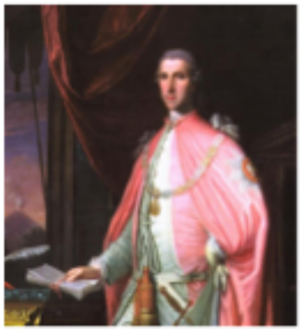
The Author

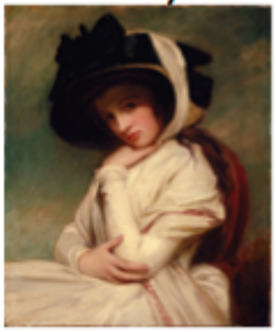
Susan Sontag
(1933-2004)

The Cavaliere



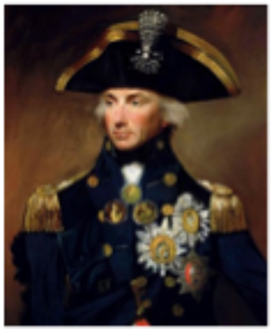
William Hamilton
(1730-1803)

The Beauty



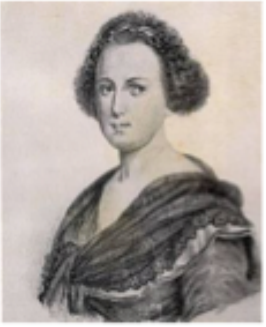
Emma Hamilton
(1765-1815)

The Hero



Horatio Nelson
(1758-1805)

The Poet



Eleonora Fonseca
Pimentel
(1752-1799)

Point of View and the Art of Narrative in Susan Sontag's *The Volcano Lover: A Romance*

"It's all about point of view."

During a conversation in April 1995 among writers Michael Ondaatje (The English Patient), A. S. Byatt (Possession), and Robert Hass (Into the Garden: A Wedding Anthology) at the Herbst Theatre in San Francisco, one of the recurring discussion topics was point of view in the novel. Both Ondaatje and Byatt talked of receiving letters from readers who wrote wondering what the novels "The Virgin in the Garden" or "The Skin of the Lion" would have been like had they been imagined from one or another character's point of view. By the time the conversation closed, the panel agreed that creating a novel or writing fiction today "is really all about point of view."

Many writers today are experimenting with point of view in a variety of ways. Some writers are taking classic tales that were originally told by an omniscient storyteller and retelling them from a character's point of view. Marion Zimmer Bradley has retold the Trojan War from Cassandra's point of view in "The Firebrand," and in "The Mists of Avalon" she has retold the story of King Arthur from Morgaine's point of view. Other writers are using point of view to explore certain kinds of psyches, sometimes using figures from history or current events to draw their portraits. In "The Confessions of Nat Turner," William Styron uses the voice of Nat Turner to explore the consciousness of a black man who led a bloody uprising against white southern slave owners in Virginia in 1831. In "In Cold Blood, A True Account of a Multiple Murder and its Consequences," Truman Capote takes his readers into the minds of the two young men responsible for killing an entire family. Graham Swift, in his novel "Shuttlecock," uses the voice of a highly intelligent, sadistic man to show a son's obsession with discovering the truth behind his father's escape from a French prison during World War II. And Marcus Zusak, in "The Book Thief," tells that story of young German girl during World War II from the point of view of Death.

Other writers are playing with multiple points of view to create their stories. Jeanette Winterson in "The Passion" uses the voices of a young soldier who becomes Napoleon's faithful cook, and a beautiful daughter of a Venetian gondolier, to tell the stories of two people who meet their destinies in Venice after the fury of the French Revolution. Margaret Atwood, in "The Robber Bride," tells the tale of a beautiful, manipulative, cunning and cold-hearted woman from the points of view of the three women-friends she betrays; the "Robber Bride," alas, never gets to tell her side of the story.

But of all the writers experimenting with point of view, Susan Sontag, in *The Volcano Lover: A Romance,* shows how the changes in the use of point of view—from omniscient narrator to the self-effacing Jamesian narrator to the "unreliable eyewitness"—have impressed the creative imagination of both writers and readers. To demonstrate how point of view has affected the art of the narrative, Sontag draws her story of *The Volcano Lover* from the historic annals of the life of Sir William Hamilton, a member of the British aristocracy who served as Ambassador to Naples, Italy, in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Although a tireless collector and patron of the arts, Hamilton is mostly remembered as the husband and cuckold of the "wanton and scandalous" Emma Hamilton, whose reputation as the most beautiful woman of her time and the seducer of England's greatest naval hero, Lord Horatio Nelson, has inspired a number of books and movies. But Sontag is not just revisiting a tired tale of a beautiful young woman who betrays her older, handsome, courtly husband for a young, passionate, god-like hero. She is deconstructing it. She is taking a story that resonates with the classic ideals of art, beauty, nobility, courage, and grace, that draws upon the romantic shadows of Menelaus, Paris, and Helen, and King Arthur, Guinievere, and Launcelot and transforming it into a feminist and postmodern examination of the changing shape of Western civilization since the Age of Enlightenment. And she is using point of view to guide the story from the past to the present and expressing the changes that have taken place in society as well as the changes that have reshaped the novel and opened the imagination and creativity of the artists and writers of the twentieth century.

Sontag begins the novel with a prologue that is set in both 1992 and 1772 and introduces the narrator. She creates a narrator who, like the Cavaliere (Hamilton), is interested in collectable objects, is curious about volcanos, and is fascinated by humankind's ability to rise from the ashes again and again. She also establishes a narrator who has access to the movements and behaviors of all her characters, who weaves in and out of a genderless first, second, and third-person, and who shifts between the present and past tenses. Parts I and II of the novel, the sections that explore the events of the Cavaliere's life (Sontag does not identify Hamilton by name until the end of the novel) with his first wife Catherine and his second wife Emma, are told by the omniscient narrator, and for the most part are set in the late eighteenth century, except when the narrator digresses to make comments from a 1992 point of view. In contrast to the omniscient narrator's tale, she concludes the novel with five of the characters speaking in their own voices, the Cavaliere as he is dying, and four of the female characters from the grave.It is a *tour-de-force* of the techniques of point of view and an exquisite example of how today's writers are using point of view to imagine and create fiction and to affect how readers respond to and interpret what they read. Sontag, by juxtaposing the omniscient and first-person points of view, shows how a writer in the twentieth century has been freed from the bird's eye view of the objective observer; freed from having to use letters, monologue, and memoir to reveal a character's inner thoughts; and freed from the restraints of using only one point of view and one grammatical tense. Anything goes. Everything is possible as long as it is somehow made plausible. Sontag also reveals how the reader has become more responsible for understanding the author's techniques in relation to the telling of the story and for interpreting the moral consequences of the characters' behaviors. Sontag, in *The Volcano Lover,* reveals how point of view has led the novel into the postmodern era.

