. In this regard, the *incipit* of the first chapter of *Figurally Colored Narration* ("Introduction: Narrator and Figure," 1-15) is particularly recommendable:

> The present book deals with *figurally colored narration* (FCN), a narrative phenomenon that is widespread in modern literature but has received little attention in narratological research. It is about a device that, in terms of narrative perspective, is situated between the authentic text of the narrator and that pattern of mind representation that in an international context is referred to as *free indirect discourse* (FID). (1)

Right from the start, then, the author introduces the object of his study (FCN) by taking free indirect discourse into account. In particular, pointing out the problem of demarcating FCN from FID, he notices that two manners of discourse and two semantic and axiological horizons are intertwined. In fact, if in both FCN and FID "the figural element is not explicitly marked," nevertheless "figurally colored narration does not give the impression of an immediate representation of the character's current acts of consciousness" (1). In other words, when figurally colored narration occurs, the narrator orients his discourse around the figure's point of view, showing a "figural selection, evaluation, and naming" (9) of the thematized objects.

The question then arises: is there a way to clearly distinguish FNC from FID in a novel? For this purpose, quoting the *incipit* of Anton Čexov's *Rothschild's Violin*, in the first chapter of his essay Schmid highlights that the heterodiegetic narrator certainly "adapts his text to the horizon of a figure in individual thematic and axiological features" (2). If it were FID, Schmid explains, the reader would be confronted with "a more or less narratorially reworked reproduction of the speech, thought, or evaluative acts of a narrated figure or a collective" (2) – which would reflect the figure's current consciousness. Here, in contrast, "in the selection and

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[13] That is why the "Literary language is a highly distinctive phenomenon, as is the linguistic consciousness of the educated person who is its agent; within it, intentional diversity of speech [*raznorecivost'*] . . . is transformed into diversity of language [*raznojazycie*]; what results is not a single language but a dialogue of languages" (Baxtin, "Discourse in the Novel" 294).

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evaluation of the thematized objects, [the narrator] orients himself around the standpoint of the character" (4), following only his ideological and axiological horizon. It is thus an unmistakable case of figurally colored narration. In fact, as the author states,

> what is constitutive for FCN is figural selection, evaluation, and naming without actually transmitting the current content of a figure's consciousness. The identification of FCN depends on whether axiological and stylistic features that deviate from objective, sober statements are attributed to the narrator (FCN) or to a figure (no FCN), and this is a subjective act of interpretation. (9)

Thus, according to Wolf Schmid, the very subtle distinction between FID and FCN depends first and foremost on the *reader's interpretation*. Consequently, since the "reader's identification of FCN is an attribution based on interpretation" (4), an unambiguous answer to the previous question on the demarcation between these two narrative patterns does not exist. More specifically, as Schmid points out, this is particularly evident in the case of narratives which are strongly figural in perspective, that is, in narratives characterised by "a lack of contrast with the narratorial context" (8). In these cases, in fact, it is difficult to determine whether it is the narrator or the hero who is speaking (or thinking). The same seems then to occur in narratives where the first-person narrator corresponds to the character. Here, again, there is not an actual contrast between the narrating and narrated self. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that these two entities often have different traits: "This is the more the case – Schmid declares –, the greater the temporal distance between the two states of the same person" (134). Thus, with the specific intention of demonstrating that figurally colored narration can be traced even in "limiting"[14] cases like homodiegetic narratives, Schmid examines Fëdor Dostoevskij's *The Adolescent*. Here, in fact, the temporal distance separating the narrating self from the narrated one corresponds only to one life year (the narrating self Arkadij Dolgorukij is twenty years old, while the narrated self is nineteen). So, at the micro-textual level, it is interesting to note a sprinkling of figural coloring in the narrator's discourse, who, stylistically speaking, orients himself around the narrated self's horizon by using "specifically adolescent expressions," such as "defiantly showy hyperbole, carelessly boyish expressions, and stereotypical terms from adolescent vocabulary" (136). Thus, by analyzing this novel, Schimd succeds in demonstrating that the relationship between the narrating and the narrated self actually "corresponds to the relationship of the character to the narrator in non-diegetic narration" (141).

