

# Doris Lessing's Narrative Technique as a Means of Artistic Creation of the World of Conflict and Reconciliation in *The Memoirs of a Survivor*

Mira Czarnecka

**Abstract:** The subject of the article will be the analysis of the narrative of conflict and reconciliation in *The Memoirs of a Survivor*, a dystopian novel by Doris Lessing, a postmodernist British author, and the description of the stylistic effect of disintegration and then fusion into unity achieved by the writer. For the purpose of the analysis the theory of narrative presented by Mieke Bal will be employed. The key tenets of the theory of narrative relevant to my task will be presented and then further elucidated by examples from the novel. This will be followed by an analysis of selected excerpts with a view of putting theory into practice. In the course of the analysis, among others, the following three strings of concepts of the above mentioned theory of narrative will be used: narrative, narrative text and narrative levels; perceptible narrator, character-bound narrator, external narrator; focalization, focalizator and character-bound focalizator. The analysis will be conducted with an aim to demonstrate that the narrative strategy employed by the author, that of the multiple voices speaking, results in the artistic creation of a broken world, which is, however, brought to unity as the narration ends, flowing into one voice.

**Keywords:** multiplicity, voices, narrative, conflict, reconciliation

In my article I will analyze the narrative technique employed by Doris Lessing, a postmodernist British author, in *The Memoirs of a Survivor*, a story of "the collapse of the old society" (Lessing 1976, 106). For the purpose of the analysis I will employ the theory of narrative, as presented by Mieke Bal (2012). I will start by outlining the story and the composition of the novel. I will then present

Mira Czarnecka "Doris Lessing's Narrative Technique as a Means of Artistic Creation of the World of Conflict and Reconciliation in *The Memoirs of a Survivor*", *Polish Journal of English Studies* 2.1 (2016): 39-55.

the key tenets of the theory of narrative relevant to my task and then I will further elucidate them by examples from the novel. This will be followed by an analysis of selected excerpts with a view of putting theory into practice. In the course of the analysis, among others, the following three strings of concepts of the above mentioned theory of narrative will be used: narrative, narrative text and narrative levels; perceptible narrator, character-bound narrator, external narrator; focalization, focalizer and character-bound focalizer. The analysis will be conducted with an aim to demonstrate that the narrative strategy, that of the multiple voices speaking, employed by the author, results in the artistic creation of a broken world, which is, however, brought to unity as the narration ends, flowing into one voice.

One of the major British post-war writers, Doris Lessing, in describing her artistic development, acknowledged the influence of the works of great realists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as Dostoyevsky, Balzac and Tolstoy (Lessing 1957 cited in Rubenstein 1979). The writer started as an admirer of psychological realism and her first novels followed its conventions. However, as her fiction grew in complexity, she found the realistic narrative method inadequate and started searching for new ways of “communicating the complex nature of consciousness” (Rubenstein 1979, 11). On the dust jacket of *The Golden Notebook*, published in 1962, Doris Lessing described her novel as an attempt to “break a form; to break certain forms of consciousness and go beyond them”. By saying this, she not only referred to doing away with the traditional form of narrative, but also to establishing a new relationship between mind and reality (Rubenstein 1979, 11). Doris Lessing’s continued experiments with the form and expression found further manifestation in her later novel, *The Memoirs of a Survivor*, published in 1974.

As the title suggests, the novel is written as a type of a memoir, with the central figure being the unnamed narrator. However, the memoir does not give the readers a realistic account of the past events but invites them to enter alternative visionary worlds – both mythic and individual. The narration deals with the reporting of events going on in the three spaces, constituting the novel’s world. The realistic background to the story is the life in the society pestered by the collapse of social rules and communication systems and by the breakdown of language. This self-consciousness of the status of language and narration dominates the story (Taylor 1982, 227). Katherine Fishburn, in *The Unexpected Universe of Doris Lessing. A Study in Narrative Technique*, took up, among others, *The Memoirs of a Survivor* as a subject

for the analysis of Doris Lessing's narrative methods. She identified them as techniques of narrative guide-leader, recognition and re-cognition. In this model, the narrator is an intermediary between the outside and the inner worlds, the first being a realistic, and the other, a fantastic one. The recognition consists in the readers being invited to recognize both worlds as their own, while the re-cognition is a process of readers comparing the worlds and deciding in which one they would prefer to live (Fishburn 1985, 42, 43, 49).

