

Principles of Literary Study

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point of (re)view

- ▶ external narrator, external focalizer: the eyes of Umuofia
- ▶ “the nine villages *and even beyond*”: the eye on the eyes of Umuofia
 - ▶ “The world is large,” said Okonkwo. (74)
- ▶ voice: the Nigerian-English novel
 - ▶ implicit glossing
 - ▶ incorporated oral genres (proverb, tale)
 - ▶ an individual, a collective, or...?

Ikemefuna's death

1. CF (Okonkwo): Ezeudu's warning (57)
2. CF (Nwoye), CF (Ikemefuna): the elders come (57)
3. CF (Nwoye): Ikemefuna taken away (58)
4. CF (Ikemefuna): Ike's increasing inwardness (59)
5. "As the man who had cleared his throat drew up and raised his machete, Okonkwo looked away." (61)

reported discourse

direct *reporting verb + verbatim speech*

“How much longer do you think you will live?” she asked. (75)

indirect *reporting verb + complement clause (tense/person match matrix clause)*

He told Ear that he was still alive. (75)

Only then did she realize, with a start, that Chielo had stopped her chanting. (103)

free indirect *no reporting verb, tense/person match discourse matrix*

But Chielo's voice was still a long way away. Had she been running too? (103)

His hands trembled vaguely on the black pot he carried. Why had Okonkwo withdrawn to the rear? Ikemefuna felt his legs melting under him. And he was afraid to look back. (60–61)

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- ▶ Why had Okonkwo withdrawn to the rear?
- ▶ Ikemefuna wondered why Okonkwo had withdrawn to the rear.

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- ▶ Why had Okonkwo withdrawn to the rear?
- ▶ Ikemefuna wondered why Okonkwo had withdrawn to the rear.
- ▶ Ikemefuna wondered, “Why has Okonkwo withdrawn to the rear?”

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- ▶ [The narrator tacitly denies that it is certain that it is right to be masculine and violent.]

Dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his machete and cut him down. He was afraid of being thought weak. (61)

- ▶ [The narrator tacitly casts doubt on Okonkwo's belief that his action will prevent him being thought weak.]

rhetorical irony: definition

Verbal irony consists in echoing a tacitly attributed thought or utterance with a tacitly dissociative attitude. (272)

Deirdre Wilson and Dan Sperber, "Relevance Theory," in *The Handbook of Pragmatics*, ed. Laurence Horn and Gregory Ward (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 272.

When he was a child his mother had told him a story about it. But it was as silly as all women's stories. Mosquito, she had said, had asked Ear to marry him... (75)

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proposition All women’s stories are silly.

1st-order metarep. Okonkwo believes that all women’s stories are silly.

2nd-order metarep. The narrator tacitly rejects Okonkwo’s belief that all women’s stories are silly.

irony doesn't always criticize

Evil Forest then thrust the pointed end of his rattling staff into the earth. And it began to shake and rattle, like something agitating with a metallic life. He took the first of the empty stools and the eight other *egwugwu* began to sit in order of seniority after him.

Okonkwo's wives, and perhaps other women as well, might have noticed that the second *egwugwu* had the springy walk of Okonkwo....But if they thought these things they kept them within themselves. (89–90)

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The audience believes that Evil Forest is an ancestral spirit.

The narrator neither endorses nor denies the audience's belief that Evil Forest is an ancestral spirit.

women's stories: breakout groups

Consider the story of Tortoise and the feast in the sky (chap. 11, pp. 96–99). What is this doing here? The handout gives you some ways to approach it.

- ▶ Describe the layers of narrative embedding. (Frankenstein's Creature returns!)
- ▶ What might be the relationship of the embedded story to the primary narrative?
- ▶ What is the significance of the *situation of telling* (Ekwefi and Ezinma)?

next

- ▶ exercise due Wednesday at noon
- ▶ try to finish the novel, but anyway get as far as chap. 19 (end of pt. 2).
- ▶ Quayson article for Monday