Although the author investigates the *narrator's* and the *figure's text*[15] within the literary world, he also emphasizes the "naturalness" of this narrative pattern, i.e., its origin in everyday language. In fact, as the scholar explains, figurally colored narration recurs habitually in everyday

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[14] Since Schmid considers diegetic narrator a "limiting case" of FCN, the discussion about the first-person narrators is addressed in the fifth chapter of *Figurally Colored Narration* ("Limiting and Uncertain Cases," 124-141).

[15] According to Schmid's discussion, *text* does not correspond to *discourse*: "To clarify the terminology, the narrative discourse (the text of the narrative work as a product of the narrator) is divided into the narrator's discourse and the characters' discourse, whereby the characters' discourse functions as quotations within the arrangement of the narrator's discourse. Since the beginning of modern narrative in the eighteenth century, the narrator's discourse often does not produce a pure narratorial text but tends instead to intersperse it with features characteristic of the characters' texts. Similarly, a character's discourse may contain narratorial features. The narrator is responsible for both phenomena: the penetration of figural features into his own (the narrator's) discourse and the narratorial revision of the character's discourse." That is why "The unmixed, genotypic texts, i.e., the *narrator's text* (NT) and the *character's text* (CT), must be distinguished from the narrator's discourse and the character's discourse, which can also contain figural and narratorial features respectively" (Schmid, *Figurally Colored Narration* 42).

conversation – even though unintentionally and mostly unconsciously. In this regard, in the first chapter's paragraph titled "The Naturalness of FCN" (9-13),[16] Schmid highlights the "usual" adoption of FCN:

> Whenever a person reports about another person's experiences or adventures, he or she will involuntarily adopt to a certain extent the point of view of that person in both the literal and figurative sense of the term. The narrator [i.e., the speaker] will take over the person's field of vision . . . , i.e., he will adapt the choice of objects to be narrated to the perspective of the person about whom he is reporting. (9)

Just as in a novel, the storytelling instance often orients the narration around the character's axiological perspective. So, on a daily basis, "It is not possible to report on another person without taking on his or her spatial, temporal, axiological, linguistic, and perceptual point of view to some extent" (9-10). Figurally colored narration is therefore "the literary modeling of this everyday convergence between a teller and the person he is telling about" (10). As a consequence, while both literary FCN and its everyday adoption are characterized by a subtle - and mostly hidden - interference between the text of the narrator (or real speaker) and the text of the character (or interlocutor), their substantial difference concerns the discourse *form*, i.e., the degree of its contrived elaboration. In Monika Fludernik's terms, figurally colored narration presupposes therefore a literary *fictio*,[17] when it occurs in literary texts.

After reflecting on the FCN and FID common origin in everyday language, Wolf Schmid then goes on with the second chapter of the essay – "Figurally Colored Narration: Terms and Definitions" (16-41) – reasoning about lexical coloring and the different definitions that have been given to FCN in the past. Illustrating schematically the six patterns of explicit representation of consciousness in narrative discourse – divided into "marked" and "covert" representation of consciousness –,[18] the author offers a comparison with the types commonly used in English-language scholarship, searching for the FCN narrative device. Presenting first Brian McHale's scale of speech reproduction (1978),[19] he notices that in his typology of forms of speech representation there is no mention of FCN. But neither in Dorrit Cohn's triad of modes for rendering consciousness,[20] nor in the similar Alan Palmer's triad of rendering mind (2004) there is an actual correspondence with the FCN pattern. Therefore, going further back in the years, the first known description of FCN comes from Leo Spitzer, who, in *Sprachmischung als Stilmittel und als Ausdruck der Klangphantasie* (1923), calls the FCN device "*Sprachmischung*" ("mixing of languages"), then adopting the expression "*Sprachmengung*" ("blending of languages"). Indeed, studying specifically the prose style in Alfred Kerr's criticism, Spitzer highlights the "contagion" – or "contamination" – of the narrator's language by

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[16] Looking at the index of contents, *Figurally Colored Narration* is divided into eight chapters preceded by the author's preface. The extensive search is developed into six titled chapters, which in turn are divided into paragraphs and sub-paragraphs. Finally, the last two chapters contain the "Works Cited" and the "Index of Authors and Works".

