

First and Third Person Narration [Seminar]

1. Which genres of discourse, other than those in literature, are normally 'third person'?
Which genres of non-literary written discourse are 'first person'?
2. Which sorts of literary genres are in the third person?
Which literary genres are normally in the first person?
3. Do you associate use of a particular person with factual or fictional discourse?
4. Is the difference between the first and third person in ancient literature always clear cut? Are there ever any situations when it is?
5. Do *mise-en-abyme* narratives have a bearing on this?
6. Look at Virgil's *Aeneid* Book 1 verses 1-20 and Book 9 verses 446-50. Is an epic like this a first person or third person text?

7. Transposition

Could *Aeneid* books 2-3 (Aeneas's narrative) be recast in the first person and Julius Caesar's histories from the the first to the third person without a fundamental change of content?

Looking at the 'first person' novels in Reardon (e.g. ps-Lucian *Ass-story*, Lucian *True Histories*), *The Golden Ass* and the *Satyricon*: would there be any problem with re-casting them in the 3rd person?

Do writers of ancient fiction ever play or experiment with the possibility of this transposition?

Could the same be done with other narratives e.g. Augustine's *Confessions*?

Could the same be done for modern first-person fictional narratives?

8. Literary History

Which literary 'person' is most popular and most prominent in

a) the Greek **romance** b) the Roman **novel**?

Which literary 'person' is most popular and most prominent in

a) Greek **literature** and b) Roman **literature**, generally?

Is this the luck of the draw in terms of what has survived or do these differences mean something about Greeks and Romans?

Helpful Reading

G. Genette *Narrative Discourse* (Cornell 1988)

G. Genette *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (Cornell 1993)

S. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction* (London 1988)