Point of View and the Writer

Unlike the writers and storytellers who relied on well-known stories of events in the past—for example, Homer and the author of "Beowulf," or the writers who used the omniscient point of view to reveal their "histories," as Fielding called "Tom Jones"—writers today have the potential to tell a story from any ilk and any number of points of view. A writer can choose a character—a scholar, a courtesan, or any kind of being or thing, real or imagined—and show the story through what that character experiences, sees, knows or imagines. A writer can completely hide himself and create a character like Humbert Humbert, a pedophile, and have this character, using first-person, tell the story of a murder and a woman-child named Lolita as Vladimir Nabokov does in his novel *Lolita*.

Writers can also decide to use multiple points of view to create a novel. They can begin in the mind of an imbecile, move to the mind of a sensitive and suicidal adolescent, shift to the mind of a beastly, tyrannical young man—all in first-person—and conclude the novel through eyes of a servant in third-person, as William Faulkner does in *The Sound and the Fury.* No point of view is out of reach. Writers today can use any kind of "character"—from an adulterous husband (Spartina) to an obese housewife (Fat Woman) to a vampire (Interview with the Vampire) to a pig (Babe) to a can of beans (Skinny Legs and All)—to tell a story, as long as the writer can somehow make it plausible for the audience. Writers can remain silent and speak only through the character, and writers can be present and speak directly to the reader. Writers can move among the different techniques of point of view, hiding and appearing as fits their purpose.

Defining Point of View

But what is point of view? In simple terms point of view answers the question "Who is telling the story?" Is the story being narrated by a storyteller relating events about the long ago past? Is the narrator telling a story about other people and events they have witnessed? Is the narrator telling a story about their own life? Is the story being told using first-person, second-person, or third-person? Easy enough questions. Unfortunately, in the twentieth century, answering the question "Who is telling the story" is not so simple, especially when writers feel free to shift points of view within a single paragraph and to scramble the time and tense of the narrative. When an author chooses to tell part of a novel through the eyes of characters reflecting on their lives after they have died, as Sontag does in *The Volcano Lover*, how does a reader come to terms with such an inventive point of view? Does a reader think, "Dead characters talking, cool," or does the reader pause and question the very nature of how human imagination works to seek out meaning, understanding and insight through fiction?

A Historical Context for Point of View

Much has changed in the art of the narrative, and most of the changes can be traced to the technique of point of view. Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg's, in *The Nature of Narrative*, cite two factors that have affected the development of point of view:

1. The shift in authority from muse-inspired storytellers to the writer as creator/artist, and

2. The development of irony, from the simplest form of irony that exploits the reader's superior knowing what the characters are unaware, for example, the reader's awareness Oedipus' murder of his father and marriage to his mother, to that of the reader seeking to understand what the narrator telling the story cannot, for example, the narrator's inability to understand his own heart in Henry James' short story "The Beast in the Jungle. "(Scholes and Kellogg 240-221)

By tracing these two aspects of narrative art from Homer to J.D. Salinger, Scholes and Kellogg reveal how point of view has moved from gifted and reliable storytellers inspired by the Gods, muses and ancient stories to "unreliable eyewitnesses" who act as "repositors of the truth but who may be wholly or partially unreliable" (265). In the following passage, Scholes and Kellogg also comment upon how the relation between the author and the reader has become more sophisticated; the reader is no longer an enthusiastic spectator but an active participant in creating meaning.

> *Its frequent use [unreliability] in modern fiction is also an aspect of the modern author's desire to make the reader participate in the act of creation. The Renaissance allegorist expected his readers to*

> *participate strenuously in his work, bringing all their learning and intellect to bear on his polysemous narrative. Similarly, the modern novelist often expects just such intense participation, but being empirically rather than metaphysically oriented he makes the great question that of what really happened inside and outside the characters he has presented; whereas the allegorists made the question of what these characters and events signified the primary question for their audience. (Scholes and Kellogg 265)*

Sontag has constructed *The Volcano Lover* to show how point of view has shifted from storyteller and allegory to representations of consciousness, from a seemingly objective narrator who shows, tells and comments on the lives of the Cavaliere and his first wife Catherine, his second wife Emma, and the Hero [Nelson] in parts I and II, to a point of view that moves inside the characters, into the minds and memories of the people who lived the events in parts III and IV. The reader first attempts to understand the novel through what the characters and events signify and then has to re-examine those thoughts in light of what the characters, speaking in their own voices, reveal about their experiences and perceptions of events. The reader is also left to wonder about the perceptions of the characters whom Sontag does not let speak: the Hero, Charles, William, Efrosina, Tolo and the King and Queen. The reader is left to wonder what happened "inside and outside of the characters," what forces truly drove the Cavaliere, the Hero, and the Beauty to collude in the executions of some of Italy's noble families, artists and scientists?

Point of view, then, asks the questions: Who to believe? What to believe? and How to believe? Storytellers like Homer (circa 800-1200 b. c. e.), or the author of Beowulf (circa 800 -1200 c.e.) , or even Thomas Mallory (1485), in many respects, did not have to consider whether or not their audiences would find their stories believable, that is, reflective of their world, experiences and cosmologies. The authority of their stories was delivered from gods, muses and deeply rooted cultural traditions. However, when the novel imprinted itself on the pages of western civilization and artists became more concerned with realism in art, making a story believable created very specific technical problems for writers. How do writers create the illusion of believability or the representation of reality? The issues of believability and authority and the representation of reality are at the core of Sontag's novel. It is why, when she begins her story of the English ambassador to Naples, the Cavaliere, she uses the technique that Anna Barbauld, in her 1804 preface, " Biographic Account of that Author, and Observations on his writings," to "The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, called "narrative or epic" and what most teachers of Literature in the twentieth century call "omniscience"—a point of view Sontag's audience would consider a very traditional and seemingly objective way to present a story:

> *In this the author relates himself the whole adventure. . . . The author, like the muse, is supposed to know every thing. He can indulge, as Fielding has done, in digressions, and thus deliver sentiments and display knowledge which would not properly belong to any of the characters (Richardson XXIII)*

Scholes and Kellogg categorize this kind of narrator as *histor,* and show that authority is derived from the narrator's search for the truth. Certainly the search for the truth is one of the factors that helps *The Volcano Lover's* omniscient narrator establish a seemingly reliable and believable relationship with the reader.