[17] With regard to the literary *fictio*, see Fludernik *An Introduction to Narratology*, 60.

[18] The three patterns of "marked" representation are direct interior discourse (that includes direct interior monologue or stream of consciousness in the first person as *extended forms*, and quoted figural designation as *reduced form*), indirect and autonomous indirect representation of perception, thought, and emotion, and consciousness report; on the other hand, free indirect discourse (as well as free indirect monologue and stream of consciousness in the third person), free indirect perception and figurally colored narration are the "covert" ones (Schmid *Figurally Colored Narration*, 16-17).

[19] See McHale.

[20] See Cohn.

the language of the fictional characters.[21] In this sense, this *interference* actually corresponds to what Schmid defines figurally colored narration.

Referring to Spitzer, also Baxtin talks about "contagion" in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1929), [22] where he studies the relationship between the "authorial context" and "reported speech." While here (Baxtin-)Vološinov uses the definition of "anticipated and disseminated reported speech" (*predvosxiščënnaja i rassejannaja čužaja reč'*), a few years later, in *Discourse in the Novel* (*Slovo v romane* 1934-35), Baxtin defines this interference "as a manifestation of the phenomenon of "heteroglossia" (*raznorečie*)" (23). In fact, analyzing Charles Dickens' *Little Dorrit*, the Russian thinker develops in depth his theory of "double-voicedness" and he unearths both examples of "pseudo-objective motivation,"[23] and cases of "hidden, diffused speech of another" (*skrytaja forma rassejannoj južoj reÿi*), for which "the speech of another is introduced into the author's discourse (the story) in *concealed form*, that is, without any of the formal markers usually accompanying such speech, whether direct or indirect" (Baxtin, "Discourse in the Novel" 303).

Looking then at the German world, the (covert) "contagion" initially intended by Spitzer can be discerned in Stanzel's theory. More specifically, the researcher finds in Joyce's prose an "overflow of the consciousness content [*Überfließen des Bewusstseinsinhalts*] of the different characters toward the narrative medium" (Stanzel, "Sprachmischung als Stilmittel" 295, in Schmid, *Figurally Colored Narration* 37). The issue concerning the interference between the character's and the narrator's text (i.e., FCN), is defined as a "reflectorization of the teller-character or assimilation of a teller-character to a reflector-character" (Stanzel, *Theorie des Erzählens* 168-169, in Schmid, *Figurally Colored Narration* 35). However, it is necessary to pay attention to the term "assimilation" adopted by Stanzel: it does not automatically mean sympathy or even empathy of the narrator towards the heroes. In fact, "assimilation" could also be translated as an ironic distancing of the narrator himself from the figures' point of view. On this matter, studying the discursive style in Katherine Mansfield's *The Garden Party*, Stanzel demonstrates that the narrative voice, actually portrays the character mostly ironically and critically, while adopting the stylistic and axiological traits of the genotypical figural text.

With reference to the concept of "reflectorization" of Stanzel's *Theory of Narrative*, Monika Fludernik also considers this issue in her essay, *Towards a 'Natural' Narralogy* (1996), making, however, two additional moves. On the one hand, she adopts the category of "reflectorized teller character" referring to a superior instance that dominates the entire narrative discourse, and combines "the knowledge of the narrator with the focalization and language of a character present on the scene" (Fludernik, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 135, in Schmid, *Figurally Colored Narration* 38). On the other, she distinguishes between "reflectorization" and "figuralization," calling into account Ann Banfield's "empty deictic center" model.[24]

Finally, with regard to the Anglophone world, Hugh Kenner's concept of "Uncle Charles Principle" (UCP) it seems to be very similar to figurally colored narration, since the principle says: "the narrative idiom need not be the narrator's" (Kenner 18, in Schmid, *Figurally Colored Narration* 32). According to Schmid, the most interesting aspect that brings UCP closest to FCN is that it refers to the narrator's speech "not only in terms of diction but also in terms of syntax" (32). In other words, the narration is oriented around the character's axiological and ideological horizon as much in lexis as in grammatical articulation. That is why UCP shows

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[21] See Stanzel (*Theorie des Erzählens*, 48, 247; transl. *Theory of Narrative*, 26, 192).