The action of *The Memoirs of a Survivor* is set in the future, in a place which, although not identified, is undoubtedly London - a big city in the south-east of England with an underground. There are many references to this public facility in the text: "They were living in the underground" (Lessing 1976, 152), "[T]hey would have the children smoked out of the underground" (Lessing 1976, 155), "the Underground gang" (Lessing 1976, 173), "'Kids' from the Underground" (Lessing 1976, 177) and "the gang of children from the Underground" (Lessing 1976, 170). The city is deprived of all the gains of civilization; none of the municipal systems work, the government exists but is no longer able to control and govern, the air has become toxic, food is scarce, official channels of communication are replaced by propaganda, and people abandon their homes to join travelling gangs.

The story is narrated by a "guide-leader" (Fishburn 1985, 38), whose name is never revealed and only a single incident informs the reader that she is a woman. This happens when one of the heroines addresses the Narrator in the following way: "Will you visit us? I mean Gerald says it is all right. I asked him, you see? I said to him, can *she* [emphasis added] come, do you see what I mean?" (Lessing 1976, 113). The Narrator is able to report the story, looking back on the events of the turbulent times, speaking as a "Survivor" and giving to the whole the form of a "letter to the past" (as cited in Greene 1994, 142). The first sentence of the novel, "We all remember that time" (Lessing 1976, 7), gives hope that there are other survivors. Although the identity of the "We" is never clearly established, the reader is led to believe that these can be both the witnesses of those difficult times and the audience to whom the story is related (Fishburn 1985, 39).

The narrator watches the process of disintegration from her flat. What happens inside the flat, conforms to traditional notions of time and place. Likewise, the events in the street happen in the present and influence the characters of the novel as they develop. They speak of the absurdities of the times, the terror of the disintegration of life and the uncertainty of what

is to come. At some point, however, the Narrator becomes aware of a new reality:

Yet there did come that moment when I had to admit that there was a room behind that wall, perhaps more than one, even a set of rooms, occupying the same space as, or rather overlapping with, the corridor (Lessing 1976, 11).

That this world belongs to a psychological rather than a physical realm the reader infers from the Narrator's words that it occupies "the same space" as the corridor (Greene 1994, 141-144). In that way the third dimension, "the space behind the wall" (Lessing 1976, 143), violating the traditional concepts of time and space, is introduced into the story.

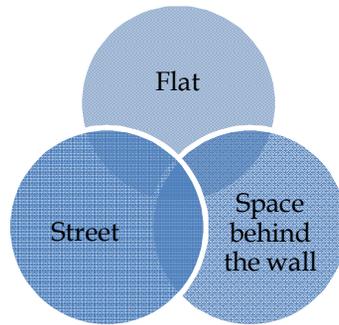


Figure 1. Graphic presentation of the three dimensions present in the novel.

The Narrator is able to penetrate beyond the wall and enter a visionary world:

One morning I stood with my after-breakfast cigarette ... and through clouds of blue coiling smoke looked at how the yellowness of the sun stretched in a foreshortened oblong, making the wall itself seem higher in the middle than at its ends. ... and then I was through the wall and I knew what was there (Lessing 1976, 15).

The first visit turns out to be a joyful experience: "I felt the most vivid expectancy, a longing: this place held what I needed, knew was there, had been

waiting for – oh yes, all my life, all my life” (Lessing 1976, 15). After a few days the visit is repeated: “And again the wall dissolved and I was through” (Lessing 1976, 16). The narration of current events begins when on the Narrator’s doorstep appears a man with a girl, Emily Cartright, accompanied by her pet, half dog, half cat named Hugo, and leaves them under the Survivor’s care. The life behind the wall turns out to be directly connected with Emily:

It was a day or two after Emily came: I was beyond the wall, and I kept opening doors, or turning the corners of long passages to find another room or suite of rooms. ... Everything I looked at would have to be replaced or mended or cleaned for nothing was whole, or fresh (Lessing 1976, 25).