Barbauld, according to Wallace Martin in his work *Recent Theories of the Narrative,* was one of the earliest critics to call attention to how point of view affected the advantages and liabilities for the author and what effects they created for the reader. Barbauld, however, noted this phenomenon in relation not to who is telling the story but to the kind of form novelists chose to tell their tales: Narrative or epic, Memoirs, and Epistolary correspondence. Below is a summary of her ideas which notes the differences among an author's three ways of telling a story.

> ***Narrative or epic***
>
> *In this the author relates himself the whole adventure. .... The author, like the muse is supposed to know every thing. He can indulge, as Fielding has done, in digressions, and thus deliver sentiments and display knowledge which would not properly belong to any of the characters. But his narration will not be lively, except he frequently drops himself, and runs into dialogue; all good writers therefore have thrown as much as possible of the dramatic into their narrative. [It shows] not only of the sentiments, but the manner of expression of different personages, as if we took it from the scenes in a play.*
>
> ***Memoirs***
>
> *The subject of the adventures relates his own story, which confines the author's stile . . . to the supposed talents and capacity of the imaginery narrator, but which she believed also provided a greater air of truth.* ***Roderic Random*** *and Goldsmith's* ***Vicar of Wakefield*** *are examples.*
>
> ***Epistolary correspondence***
>
> *This mode of narration uses letters carried on between the characters of a novel and provides the advantages of the other two by allowing each of the characters their own voice and immediate expression of their own feelings. On the other hand, it is highly fictitious; it is the most improbable way of telling a story. (Richardson XXV-XXVIII)*

Sontag employs all these modes to tell her story, but the effect they have on the reader is not so easily delineated. Though Sontag sets most of the novel in the eighteenth century and employs the techniques that the early writers of novels employed—a narrator who knows everything and interrupts the flow of the narrative, and the techniques of letters and memoirs—she gives her novel a postmodern twist. She uses second-person instead of "Dear Reader" to directly engage the reader's imagination, and she deconstructs the story told by the omniscient narrator by concluding the novel with five of the characters expressing their own feelings and reflecting on the story in their own voices. The effect on readers does not just cause them to ask "Who do I believe and What do I believe," it causes readers to question the very act—the "How do I believe"—of drawing conclusions about people and events from a specific point of view, especially when that view has been presented by a narrator almost two-hundred years in the future—an intellectual twist that novelists in the eighteenth century could never have imagined nor imagined expecting of their readers.

If Barbauld is a guide to understanding what concerned novelists about the presentation of the novel, it was the desire to create a story that presented characters and events in a more realistic way. Novelists were equally desirous to use the medium as a forum for moralizing as well as for thoughtful and ironic reflection and observation. How a writer accomplished this task, Barbauld would most likely argue, is how authors managed the point of view of their tales, whether they established an intelligent and believable authority, whether they presented reasonable dialogue, whether they stayed within the voice of a character and did not stray from what the character could know, or whether the language and sentiments of a character's epistolary correspondence were in keeping with the nature of the character. These are judgments readers and critics still use as yardsticks to measure whether a story is believable or not. But the measurements readers use to discern believability today have diverged greatly from the yardsticks defined by Barbauld.

In *The Volcano Lover* Sontag shows how an omniscient narrator who tells a story that focuses on one of the characters, in this case the Cavaliere, creates a certain kind of effect on the reader. The reader tends to see everything and everyone in relation to how it affects the Cavaliere's life. The point of view of the other characters, notably the female characters, remains voiceless, as women's voices have for centuries. Sontag, by juxtaposing an omniscient narrator with the first person voices of the female characters, shows how the novel enters the twentieth century by presenting new approaches to point of view upon which to imagine different ways to tell a story, to present characters, and to open readers' minds by forcing them to participate in drawing meaning and moral evaluations from the text.

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, believability was framed by the nature of outward behavior, by whether or not people adhered to specific social conditions, class, religion, gender, age moral values. "While prolonged inside views were largely restricted to first-person forms, third-person novels [of the eighteenth and most of the nineteenth centuries] dwelt on manifest behavior, with the characters' inner selves revealed only indirectly through spoken language and telling gesture," notes Dorrit Cohn in *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction (21).* Such barometers have dissolved in the twentieth century. "It [the end of the eighteenth century] was the time when all ethical obligations were first put up for scrutiny, the beginning of time we call modern," Sontag's narrator comments as the narrative moves towards the rumblings of the French Revolution. And what rumblings occur in the 1800s! The most notable occurrence, especially as it affects how point of view will change in the novel, is the image of the hero, another subject that is examined in *The Volcano Lover.* Much of what affects how writers negotiate believability in the twentieth century can be traced to the changing status and characteristics of the hero in narrative—a change most scholars would argue goes hand-in-hand with the shift to realism in art. Sontag marries these two themes, the changing status of the hero and realism in art, by moving the characters from what Northrup Frye in *The Anatomy of Criticism* calls the *high mimetic* to the *low mimetic* and *ironic* (see Appendix I). A hero is considered *high mimetic* when presented as "possessing authority, passions, and the powers of expression that are far greater than ours, and who is looked upon as superior in degree to others, but not to the environment," as in epics and tragedies. A hero is considered *low mimetic* when presented as "neither superior to others nor to their environment" and *ironic* when presented as "inferior in power or intelligence to ourselves," as in many of the modern and postmodern short stories and novels (Frye 34).

Point of View and the Hero

How narratives depict heroes is for Northrup Frye the cornerstone to understanding the changes in western literature over time. Like Scholes and Kellogg, who provide a historical view of literature based on the characteristics of the narrator to the narrative and to the aspects of authority and irony, Frye also provides a historical overview; however, his theory is based on the hero's relation to human beings and to nature. Rather than using terminology like Scholes and Kellogg's narrator-types (tradition, histor, bard, maker, omniscience, recorder, eye-witness, unreliable eye-witness—see Appendix II) to show the changes in narrative over time, Frye establishes categories based on "fictional modes." These fictional modes *(myth, romance, high mimetic, low mimetic, and ironic)* show how the hero descends from the height of gods—from the mythological, symbolic and ideal—to the depths of mortal, everyday folks in all their supreme and horrific nakedness, to the real. Frye, in essence, traces how the position of the hero, if it were mapped to "narrator-types," moves from what Scholes and Kellogg call *tradition* to the *unreliable eye-witness.* Frye shows how, during the course of the novel's development, the hero loses his superior glory and descends to earth, mortal and subject to the laws of man and nature—a phenomenon *The Volcano Lover's* narrator asks the reader to consider while describing the novel's characters.