[22] The book was published under the name of Valentin Vološinov in 1929.

[23] The "pseudo-objective motivation" is "one of the forms for concealing another's speech . . . . If judged by the formal markers above, the logic motivating the sentence seems to belong to the author, i.e., he is formally at one with it; but in actual fact, the motivation lies within the subjective belief system of his characters, or of general opinion" (Baxtin, "Discourse in the Novel" 305).

[24] See Banfield, "Describing the Unobserved," and Banfield, "The historical development."

several points of contact with FCN. A few years later, in the wake of Kenner's UCP study – which is mainly devoted to Joyce' prose style –, also Susan Swartzlander goes in search of this "principle" in Ernest Hemingway's *Up in Michigan*. She states: "Like Joyce, Hemingway used a narrative voice that adopts not just the idiomatic phrases, but also the speech rhythms, syntax and attitudes representative of the characters" (Swartzlander 34, in Schmid, *Figurally Colored Narrtion* 33). Furthermore, although she interprets UCP differently from Kenner, also the American writer Lucy Ferriss investigates UCP in a series of works that eminent authors wrote since 1985. Thus, on the basis of her research, Ferris makes a distinction between UPC and APP (this acronym refers to the first short story that Ferriss analyzes, John Updike's *A&P*). If the first one (UCP) indicates the adoption of stylistic and axiological features of the character's text, in the case of APP there is an inversion of this principle of interference: it is in fact "the narrative text [that] penetrates the character's discourse" (34), as Schmid illustrates.

Without additionally going into detail, it should be noticed that Schmid also takes into account other FCN definitions that we only mention here: Natal'ja Koževnikova – who develops the concept of "improperly authorial narration" (26) –, Elena Paduÿeva – who briefly treats FCN under the term of "quotation" (*citirovanie*) (28) –, Johannes Holthusen – who talks about "improper narration" (*uneigentliches Erzählen*)[25] (29), but also "free indirect narration" (29) –, Mieke Bal – who speaks of "focalisation transposeé" (40) –, and, finally, Irene de Jong with the definition of "embedded focalisation" (40).

Although FCN has been named in different ways, the common thread that runs through all these definitions is still the study of *text interference*, which constitutes the core of the entire discussion of *Figurally Colored Narration*. In this regard, in the third chapter – "Figurally Colored Narration as Text Interference" (42-57) –, Schmid lists a number of features[26] in order to represent the relationship (degree of interference) between the narrator's text (NT) and the character's text (CT) in the different patterns of reported discourse – direct speech, tied indirect speech, free indirect speech and figurally colored narration. This clear schematization allows the author to differentiate these phenomena of text interference, as well as to reflect on the issue of "bitextuality" – referring in particular to the Baxtinian theory – that characterizes FCN. In particular, according to Schmid, "bitextuality" does not correspond to "double-voicedness": if bitextuality means "the simultaneous presence of two texts in one and the same segment of the narrative text," with "double-voicedness" Schmid refers instead to the "conflict between the semantic and axiological positions represented in the two texts" (49). The question then arises: what are the effects resulting from this interference? Returning to FID for a moment, we know that two main expressions are possible: on one hand, a sympathetic fusion between the narrator and the character, and, on the other, a distancing estrangement result. But what happens with FCN? Examining a few passages from Fëdor Dostoevskij's *A Nasty Anecdote*, the scholar points out the narrator's satirical intention when he adopts certain figural traits. Consequently, this noticeable ironic criticism is due to "the narrator [that] ironically accentuates the words and evaluations that correspond to the characters' texts" (83). At the opposite end of the satirical accent, there is instead the "empathetic description," as it happens in Fay Weldon's *Weekend*. Here, in fact, what at first it appears to be FID, turns out to be FCN. More specifically, the narrator portrays Martha's unpleasant life by manifesting a noticeable