Despite the fact that the next visit behind the wall begins in a similar way, it leads to a new type of emotional experience, which the Narrator will ascribe from that moment on to the scenes which she calls “personal”: “Moving through the tall, quiet white walls ... I came on a room ... which I knew ... and it was in such disorder I felt sick and I was afraid. ... I began cleaning it” (Lessing 1967, 39). “It was the first of the ‘personal’ experiences” (Lessing 1967, 40) described by the Narrator. Personal scenes represent destructive emotions, without any hope of improvement: “[T]he ‘personal’ was instantly to be recognized by the air that was its prison .... [T]o enter the ‘personal’ was to enter a prison, where nothing could happen but what one saw happening” (Lessing 1976, 40). Those scenes are related to Emily’s past, and in one case to her mother’s past. The first scene shows an evening ritual of putting children – Emily and her younger brother – to bed: “This small child was of course the Emily who had been given into my care” (Lessing 1976, 43). The “personal” scenes remain in contrast with “impersonal scenes”, which bring hope and a chance for change, although it requires work: “The impersonal scenes might bring discouragement or problems that had to be solved ... but in that realm there was a lightness, a freedom, a feeling of possibility” (Lessing 1976, 40).

In total, the Narrator visits the world behind the wall eighteen times, and the last visit forms a closure to the story, marking the end of the physical world which she inhabits: “It all came to an end” (Lessing 1976, 189). I will return to that scene later on, as it is central to the story and it is a moment when the final unity, the subject reconciliation, is achieved. I will now introduce

the theoretical framework which I will use to analyse the narrative technique employed by Doris Lessing in the novel.

In his *Narrative Discourse. An Essay in Method*, Gérard Genette (1980) provided the first systematic description of the theory of narrative. Arguing that in written narrative, the temporal plane of the story is converted into the spacial plane of the text, he identified three elements organizing the spacial structure of narration: *Order*, a temporal order of the succession of the events in the story and a pseudo-temporal order of their arrangement in the narrative; *Duration*, a duration of a narrative compared to the duration of the story; and *Frequency*, the relations of frequency between the narrative and the diegesis (Genette 1980, 35, 87, 113). He further defined *Narrative mood* as a regulation of narrative information, its two chief modalities being: *Distance*, as narrative can seem to keep at a greater or lesser distance from what it tells, and *Perspective*, the point of view which narrative seems to take on with regard to the story (Genette 1980, 162). The author differentiated between a narrative of events, being a transcription of non-verbal into the verbal, and a narrative of words, its two major forms being recopying and rewriting (Genette 1980, 165, 169). Through connecting distance to the narrative of words, Genette identified narratized or narrated speech, narrative of thoughts and narratized inner speech, as the most distant techniques, and transposed speech, in indirect style and free indirect style, as an intermediate solution, and further, immediate speech – interior monologue – in which the narrator gives floor to his character, as the most direct one (Genette 1980, 171–175). Elaborating on the *Perspective*, Genette differentiated *Mood*, i.e. the point of view which orients the narrative perspective (who sees), *Voice*, i.e. the narrator (who speaks) and *Focalization*, i.e. the focus of narration. The researcher further distinguished between: *nonfocalized* narratives, narratives with *internal focalization* and narratives with *external focalization* (Genette 1980, 186–190). In the foreword to Genette's work, Jonathan Culler pointed out that the notion of focalization, as presented by the author, was further developed by Mieke Bal, who continued research into the theory of narrative (Genette 1980, 10).

In *Narratologia. Wprowadzenie do teorii narracji*, Bal presented her narrative model devised along three layers: *narrative text*, *story* and *fabula*. The *narrative text* is a text in which an agent or a subject relates to the reader a story via a specified medium (language, image, sound, construction or a mixture of the four), the *story* is the contents of such a text and a source of the concrete manifestation, shape and the colouring of the *fabula*, while the *fabula* is a system

of logically and chronologically connected events, provoked or experienced by actors and presented in a specific way. *Actors* are agents who undertake action (Bal 2012, 3–4). The *narrative situation* is determined by two elements, a *narrator* and a *focalizer* (Bal 2012, 18). The first element, the *narrator*, is a fictional representative, an intermediary appointed by the writer; if it never declares himself/herself as a character in the story, he/she is the so called *external narrator* (NZ), and if it can be identified as one of the characters, he/she is the *character-bound narrator* (NP) (Bal 2012, 7, 22). The second element, the *focalizer*, is a point from which the elements are seen. It can merge with the point of view of a character (i.e. be a part of the *fabula*, resulting in *internal focalization*) or it can be placed outside it (bringing about *external focalization*) (Bal 2012, 151). Focalization performed by the character (FP) may change, move from one character to another, even if the narrator remains the same (Bal 2012, 153). A major part of Bal's narrative model deals with the narration of words, its key elements being *narrative levels* and *personal* and *impersonal language situation* (Bal 2012, 48, 51). I will now apply Bal's theory to the analysis of Doris Lessing's narrative technique in *The Memoirs of a Survivor*, and in doing so, I will discuss its elements in more detail.