What is a hero supposed to look like? Or a king? Or a beauty?

> *Neither this hero, nor this king, nor this beauty have what Reynolds [the painter] would regard as an appropriate appearance. The hero doesn't look like a hero; the king has never acted like a king; the beauty, alas, is no longer a beauty. To put matter plainly: the hero is a maimed, toothless, worn, underweight little man; the King is a grossly fat man with herpes and a huge snout; the beauty, thickened by drink, is now large as well as tall, and at thirty-three looks far from young. Only the Cavaliere (aristocrat, courtier, scholar, man of taste) conforms to ideal type. He is tall, slim fine-featured, intact; and*

> *though much of the oldest of the four future citizens of the universe of history painting, he is the one in the best physical condition. (Sontag 206-207)*

In this paragraph Sontag unmasks the physical qualities of character that defined the heroes and heroines of the epic and romance traditions. She asks the readers to conjure for themselves the image of heroes, kings and beauties. And then she swiftly and brutally undoes them. She takes the characters that were introduced as figures without names, as an author writing an allegory might—the Cavaliere, the Knight, the Collector, the girl, the wife, the Beauty; and the Captain, the Admiral, the Hero—and reduces them to individuals subject to all the diseases, prejudices, joys and human frailties of all people who live during a certain moment in time. But the unmasking does not stop with their physical qualities, the narrator continues to strip away their heroic natures detail by detail, event by event, until readers are left to peer into the souls of people who, under a specific set of circumstances during a specific period in history, lived out their fates the best way they knew how. Sontag even has the narrator, speaking from the vantage point of 1992, comment on this phenomenon:

> *We like to stress the commonness of heroes. Essences seem undemocratic. We feel oppressed by the call to greatness. We regard an interest in glory or perfection as a sign of mental unhealthiness, and have decided that high achievers, who are called overachievers, owe their surplus of ambition to a defect in mothering (either too little or too much). We want to admire but think we have a right not to be intimidated. We dislike feeling inferior to an ideal. So away with ideals, with essences. The only ideals allowed are healthy ones—those everyone may aspire to, or comfortable imagine oneself possessing. (197)*

Sontag shows that all myths and illusions of heroism as well as power, civilization, education, and moral values came under siege at the end of the eighteenth century and that a new age in the story of western civilization was poised to begin. She also shows, in a feat of ironic commentary, how the role of the hero has played itself out in a democratic society.

Storytelling in the Twentieth Century

A great deal of contemporary storytelling is no longer controlled by the story of a hero and one authorial point of view. Gone is the believability in an invocation to the Muse. Gone is the familiarity of cultural myths. Gone is the all-knowing narrator whose purpose is to seek out truth for the reader. Even an eye-witness account, if it includes any interpretation of an event, is cause for deconstruction. An audience may believe the plane crashed, but may not so readily believe the circumstances that caused the plane to crash, especially if a representative of the airline is providing the information. The conventions that created authority and believability for the reader or listener have been scattered in the twentieth century.

There are many theories about what led to this—the rise of social realism in art, the cadences of democracy and the rise of an educated middle class, the Nietzschian dictum that God is dead and that dogma, certainty, and absolutes in metaphysics, in ethics, and in epistemology died with him. The advent of Darwin and his theories of evolution and natural selection; Freud and his theories of the unconscious; Einstein and Levi-Strauss and their scientific and cultural anthropological brands of relativity; and the role of the artist and the individual in society. Whatever the cause, storytelling in the twentieth century has centered on the problem of point of view, because point of view controls authority, believability and irony of the text. "The story takes the shape its author has given it, a shape governed for us primarily by the point of view through which the characters and events are filtered. . . [and it is point of view] that controls the reader's perception of everything else (Scholes and Kellogg 275)

"Point of view controls the reader's perception of everything else." This is a drumbeat Sontag certainly writes to and a drumbeat that in many respects guided the first critical examination on the role of point of view in the novel by Henry James in a series of essays collected and published in *The Art of the Novel* in 1907.

Between the aspects of point of view noted by Barbauld (1810) and the more wholly realized system of Scholes and Kellogg (1966) is the birth of a narrative strategy propounded by novelist and critic Henry James.

Sontag and most writers in the twentieth century owe much to Henry James. With James and his narrative strategy of "central consciousness" arises a way to escape the "god-like" role of the omniscient narrator and establish an "authorial narrator (not to be confused with the author) who presumes access to the mind of only one character but does not indulge in commentary or use of the pronoun 'I'" (Martin 133). For writers this is the beginning of an entirely new way to present a story, an entirely new way to establish authority and irony, to develop characters, to create suspense, to express ideas, to create art, and to "dramatize," as James exclaims, across the page. For critics, James' examination of how he approaches the art of the novel begins the inquiry into how to discuss these aspects in a systematic way.

When Henry James developed his "consciousness" technique to "hide" the author, he changed the relationship between the author and the text, the author and the reader, and the reader and the text. He changed "the consciousness" of the novel from omniscience, letters, and memoirs to the limited vision of one character's mind expressed in the third-person, and in consequence placed new demands upon the imagination and intelligence of the reader. He forced the reader to create meaning and to understand the story through the rigorous examination of the author's choice of the point of view—of the narrator. James' strategy caused readers to question the "reliability" of the person who was feeding them the story, upping the ironic possibilities for the author and the reader. Henry James' influence on the changes in point of view can be looked at as standing between *The Volcano Lover's* omniscient narrator and the first-person narrations that conclude the novel, between the narrative techniques outlines by Barbauld and the techniques that will be ushered in by James Joyce, Marcel Proust, William Faulkner and others in the early part of the twentieth century.

The Influence of James Joyce

There is probably no other writer more responsible for changing how writers use point of view in the twentieth century than James Joyce. Scholes and Kellogg remark that "In [*Ulysses* Joyce] felt free to present his characters' thoughts in interior monologue when he wanted to and to adopt in addition the greatest variety of narrative postures ever before assumed in a single literary work" (271). Though for many people *Ulysses is* difficult to read, it is probably the greatest example of how point of view opened the imagination of writers and challenged the very ideas of how human consciousness perceives reality and then expresses itself in language. In Joyce's consciousness, time and space filter freely; the present, past and future co-exist, and logic, reason and linear plots are for people who read as if they are running a race. The demands Joyce placed on his readers was revolutionary—for many readers too revolutionary; the display of Molly Bloom's mind in punctuationless stream-of-consciousness was demanding too much. But for writers, Joyce opened the door to representing the inner life of characters in a profoundly new way.