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[25] "My *Elemente der Narratologie* (195-197) took up Holthusen's term "uneigentliches Erzählen" and demonstrated the procedure with examples from Dostoevskij, Čexov, and Solženicyn. In the English translation of the book, *Narratology* (166-168), I chose the term figurally colored narration" (Schmid, *Figurally Colored Narration* 31).

[26] The relevant features to a schematic profile are: Thematic features, Evaluative or ideological features, Grammatical features – person, Grammatical features – tense, Grammatical features – orientation system, Features of language function, Stylistic features – lexis, and Stylistic features – syntax. See Schmid, *Figurally Colorer Narration* 43-45; see also Schmid, *Narratology* 139-148.

degree of empathy for her condition, and thus coloring the figure's assessments with a slight irony. But this ironic accentuation performs an opposite function than the one that has been mentioned before: it is not intended to mock the character and her axiological horizon, but rather to pity her. It is thus an ironic nuance for emphasizing Martha's miserable life situation. Therefore, ironic distancing and sympathetic fusion represent two "extreme" effects of FCN. However, it must be underlined that in between "a broad spectrum of possible forms with different value relations extends, ranging from empathy to humorous accentuation, critical irony to scathing mockery" (50). Moreover, as Schmid points out,

> the question, which has been controversial since the discovery of FID, of whether text interference serves more to express empathy or irony, divides scholars into two parties: univocalists (Bally, E. Lerch, Lorck, Banfield, Padučeva) and bivocalists (Spitzer, Baxtin, Pascal). This question can only be answered by considering what position the narrator . . . generally takes regarding the character's evaluations. Ascertaining that is *a matter of interpretation*, and thus a problem of hermeneutics. (147, italics by me)

In the last part of the third chapter of *Figurally Colored Narration*, Schmid then deepens his research by considering a particular case in which a double text interference occurs, i.e., when FCN is within FID. The literary work that he analyses is Jane Austen's *Emma*. Focusing on a passage that, at first reading, seems an inner monologue on Emma (presented, as usual, in FID), the scholar actually points out that Emma's inner speech includes also the *text* of another character, named Harriet Smith. According to Schmid's analysis, there are "two levels of text interference: on the first level, the text of character A (Harriet) is superimposed with the text of the deliberating character B (Emma), and on the second level, Emma's text is superimposed with the narrator's text" (53-54). Therefore, we see here a double disapproval or a double ironic distancing: on one side, in her inner speech Emma disapproves of Harriet's axiological horizon; on the other, the narrator distances himself from Emma's own subjectivity.

What is important to underline is that when we talk about written texts, it is up to the reader to recognize these *covert interferences*. In other words, as we have already said in the previous pages of this review, it is the reader who has to *interpret* the narrative discourse on the basis of the context of the narration. In fact, as Baxtin states, "this expression . . . in written speech we guess and sense it precisely because of the context that frames the other's speech, or by means of the extraverbal situation that suggests the appropriate expression" (Baxtin, "Speech Genres" 93). Only in this way, the reader is able to grasp the subtle figural colorings, as well as to distinguish FCN from FID. Conversely, in the case of "words" (utterances) spoken aloud, the interpretive act is facilitated by the intonation of the narrator or of the speaker. The phenomenon of double-voicedness *should* be more evident here, precisely because, through the speakers's change of tone, the listener is allowed to notice the more or less ironic nuance of a specific expression. However, it must be underlined that also in oral speeches the "colored expressions" can be misunderstood, depending on readers's interpretation: "How many voices are assumed depends on how the reader perceives [the] relationship" between narrator and character (Schmid, *Figurally Colored Narration* 147-148). On this matter, in his essay Schmid offers an example of "misunderstood text interference," referring to the speech that the President of the West German Bundestag, Philipp Jenninger, gave on November 10, 1988. Investigating in detail this oral discourse, Schmid aims to demonstrate that "It is in the nature of text interference that it can easily be misunderstood, especially if the recipient is not trained in ironic discourse" (54).