The Narrator of the story forming the novel's plot, the Survivor, discloses her identity in the text and calls herself an "I", which makes her a perceptible narrator (Np) (Bal 2012, 27). "I [emphasis added] shall begin this account at a time before we were talking about 'it'" (Lessing 1976, 9). At the same time, the Narrator, or the narration agent, appears in the story as a character, thus becoming the character-bound narrator (NP) (Bal 2012, 22). In the text, the Narrator frequently addresses the prospective readers of the memoirs directly, informing them about important events, signalling changes, explaining things or seeking understanding.

The story begins with the already quoted words: "We [emphasis added] all remember that time" (Lessing 1976, 7). As the story continues, the Narrator frequently turns to the reader in a direct way: "I [emphasis added] was beyond the wall, and I [emphasis added] kept opening doors, or turning the corners of long passages to find another room or suite of rooms" (Lessing 1976, 25), "But more of this later [emphasis added], when I describe 'the Ryans' in their proper place" (Lessing 1976, 107), "Things continued to be easier between Emily and me [emphasis added]" (Lessing 1976, 125), "I [emphasis added] sat listening. I [emphasis added] sat by myself ... it was that hot final summer" (Lessing 1976, 131), "I think this is the right place to say [emphasis added]

something more about 'it'" (Lessing 1976, 135) and "*Perhaps I would have done* [emphasis added] better to have begun this chronicle with an attempt at a full description of 'it'" (Lessing 1976, 136).

All the quoted excerpts are examples of the narrator's personal language situation, which draws on the language of direct interaction between the speaker and the listener (Bal 2012, 51). Its typical textual markers are the use of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> personal pronouns as well as of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grammatical persons. Not all past tenses are possible. As far as deixis is concerned, demonstrative pronouns *this* and *these*, adverbs of place *here/there*, adverbs of time *today*, *tomorrow* are used. Other indicators of personal language situation include words and phrases in their emotive function, e.g. *Oh!*, words and phrases used in their connotative functions, such as direct forms of address, direct orders and questions, e.g. *Please*, modal verbs and adverbs indicating the uncertainty of the speaker, e.g. *maybe*. The instances of the personal language situation indicators, in the quoted excerpts, are the following: *We*, *I*, *But more of this later*, *me*, *I think this is the right place to say*, *Perhaps I would have done*. In all those cases, the Narrator, who is at the same time an actor, addresses the reader directly; hence, in terms of Bal's theory of narrative, we are dealing here with a personal language situation on the first narrative level (Bal 2012, 52–53). The resulting stylistic effect is that the reader hears one recognizable and clear voice with which he or she identifies and also gets drawn into the events of the story.

The speech of actors can be reported on the first narrative level, so that the narrator embraces it as his or her own. Its most frequent example is indirect speech, when the narrator quotes with maximum precision the words which were supposedly uttered by the actor (Bal 2012, 53). Other markers of indirect speech are the presence of the reporting verb, usually in the past tense, often followed by *that* and accompanied by the change of pronouns, tenses and sentence structure (Graver 1986, 173–174). Indirect speech is an example of an impersonal language situation, as the language concerns other speakers (Bal 2012, 51). The indicators of the impersonal language situation are the use of the third singular and plural personal pronoun and of the third person in general, the use of all past tenses, the use of demonstrative pronouns *that* and *these*, of adverbs of place, such as *in that place*, and of adverbs of time, such as *on that day*, *the following day*. No words and phrases in their emotive function, no direct forms of address, no direct orders or questions and no modal verbs are used.

In the story told by the Survivor, the use of indirect speech is very rare: "She *said* [emphasis added] to me, to Emily, and doubtless to herself, *that she was going* [emphasis added], yes, *she would go* [emphasis added] tomorrow" (Lessing 1976, 144-145). In the quoted excerpt, the indicators of the impersonal language situation are the following: the use of the pronoun *she*, the use of the past continuous tense form - *was going*, and the use of the future in the past tense form - *would go*. The use of *yes* and *tomorrow* mark the narrator's strategy of flavoring the string of words with personal features of June's style, whose speech has been reported, thus betraying the focalization performed through her eyes.