The Influence of William Faulkner

Probably no other author in the early part of the twentieth century did more to transform the techniques of James' central consciousness and Joyce's stream-of-consciousness to create a narrative strategy than William Faulkner. Like James and Joyce, Faulkner used point of view to encourage the reader to read in a new way. But he turned the Jamesian idea of central consciousness on its head and birthed narrators less intelligent than his readers to tell his story. He abandoned the third-person for the first-person. Faulkner, too, demanded a change in relation between the reader and the storytelling. In *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner tells the same story from four different points of view without any apparent semblance of logic or time, using a variation of Joyce's stream-of-consciousness technique. The explication of the plot, a storyline, as well as divining the truth, the "what to believe," is the onus of the reader, though as the author he has carefully provided all the pieces. It is impossible to comprehend *The Sound and the Fury* in just one reading, and it is even more incomprehensible if readers do not understand how Faulkner is using point of view to change the act of storytelling. Like Joyce, Faulkner shows that readers make meaning backwards; it is only by looking back after arriving at the conclusion that readers can make sense of what they have read and experienced. (Like life!) Sontag sets up *The Volcano Lover* in much the same way, but she adds other narrative complications: a narrator who is telling a story out of the annals of history from a distance of two hundred years, and characters who, in addition to the reader, look back on the story to make sense of what has been told. The whole question of reliability, of what to believe, and how to shape any kind of meaning and moral evaluation is completely forced on the reader. Each of *The Volcano Lover's* six narrators presents their story, then the reader is left to mull over and discuss the ideas and moral considerations that are being represented.

History, Art and Point of view

History, too, has its own point of view in Sontag's narrative. Upon returning to London, the depictions of the scandalous triumvirate—cuckold, drunken whore and lovesick hero—were less than kind:

> *The caricaturists did not spare her or the Cavaliere. Gillray [1757-1815, a popular artist noted for his caricatures] showed him as a withered old grotesque absorbed by an array of ugly statuettes and damaged vase; above his head are portraits of a bare-breasted Cleopatra holding a gin bottle and a one-armed Mark Antony wearing a cocked hat, and a picture of Vesuvius in full eruption. (330*)

Although Gillray's depiction of Nelson is unflattering, the hero, given that "only ten thousand in the country could read newspapers," remained beloved in his countryman's eyes. Upon his arrival home he was greeted with all the fanfare and adulation due a man who had battled the seas and kept Napoleon from conquering Britain. Even his wife stood by him, until the Hero bowed out of her life and moved in with his Beloved and the Cavaliere. But for the Cavaliere and the Beauty, all that greeted them were jeers and whispers:

> *But history teaches us that one does not always live on in the minds of en for that for which one desires to be remembered. One applies oneself diligently, one's achievements mount, genuine achievements, and then, alas, a story becomes attached to one's name, everyone hears it, everyone tells it, and that is all finally which anyone recalls. (371)*

These are the words of the Cavaliere, spoken in first-person, as he lays dying on April 6, 1803, in part III of the novel. Spoken like a true gentleman, without malice, without blame. Spoken like the character of the Cavaliere that the narrator has so patiently and judiciously described. The irony of this statement, however, is that fiction, not history, is recording and remembering his achievements as well as "the story [that] becomes attached to one's name." This is not the first time that Sontag has dwelt upon the nature of history as it represents the events and lives of people who can no longer speak for themselves.

The relation between history, art, fiction, and point of view is a recurring theme in *The Volcano Lover.* How have writers used history to create fiction? How do readers interpret a story or a work of art that represents historical events? and how does history interact with the development of point of view in narrative? Scholes and Kellogg argue that the emergence of the *histor* point of view in narrative—the narrator who initially acted as a historical investigator of human beings and their world and later developed into the omniscient narrator—draws its authority from the techniques of historians. Cervantes certainly used this conceit in *Don Quixote:* "I was thinking about the prologue I had to write for the history of Don Quixote. . . ." (42), as did Fielding in *Tom Jones:* "Book I: Containing as much of the birth of the foundling as is necessary or proper to acquaint the reader with in the beginning of his history," (27) and as did Hawthorne in *The Scarlet Letter:*

> *It will be seen, likewise, that this Custom House sketch has a certain propriety, of a kind always recognized in literature, as explaining how a large portion of the following pages came into my possession, and as*

> *offering proofs of the authenticity of a narrative there in contained. (16)*

Sontag shows how writers no longer have to bow to these conceits. In fact, she deconstructs them. Sontag does give credit to the histories, biographies, memoirs, and letters that inspired her, but she tells her readers to make no mistake that what they are reading is an act of fiction.

The Volcano Lover is rife with references to the relation between history and art. In a conversation between the Beauty and the Poet [Goethe], he tells her: "The great end of art is to strike the imagination. . . . and in pursuing the true grandeur of design, it may sometimes be necessary for the artist to deviate from vulgar and strict historical truth" (150). The narrator, too, comments on the relationship artists have to their material: "Sometimes it's acceptable not to tell the truth, the full truth, when relating or rendering the past. Sometimes it is necessary" (196). The authority of the novel is the novel itself no matter how many of the events are "factual"; it is a work of the imagination that will be judged for itself according to a reigning set of criteria by critics and readers. Although Sontag provides names, dates, and events that will lead the reader to her research, she does not couch the credibility of *The Volcano Lover* in facts. The novel's believability relies solely on how the narrator engages the reader in the narrative, not on its display of historical records. It's arguable she is using the eighteenth century and the story of the Hamiltons as a substrate of her narrative to comment on how the past is continually being reexamined and reinterpreted by the present. Sontag shows the reader how the present as well as the past possess their own distinct points of view. In the eighteenth century, if the narrator's description of Gillray's depictions of Emma can be taken as representative of the time, Emma is a whore. From the point of view of a woman in 1992, Emma Hamilton, even with all her faults, is a kind of hero. Sontag suggests that in the postmodern world, facts are little more than the undressed mannequins writers and readers clothe with point of view. Whether knowingly or inadvertently, Sontag shows that where early writers of the novel "suspended disbelief" by citing known stories and facts as proof of authenticity, writers in the twentieth century rely on the art and point of view of the narrative to engage "the complex interaction between the reader's partial belief and partial disbelief" (Scholes and Kellogg 268). In Scholes and Kellogg's system, this shift in authority from history, testimony, and empirical data is aligned with the writer as creator and artist.