The fourth chapter of *Figurally Colored Narration* – "Functions and Areas of Application" (58-123) – is devoted to the different FCN's fields of application. Apart from the first two paragraphs – in which the author analyzes some passages from Anton Čexov's *The Bride* and

Saul Bellow's *Looking for Mr Green* –, the core of the argument revolves around the functions that FCN can perform in a narration. In this regard, as Schmid states,

> We mainly find FCN in passages where the normal functions of a narrator are fulfilled: introducing or concluding a story, describing a landscape, characterising a figure or a collective with more or less critical accents, describing a figure empathetically or satirically, telling a life story. (148)

For a major clarity of exposition, we briefly describe the most common FCN's areas of application in a bulleted list.

1. By examining three cases, Jurij Trifonov's *The Long Goodbye*, Katherine Mansfield's *The Daughters of the Late Colonel*, and Dieter Wellershoff's *The Normal Life*, Schmid highlights that the narrator's flashbacks are often characterized by a noticeable figural coloring. In fact, from a figural act modeled in FID, the narrator can develop a flashback in FCN, thus orienting the narrative discourse around the figural perspective and adopting some axiological and stylistic features of the genotypical character's text.

2. FCN can also be used to characterize a hero or a collective. Indeed, it is very likely that the narrator adopts designations and evaluations of the figure for his or her better and more complete characterization. As Schmid points out, "We observe such a function in the example from Dickens's *Little Dorrit* quoted by Baxtin to illustrate the intrusion of another's speech into narrative discourse" (71). In addition to the "the somewhat ceremonious epic tone" by which Mr. Merdle's "manner of thinking" (71) is expressed, the novel also includes an obvious case of collective FCN, "which is not related to a single figure but to a group of persons" (73), whose "text is [generally] formed from the social *doxa*" (74). As a result, as Schmid declares, "The ironic reproduction of the collective glorification of the successful banker [Mr. Merdle]" (74) clearly shows the ironic effect and the satirical function of collective FCN.

3. A further FCN's area of application concerns the description of spaces through the adoption of colloquialisms. By incorporating expressions from the vernacular of the people into the narrative discourse, FCN thus seems to converge with *skaz*, as it happens in the works of Nicolaj Leskov, who is considered one of the most eminent masters of this narrative style. Being strongly prominent and playing a "distinctive role" in the Russian prose of the 1920s, the contagion of narrative discourse with the vernacular of the people thus seems to confuse *skaz* with figurally colored narration. However, in Boris Pil'njak's *The Naked Year* and – in the midst of nineteenth-century realism –, Lev Tolstoj's *The Forged Coupon* –, Schmid does not look so much at the stylization of *skaz*, but rather at the "sprinklings of simple folk language in narrative discourse" (83).

4. A particular function of FCN is also the creation of an illusory reality. In this regard, in the example proposed by Schmid – Fëdor Dostoevskij's *The Double* –, the reader experiences a continuous "wavering . . . between assuming objectivity of the representation and suspecting figural illusion" (106). Indeed, the impression of confronting an "objective" reality is determined by the narrative mode through which Goljadkin's delirium is reported: through the figurally colored narration device, that is, through the narrator's speech that does not restore the actual perception of the figure, but simply adopts the figural evaluations and designations. According to Schmid, "It must be conceded, however, that the subjectivity of the observing hero is manifested in the gaps between the passages in FCN: in the narrative representation of Goljadkin's consciousness, in direct speech, and in FID" (106). As a consequence, the effect caused by FCN is precisely to objectively portray an illusory reality – i.e., the delusion of the sick Goljadkin – by combining "highly subjective figural perception with parody of the character's language" (107).

