
The commentary of the overt narrator on the edge of fictionality

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Different perspectives open up new angles to research fictionality status. While certain narrative modes of discourse, namely the dynamic ones such as report or speech reproduction (Bonheim 1975), leave little doubt about their fictional status, it is precisely the static modes that offer room for non-fictional interpretation – this is especially true for literary commentaries, in which often no fictional elements are presented and the narrator is instead open with his more abstract ideas and metafictional additions. This intrusion, which goes beyond a minimum of mediation, is termed overt narrator (Prince 2020).

In this regard, commentaries divide into two groups:

- (i) commentaries that contribute information in an abstracting or additive manner and complement the narrated action, and
- (ii) commentaries that provide space for interpretation beyond the work through their generalizing structure and context-independence.

It is precisely these commentaries that exemplify the debate conducted on the limits of fictionality of narrative structures. However, they are also markers for the identification of the overt narrator (Chatman 1978). It is significant that the same structures that enable understanding beyond fictional interpretation also serve as markers for explicit mediation by a narrator. What both debates have in common is that they are conducted at those passages marked by a narrative pause.

This contribution presents the results of an investigation of the overt narrator and the temporal markers for its recognition in *Die Unendliche Geschichte* by Michael Ende (1979). This is done especially with regard to how this perspective can contribute to an annotation of the fictional passages.

References: • Bonheim, H. (1975). Theory of narrative modes. *Semiotica* 14(4), 329–344. • Chatman, S. (1978). *Story and Discourse. Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*. New York: Cornell University Press. • Prince, G. (2020). Overt narrator. In G. Prince (ed.), *A Dictionary of Narratology*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 69.