In the twentieth century, the writer has taken the shift in authority one step further by also involving the reader. Sontag uses a number of techniques to stimulate the reader's awareness of the art of narrative and point of view, and to engage them in the activity of imagining:

- The central characters, the heroic, larger than life characters are introduced with terms that represent their symbolic natures: the Cavaliere or Knight, the Beauty, and the Hero. Sontag is acting much like an allegorist and immediately alerting her readers that they will be experiencing art not history, romance not social realism.
- Quotation marks are never used to indicate dialogue, thereby dismissing the illusion that what is being said between the characters is verbatim or from any source other than the author's imagination.
- The omniscient narrator continually includes the reader in the act of imagining. For example, in the following passage the narrator assumes the reader knows about the Cavaliere and is conjuring the image along with the narrator:

  He can't know what we know about him. For us he is a piece of the past, austerely outlined in powdered wig and long elegant coat and buckled shoes, beaky profile cocked intelligently, looking, observing, firm in his detachment. (20)
- The concluding first-person narratives are told from suspect points of view. The voice of the Cavaliere is told in stream-of-consciousness while he is dying. The voices of Catherine, *Her Mother* (Mrs. Mary Cadogan), Emma, and Eleonora de Fonseca Pimental are told from the grave. The reader must conclude: what a wondrous leap of imagination.

- The omniscient narrator is continually moving from 1992 to the late 1700s and often speaks in the present tense in both times, especially when the narrator wants to engage the reader in a discussion upon a specific topic such as the nature of collecting and collectors, volcanos, romantic love, suicide, art, happiness, and the role of beauty or the hero in society:

  What is beauty without a chorus, without the whispers, the signs, the murmurs?

  But who knows better than the Cavaliere what beauty is, beauty into which one falls. I am cut, I am felled. I fall, cover me with your mouth. (133)

- Sometimes Sontag lets the point of view be ambiguous, as in the above passage. Is the point of view the narrator's, the Cavaliere's, or is it both? Is it someone else's? Whatever the answer, the reader has to pause and ask "Who is 'I'?" Maybe it is Sontag herself showing how a writer's imagination is uncovered during the act of thinking and writing about the characters and the story that is being told.

Each of these techniques reminds readers that what they are experiencing is art, the art of novelists who have at their command all the tools that make up narrative: language, images, plot, characterization, point of view, dialogue, irony, and time—historical as well as imaginative past, present and future. Each of these techniques is also reminding readers that through the observation of different points of view different truths emerge. And fortunately or not, truth is amoral.

Point of View and Truth

But what are the truths on display in *The Volcano Lover* and how do they relate to Sontag's use of point of view? One of the distinguishing aspects of the novel, according to Russian critic M. M. Bakhtin in *The Dialogic Imagination,* has been its use of multiple language systems, the languages of dialogue as opposed to narration, poetry as opposed to science, the languages of the lower classes as opposed to the aristocracy, and so on. "Every language in the novel is a point of view, a socio-ideological conceptual system of real social groups and their embodied representatives" (Bakhtin 411-12) Sontag is certainly embodying Bakhtin's perception in *The Volcano Lover.* In fact, it is point of view as it is expressed in the unique and "representative" voices of the narrator, the Cavaliere, Catherine, Emma's mother Mary Cadogan, Emma and the poet and revolutionary Eleonora that provide the novel with its various and conflicting displays of truth.

The Cavaliere, just before he dies, tells the reader "I have had a happy life" (372). The narrator, for the most part, would agree with the Cavaliere's estimation, for the narrator has drawn a portrait of a man who made the best of life whatever was thrown in his path. The narrator has shown the Cavaliere to be a man who lived a life of aristocratic privilege and spent most of his energies collecting and patronizing the arts, studying his volcano (Vesuvius), and enjoying all the pleasures afforded an English ambassador posted to the Italian court in Naples (1764-1800). The narrator has portrayed a husband who found a great deal of pleasure and contentment from both his marriages; who enjoyed playing and listening to music, attending the opera, and reading poetry as well as philosophical and scientific treatises; who enjoyed the rigors of riding, swimming, climbing, and other forms of exercise as well as the enthusiasms of hunting and fishing; and who loved exploring the ruins of Pompeii, Herculaneum, and other sites as well as acting as guide and scholar for the many visiting dignitaries who stopped in Naples while making the Grand Tour of Europe. But most of all the narrator revealed the Cavaliere as a man who enjoyed surrounding himself with beauty, from the paintings and objects d' art he collected to the girl he transformed into the Beauty of an Age. "I have never overestimated my abilities," the dying Cavaliere tells the reader. "While there are more exalted destinies, I maintain that to discover what is beautiful and share that with others is also a worthy employment for a life" (367). The gentleman scholar. The man of taste and refinement. His every appearance and enthusiasm the essence of what it means to be civilized.

But there is another side to this portrayal as illustrated by the narrator: the man who took advantage of his position and knowledge to acquire and profit from the beautiful artifact's of Italy's ruins. The man who surrounded himself with priceless art and books, servants and secretaries, and many luxurious coaches and fine horses, while the people of Naples lived in ignorance and poverty. The man who purchased a monkey for his amusement then persecuted and abandoned the creature when he no longer pleased him. The man who never raised a political finger while serving the debauched and corrupt Neapolitan court. The man who silently stood by when the court, the hero and his wife carried out the executions of the artists, scientists, poets and doctors who were his friends. The man, the narrator tells us, who "will be regarded for the rest of his life, and beyond: as a famous cuckold" (259). But what is the reader to make of this man, "this old knight who was brought up with our king," as Mary Cadogan refers to him?

The closing voice of *The Volcano Lover* is that of the poet and political activist Eleonora de Fonseca Pimentel who was executed as a revolutionary in September 1799, and who calls to account everything the Cavaliere represented: "Who was the esteemed Sir William Hamilton [this is the only time in the novel that his name is declared] but an upper-class dilettante enjoying the many opportunities afforded in a poor and corrupt and interesting country to pilfer the art and make a living out of it and to get himself known as a connoisseur" (418). What is the reader to make of Sir William Hamilton now? And why is it important for the reader to behold this point of view.