5. In addition to illusions, also dreams can be narrated in FCN. In this regard, in Aleksandr Puškin's *The Coffinmaker*, the main character's dream can be considered as an illusory world and it is described by the narrator according to the hero's own axiological horizon. Here, Wolf Schmid does not insist so much on the narrator's language – which is not "figurally colored" (108) – but rather on the character's evaluations. This subtle text interference has the specific effect of transporting the reader within a (dream) world which is perceived as an objective reality. This FCN's function is then very close to the creation of illusory realities. In fact, "The narrative text takes over the character's text only in the ontological evaluation feature, i.e., in the evaluation of the oneiric happenings as real, but remains completely narratorial in style" (111).

Besides these main areas of application, Schmid adds two other examples in which the figurally colored narration seems to "trigger a mood" and "foreshadow" a specific situation that can only be understood by continuing to read the text. Firstly, in Shirley Jackson's *The Lottery*, what triggers a mood in the reader is not really the cruel event itself, but the "absolutely uninvolved, seemingly empathy-less narrator" (119), who tells a fact that seems "normal."[27] In this sense, Schmid points out that here the narrator orients his discourse around the mentality of the villagers, "who relate to the monstrous as to *a self-evident normality*" (120, italics mine). Quoting Viktor Šklovskij, it would be also possible to speak of "defamiliarization" (*ostranenie*), referring to that specific artistic device through which one can "exits" from the reality's automated perception, seeing the common things from new perspectives, as they were "different". On this matter, in *The Lottery*, the alienating effect would be determined first and foremost by the narrator's "forced trivialization of the horrific" (120). In other words, the narrator describes this ritual – which is unhuman for the reader – showing it through an estranging light, i.e., as it was a "usual" event, coloring his discourse with axiological and stylistic features of the genotypical characters' text, as well as orienting the narration around their standpoint.

On the other side, in speaking of *foreshadowing*, Schmid means the narrator's reproduction of an "internalized figural view" (123). To put it another way, as is the case in William Faulkner's *Elly*, it is not the figure (Elly) who currently perceives, but rather it is the narrator who foreshadows what the reader "will only understand after the final catastrophe" (123) by reproducing an image already internalized by the figure. Here, "the main question . . . is the function of the initial description of the wooden railing in the mode of FCN. Two things are highlighted about the railing: behind it falls a steep precipice, and the railing is fragile like a child's toy" (122). Since Elly is looking for a suitable place for the planned accident, these two details are not unnecessary for her, but rather they serve her purpose. In other words, the narrator's choice of describing them at this point of the narration is because he is reproducing a view that the figure has already seen and internalized while planning the murder. According to the figure's assessment, these two pieces of information are not negligible. Instead, with regard to the reader, he (or she) will only be able to understand the meaning and the function of these pieces of information in hindsight.

Having presented these particular FCN's areas of application, Schmid then moves towards the conclusion of *Figurally Colored Narration*, devoting the fifth chapter to the "Limiting and Uncertain Cases" (124-141). Among these, the author focuses on diegetic narrators (we discussed them in the first pages of this review), on figural coloring without a figure, and on cases in which it is difficult to determine the actual subject of perception. Talking about figural coloring without a figure, the two examples analyzed in the essay are Katherine Mansfield's *At the Bay* and Guzel' Jaxina's *My Children*. The interesting aspect of "reflectorization" without a reflector – in Stanzel's terms – is that, although the narrative discourse is figurally colored, no

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[27] *The Lottery* focalizes on an inhuman ritual performed annually by the inhabitants of an unspecified village.

character is on stage. As Schmid notices, this often occurs in landscapes' descriptions, or in situations that usually open a novel: "Such descriptions, which set the scene for the novel's action, are very often narratorial in form. . . . But it is also not uncommon for the exposition of the place of the action to take place with a sprinkling of figural selection and evaluation" (128). To put it in Banfield's terms, the reader is confronted with an "empty deictic center," since this "sprinkling of figural selection and evaluation" (128) seems not to be traced back to any perceiving and evaluating instance. The question then arises: whose are these axiological and stylistic features? To whom the narrator is referring to by adopting these *figural* evaluations and designations? In such cases, Schmid declares, "We have to imagine a potential reflector that is not represented by the narrator but projected" (124). In fact, the figural coloring probably anticipates the entry of a particular character (or collective) on stage: "a perception is shaped before a possible perceiving entity enters the stage of the story" (128).