Another way to report the speech of actors on the first narrative level is to cite it with maximum precision and attention to detail, but with the omission of the reporting verb and other markers of indirect speech form. This construction is characterized by a strikingly personalized style, which can be attributed to an actor, and a number of details greater than would be justified by the story being told (Bal 2012, 55). Indicators of a personal language situation of an actor and of an (im)personal language situation of a narrator add up and interfere (Bal 2012, 55). In such a situation, it is impossible to distinguish clearly between narration levels (Bal 2012, 57). This method of speech presentation is even more indirect than indirect speech and can be called apparent indirect speech (in the Polish translation of the quoted source, it is labeled as *mowa pozornie zależna*). The Narrator uses this form of speech presentation very frequently. In the quoted excerpt, I have marked the indicators of actor's personal language situation by printing them in italics:

I did try the word out on June: 'Gerald's harem,' I said; and her little face puzzled up at me. She had heard the word, but had not associated it with anything that could come close to her. But yes, she had seen a film, and yes, Gerald had a harem. She, June, was part of it [emphasis added]. She even giggled, looking at me with those pale blue eyes that seemed always to be swallowing astonishment (Lessing 1976, 146).

The third form of representing the speech of actors on the first narrative level is narrative text. There are some objective difficulties with discriminating between this form and apparent indirect speech, as both those forms are characterized by representing the actor's words with maximum precision and at-

tention to detail, as well as the lack of a reporting verb and *that*. What follows, we can discriminate between those two forms only if there are clear indicators described above that we are dealing with the representation of the actor's words; otherwise we assume that it is a narrative text. In the narrative text, the actor's words are represented not as a text, but as a language act (Bal 2012, 57):

What he wanted was to have her back. He wanted her to go up with him, to live with him, as queen, or chief lady, or brigand's woman, among the children, his gang. And she did not want this; she most definitely did not want this (Lessing 1976, 175).

When an actor addresses another actor, we are dealing with an actor's personal language situation on the second narrative level. The change of the narrative level is additionally marked in the text by the introduction of the reporting verb, colon or quotation marks (Bal 2012, 52). An example of the personal language situation on the second narrative level is direct speech. This form of presentation can also involve words which have been only thought (Bal 2012, 50). The author of the memoirs frequently quotes other persons' words as well as her own thoughts:

At which the child brightened up at once, and she said, turning her attention to me with difficulty: 'Will you visit us? I mean Gerald says it is all right. I asked him, you see? I said to him, can she come, do you see what I mean?'  
'I'd like to very much,' I said, having consulted Emily with my eyes (Lessing 1976, 113).

In the quoted excerpt, the Narrator also becomes an actor (NP), participating in events. In relatively few cases in the narrative, the narrator does not define himself/herself as a character in the story, thus being an external narrator (NZ) (Bal 2012, 21):

A man shouted: 'I'll call the police myself, and you can have it out with me afterwards. We have to do it, or the whole neighborhood will go up in flames one of these nights.' ...  
Someone shouted: 'They're off.' ...

'Shame,' called a woman from the crowd. 'They're scared, poor little mites' (Lessing 1976, 163).

The Narrator also quotes her thoughts: "'Yes, of course!' one would think. 'That's it. I've known that for some time. It's just that I haven't actually heard it put like that, I hadn't grasped it...'" (Lessing 1976, 8).

The majority of direct speech instances used in the narrative of *The Memoirs of a Survivor* are included in the narrative text without being introduced by the reporting verb or are given in quotation marks and embedded on the first narrative level. According to Bal's terminology, these are examples of the actor's personal language situation on the second narrative level. The instances of direct speech, very frequent in the text of the *Memoirs*, are a representation of the language act and, being such, contribute to the dramatization of the story (Bal 2012, 49, 53): "We would take rooms in the guest-house, and Emily would 'help with the chickens'" (Lessing 1976, 33), "June was not well. Our question brought out of her that this was nothing new, she hadn't been too good 'for quite a time.' Symptoms? 'I dunno, jst feel bad, you know what I mean.'" (Lessing 1976, 137), "She 'jst didn't feel good anywhere at all, it comes and goes, reely'." (Lessing 1976, 138).