"A language is revealed in all its distinctiveness only when it is brought into relationship with other languages, entering with them into one single heterglot unity of societal becoming," writes Bakhtin (411). Throughout parts I and parts II of the novel, the narrator has carefully moved from the last years of the eighteenth century to the last years of the twentieth, comparing and contrasting one social milieu to another, one set of attitudes and values to another, one artistic representation another:

> *What people made of antiquity then was a model for the present, a set of ideal examples. The past was a small world, made smaller by our great distance from it. It had only familiar names (the gods, the great*

> *sufferers, the heroes and heroines) representing familiar virtues (constancy, nobility, courage, grace), embodying an irrefutable idea of beauty, both feminine and masculine, and a potent, unthreatening sensuality—because the enigmatic, broken, bleached of color. (48)*

The narrator showed the "becoming" of the twentieth century as embodied in the romance of the Cavaliere by undressing his ideals, by deconstructing the "Romance." But it is the voices of the women who bring the Cavaliere's story into what Bakhtin would describe in *The Dialogic Imagination* as a "dialogism." Dialogism is what happens when language systems come into contact. "Everything means, is understood, as a part of a greater whole—there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others" (Bakhtin 426). Dialogism is much like the color studies in the *Homage to the Square* paintings of the Bauhaus artist Josef Albers (1888-1976). Put an orange square inside a red square and the perception of the colors change; add a yellow square and perception of the colors change yet again. The squares are still orange, red and yellow, but when juxtaposed, the purity of each color is displaced by a more complex effect upon the eye. In *The Volcano Lover* Sontag affects the same kind of result, but instead of using colors she uses voices. By juxtaposing the voices of the past and the present and the six different narrators, she unsettles the reader's perception of the purity of the omniscient narrator's point of view and forces the reader to look beyond the one voice, the one orange square, to look into the palette of voices—into the complexities of experience, perception and truth.

One of the inherent aspects of point of view, as Barbauld pointed out, is how it affects the reader's willingness to believe, whether it will provide "a greater air of truth" or not. But the "air of truth" in the twentieth century has become much more complex. Sontag shows that truth is distinguished by point of view; it is why readers wonder what a novel, for example, Nobokov's *Lolita*, might have revealed had it been from Lolita's point of view rather than Humbert Humbert's. It is why Sontag includes the voice of the revolutionary to accuse Hamilton of his political silence and elitism, why his first wife Catherine complains of his selfishness, cruelty, and sexual dispassion; and why Mrs. Mary Cadogan provides a portrait of men that is spoken with tremendous anger and pity. To bring forth a revolution, Eleonora would have the reader believe, there is no room for pity. Mary Cadogan may have been viscerally aware of the injustice levied against her gender and class, but she could never have transformed her anger into political action. "It's terrible to be poor," she tells the reader. "But still worse to have no other idea of bettering yourself with VIOLENCE" (382). The Mary Cadogans and the Catherines of the world may desire political change but they will never risk their lives for their beliefs or for future generations. And they would surely not be able to imagine a world where women are not beholden to men for their existence and happiness.

The intellectual and emotional shift that occurs in the reader from reading an account of the story that is told by a narrator privy to all the conversations, letters, actions, and details of the characters and events, and told with the intelligence of a provocative and powerful critic and essayist, to reading individual, "un-narratored," first person voices is a disturbing moment. "For us [readers in the 1990s] the significant moment is the one that disturbs us most" (Sontag 296). The reader moves from a point of view that is mediated to the immediate, from the observer to the observed, from the seemingly objective to the intensely personal, causing the reader's sympathies, attitudes, and interpretations to be significantly altered. Distanced from Catherine, Mary, Emma and Eleonora's accounts, the reader is much more likely to find sympathy and understanding for the Cavaliere. He is, after all, the embodiment of the higher aspects of human nature: art, intelligence, reason, civility, courtesy, dignity and beauty. What is Sontag doing? Why does she spend 358 pages telling a story about Sir William Hamilton that shows him to have led quite an extraordinary life, to have led a "happy" life, to have been much more than the cuckold of Emma Hamilton and then have him criticized by his first wife, rebuked by Mary Cadogan, completely ignored by Emma and finally denounced by Eleonora?

At the center of Sontag's novel is a volcano that sleeps and explodes according to its own inexorable powers and forces, and when viewed from "a safe distance is the ultimate spectacle, instructive as well as thrilling," but when viewed from up close, "churns the guts" (6). In many respects point of view can work in the same way. Keep the reader at a safe distance and the writer can create a mesmerizing and intellectually demanding spectacle. Pull the reader close, let the reader be exposed to the character's heart and the writer can tap specific feelings and prejudices that will completely dissemble the reader's perception of the story. Such are the powers of the different rhetorical modes. Such are the powers of using point of view to control the reader's, the narrator's, characters', and author's distance from the story and each other. Given Eleonora's description of her fate, given the sympathy that most people feel about liberty and justice, especially when these concern women, it would not be difficult to fall under her spell. This is the nature of point of view, which is why it is important for people to be aware of how it can be used to influence and manipulate the decisions that determine how society conducts itself, how history is written, how the roles of men and women are defined, how heroes are made and abandoned, and how writers affect their readers.

In the final sentences of the novel, Eleonora proclaims: "They thought they were so civilized. They were despicable. Damn them all" (419). How is the reader to interpret these lines? As Scholes and Kellogg note in their analysis of point of view, the nature of irony in modern works is much more sophisticated and often more difficult to recognize. At first glance, Eleonora's proclamation could be taken at face value. However, given a first-person narrator, a reader whose antennae are working overtime to discern truth, and an author who has the character of Eleonora accuse herself and the author of lying to themselves about how complicated it is to be a woman, the reading of the final lines must be perceived as ironic. For all of Eleonora's accusations of dilettantism, sycophancy, and injustice, she knows that without people like the Cavaliere, without people who see themselves as responsible for collecting, preserving and sharing what is beautiful and noble about humankind she herself would be forgotten. This is the great irony and the paradox of *The Volcano Lover: A Romance*. And it is Sontag's greatest confession. To remain apolitical and to live a happy and good life as an intellectual, an artist, a scholar, a lover, or a collector when there are still injustices to be battled, is it, as the Cavaliere declares, "a worthy employment of a life?" How do readers judge and evaluate a man who devoted his life to beauty and a hero who saved England from Napoleon, yet who were also responsible for injudiciously executing so-called political subversives? Scholes and Kellogg would argue that Sontag, like most modern writers, has used a "fictional shape to enter the ironic gap which now lies not between the author or narrator and characters but between the limited understanding which is real, and an ideal of absolute truth which is itself suspect" (Scholes and Kellogg 277). Relativism is the underlying consequence here.

We live in a society where every point of view is on display, where the feminists, the LGBT, the African-Americans, the Mexican-Americans, the Native Americans, the Christian Right, the Radical Left all want equal time and equal access, where every point of view seeks to influence how society governs and conducts itself. How then does a society that has abandoned all notions of classical ideals, absolute truths, and shared values, as Sontag points out, provide moral foundations on which to conduct one's life, to determine right from wrong, good from evil, the moral from the immoral? If the changes in the artistic use of point of view can be a guide, the moral determinations fall to the reader to sort out, which is why Sontag has her narrator act as both historical scholar and social commentator.