Nevertheless, a second possibility must be taken into account. As Schmid points out, instead of an imagined – or projected – figure, the "potential reflector" could be the narrator himself. In this regard, Otto Ludwig's *Between Sky and Earth* represents an example in which the figural coloring can only be traced back sensibly to the narrator himself, who is the only one that observes the entire scene. In fact, the characters cannot know all the details of the story since they are not being in the same position as the narrator. This means that the figural coloring is to be attributed to "a subjectively selecting narrator who expresses himself through his choices" (130); i.e., a narrator who is both the subject of the narrative text and the subject of perception.

If in *Between Sky and Earth* the narrator is the source of perspective and the subject of perception, in Johann Wolfgang Goethe's *Novella* it is not easy to determine whether the reflector is the character or the narrator himself. In fact, analyzing a specific passage, Schmid declares: "That the narrator is the reflector is suggested by the narrative style, the literary character of the lexis and syntax. That a character is the reflector is suggested by the trace in the last sentence of the presence and evaluation of the situation by a figural participant" (131). How to behave in this situation?

> Whatever we decide in such cases – for or against the narrator as subject of perception – the decision is always going to be accompanied by doubts. Such uncertainty, however, is the norm when making judgments about who is speaking, thinking, and perceiving in FCN. (131)

The "uncertainty" that the scholar is referring to is the same as when it comes to distinguish figurally colored narration from free indirect discourse. And it is also the same doubt that arises when FCN is embedded in FID.[28] On this matter, Schmid concludes: "In many other cases, *the fluctuation between the two instances is so imperceptible that entire passages of FCN can seem like FID* and they are indeed taken by many critics to be exactly that" (133, italics by me).

The question of the text's subjective interpretation comes back, highlighting the fundamental reader's role in interacting – and in dialoguing – with the narrator's and the characters' voices. Thus, Schmid's discussion seems to end circularly, reconnecting with what has been addressed since the first chapter: the reader's FCN attribution based on interpretation. In fact, in "Summary and Conclusions" (143-151), the researcher draws up a summary of the entire content of *Figurally Colored Narration*, accompanying it with a final reflection on the demarcation between FCN and FID. If they can be considered "narrative siblings, sometimes even twins" (150), having "common origins in everyday speech" (143), showing "common traits," relying on the same "principle" of text interference – so that they are also "occasionally

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[28] As the author points out, "these narratorial parts are so densely embedded in the interior monologue that they are, as it were, subsumed by it and do not appear as forms of presentation in their own right" (Schmid, *Figurally Colored Narration* 133).

mistaken for each other," and even "mixed up" –, nevertheless "they each have their own identity" (150). Therefore, it is necessary to recognize the narrative modes through which this text interference is manifested, in order to grasp the effects of such "discursive contagion." In this regard, we would like to conclude this review by reiterating that "The boundaries between the [narrator's and the character's] words, between the framing context and the reported speech, may overlap in the most unthinkable entanglements . . . but they cannot suppress themselves entirely, remaining always two, the speaking and the spoken word, the self and the other" (Sini 147, italics and transl. mine).[29] The interpretation of this *intoned word*, with its axiological horizon, its intentions, as well as its expressive coloring, is up to the reader. The "final word" belongs to him or her.

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[29] "I confini tra le due parole [del narratore e del personaggio], tra il contesto che incornicia e il discorso trasmesso, possono sovrapporsi negli intrichi più impensabili . . . ma non possono sopprimersi del tutto, rimanendo sempre due, la parola parlante e la parola parlata, l'io e l'altro" (Sini 147).

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