Because Sontag establishes a narrative strategy that identifies the omniscient narrator with the reader and provides the reader to think about the different issues as related to their own sensibilities, Sontag shows that the reader also has a point of view to be reckoned with. It is as if Sontag is saying, I am not just acting as storyteller of a particular historical figures from the eighteenth century, I am also acting as a thoughtful reader and thinker in 1992 trying to make sense of a distant past and show parallels to my own world, to show what has changed and how it has been changed. I am guiding you, reader, through what it is to think about being a collector, in all its guises, and a man of privilege in the eighteenth century. I am showing you how I imagined being a beautiful young girl from the servant class who ascends to the wife of the brother of the King, and then is also loved by one of England's most decorated war heroes. I am showing you what it might have been like to have been a poet who took a political stance and was executed for her convictions. I am showing you what it has meant to abandon the romantic and classical traditions for the relativistic. I am showing you what it is to think and imagine and find your way to truth all within the artifice of fiction, even if the pursuit leads to paradox. And I am showing you the value of imagination, yours and mine. "The end of great art is to strike the imagination, the poet told [the beauty]" (Sontag 150). Sontag is fully aware of the multifarious relativism that rules the worlds of her readers. She knows that the final evaluation of her story and her characters is with the reader; she can only hope that she has transformed the reader's point of view by opening their imagination and critical faculties and engaging them in the examination of multiple points of view she has represented.

The Volcano Lover: A Romance is a novel, that, in many respects is "all about point of view" and the powers of imagination. "By abandoning the old authoritative devices of narration the modern novelists drive themselves to new stratagems, discover new possibilities in their art" (Scholes and Kellogg 277). Sontag shows this legacy in *The Volcano Lover* in choosing a story that travels in time from the Age of Enlightenment to the Age of Information; in using a seemingly traditional narrator to begin the novel juxtaposed with first-person narrators speaking from beyond the grave; in deconstructing the classical ideals and the role of the hero; in portraying the shift to realism in art and the ascendance of the authority of the artist from recorder to creator; and, of course, in alluding to all the social and philosophical ramifications set off by the French Revolution. In the 1990s, the whole question of what to believe, who to believe, and how to believe is at the center of everyone's life. "Whatever does not happen before our eyes must be taken on trust," Sontag's narrator muses. But whom to trust? Sontag shows the truths of each point of view as it is expressed in the different language systems of the storyteller; she leaves the decision as to whom to trust and the moral evaluations, however, to the reader. Like Faulkner, she has planted all the clues; and like Faulkner, she demands her story to be read again, the second time with a greater realization of the inherent limitations of an omniscient narrator and a greater awareness of the points of view of the neglected voices of the female characters. At the edge of the nineteenth century, Henry James foresaw the power of point of view in narrative:

> *The house of fiction has in short not one window, but a million. . . . they have this mark of their own that at each of them stands a figure with a pair of eyes, or at least with a field-glass, which forms, again and again, for observation, a unique instrument, insuring to the person making use of it an impression distinct from every other. (James 46)*

In the postmodern era, it is not only the writer standing at the window with field-glasses in hand, it is also the reader adjusting and readjusting the focus and bringing each of the distinct impressions into a meaningful collection of characters, worlds, images, voices and truths.

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Appendix

Northrup Frye's Fictional Modes

Fictional Mode	Defining Characteristics	Narrative Examples
Myth	Hero is of divine power, superior in kind to other men and their environment. (The Story of a god.)	Epic poems and parts of the Bible. (Lies outside the normal categories of literature.)
Romance	Hero is superior in degree to others and the environment. The hero moves in a world where the ordinary laws of nature are suspended and where he can commit marvelous acts.	Parts of classical and early European epics; romances; legends; folktales, fairytales, and ballads. *Le Morte d' Arthur, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*
High Mimetic	Hero is superior in degree to others but not to the environment. He has authority, passions, and powers of expression far greater than ours.	Most epics and tragedies—the kind of hero Aristotle had in mind. Oedipus, Antigone, Hamlet, Othello
Low Mimetic	Hero is superior neither to others nor to their environment. He is one of us, an everyman.	Realistic fiction. Most novels and short stories. *Lady Chatterley's Lover, Emma, The Robber Bride*
Ironic	Protagonist is inferior to ourselves in power or intelligence.	Novels or short stories that usek in Frye's terms, an "ironic" or, in the point of view definition, an "unreliable" narrator. *Lolita, The Catcher in the Rye, The Fight Club*

Scholes and Kellogg's Theory of Point of View

Category	Features	Authority	Irony	Examples
Tradition	Narration of events well in the past	Outside the text: Invocation to muse. Voice of storyteller (Embellisher/ adaptor rather and creator)	Reader has basic superiority over the characters; access to knowledge not available to characters	*Illiad, Odyseey, Gilgamesh, Beowulf, Morte d' Arthur*
Histor	Narrator that acts as inquirer/investigator; examines the past with an eye toward separating actuality from myth	Actual events and strength of conclusions		Herodotus, Thucydides
	Narrator is not a character in the narrative: s/he is more a persona, a projection of the author's empirical virtues. Narrator is an instrument in search of truth	Testimony, art empirical data		
Aspects of Histor				
Bard	Narrator who can reveal unspoken thoughts	Artist/creator		
Maker	Narrator who talks to the reader and controls all characters	Artist/creator		
Omniscience*	Narrator who can use all the techniques: histor, eye-witness, bard and maker		Irony between author and reader	*Tom Jones, Vanity Fair*
Recorder	Self-effacing Jamesian narrator; refuses the privileges of bard and maker	Artist/creator		*The Aspern Papers*
Eye-witness	Narrator relates actual evens (Third or first person) Narrator acts as apologies or confessor or both	Witness to actual events; Life history		Caesar's *Gallic War;* Josephus' *Life*

Category	Features	Authority	Irony	Examples
	Narrator relates fictional events (Can be about the protagonist or relating a story about others)	Artist/creator	Irony between author and narrator and between narrator and narrator as self in the story	*Golden Ass, Moll Flanders, David Copperfield*
	Narrator can limit their vision to only what can be seen or can supplement their vision to what as histor they can find out or confidently imagine	Artist/creator		*The Great Gatsby*
Unreliable Eye-witness	Narrator acts as repositor of truth but may be wholly or partially unreliable	Artist/creator	Reader seeks to understand what the character(s) telling the story cannot comprehend themselves.	*Lolita, Catcher in the Rye*