Although the story is mainly told by the Narrator, the subject Survivor, the reader is not limited to seeing everything through the Narrator's eyes. The point of view from which we look at the events varies; as a result, the reader gets a fuller and a more multifaceted picture of the situation. In Bal's terminology, such a point of view construct is called focalization and the agent performing the focalization is given the name of a focalizator (Bal 2012, 151, 153). When a character in the story becomes also a focalizator, he or she is called a character-bound focalizator (FP). In the course of the story, besides the point of view of the Narrator, we get the points of views of other characters: June, Emily, Gerald and several other persons.

In the quoted excerpts (Lessing 1976, 137, 138), the Narrator described June's health problems. In the first one (Lessing 1976, 137), in the two initial sentences, the Narrator and the focalizator are one person, the subject Survivor, and in the third sentence, the focalization moves from the Narrator (FP) to June (FP1). This is marked by the use of her idiosyncratic speech as well as of the 1<sup>st</sup> personal pronoun. The focalization and the idiosyncrasies of speech belong to June, also in the second quoted excerpt (Lessing 1976, 138). In "She was radiant with amazement, not seeing me or her surroundings,

and I knew she was saying to herself: But he's chosen *me, me...* and this did not mean *And I'm only thirteen!*" (Lessing 1976, 77), the focalizer in the second sentence is Emily, which is demonstrated in the use of 1<sup>st</sup> person pronouns. In still another example (Lessing, 1976), the focalization moves from the Narrator (FP) to Gerald (FP1), which is visible in the use of *well, if* and *perhaps* and of the question structure:

These were the children Gerald had decided must be rescued by his household. Where would they all fit in? *Well* [emphasis added], somewhere, and *if* [emphasis added] they didn't, there was that other big house just across the road, and *perhaps* [emphasis added] Emily and he *could run the two houses between them* [emphasis added]? (Lessing 1976, 156)

By giving in that way the ground over to other characters (June, Emily and Gerald), Lessing is able to introduce a multiplicity of voices, despite there being only one narrator in the story.

To sum up, my analysis of the narrative technique employed in *The Memoirs of a Survivor*, illustrated by selected examples, demonstrates that the narrative in the novel is dominated by the Narrator's direct addresses to the reader and the use of apparent indirect speech and direct speech. Although the readers are presented with a long narrative, which can be expected in the memoirs writing, the technique consisting in the presentation of the personal language situation of actors, flavored by distinctive idiosyncrasies of their speech (cf. June) as well as shifts in focalization results in the effect of a multiplicity of voices speaking. To further prove this point, I will analyze in detail a longer passage being a representative sample of the described narrative technique.

The passage I have chosen for the analysis is a scene when the Whites, Survivor's neighbors, are leaving their flat and saying goodbye to her and Emily:

The Whites, as if nothing had happened to our world, were off on a journey, and Janet was saying: 'Oh quick, do let's go, let's go, Mummy, Daddy, it's horrid being here when there's no one left.' [1] ... I stood silent, watching the Whites fuss and arrange, seeing my past, our pasts: it looked comic [2]. It *was* comic [3]. We always had been ridiculous, little, self-important animals,

acting our roles, playing our parts...it was not pretty, watching the Whites, and seeing oneself [4]. And then we all said goodbye, quite in the old style: *it was nice to know you, I hope we'll meet again* [emphasis added], all that kind of thing, as if nothing much was happening [5]. They had discovered that a coach was going out of the city that afternoon, ten miles to the north, on some kind of official business [6]. Not for the use of ordinary citizens, but they had bribed and urged their way into being on this coach, which would set them down a mile from the airport, with their luggage [7]. *An official flight was scheduled for the extreme north this afternoon* [emphasis added]: again, while no ordinary person could ever get on such a flight, the head of the department and his family might just manage it, if they had the money – *astronomical, of course* [emphasis added], not for fares but, again, for bribes [8]. What bartering and promises and threats and appeals must have gone into this journey, what a fearful effort – and all of it entirely in the new style, our new mode, that of survival, of surviving at all costs – but not a trace of this showed in their manner: *Goodbye, goodbye, it was nice to have you both as neighbours, see you soon perhaps, yes I do hope so, goodbye, pleasant journey* [emphasis added] [9] (Lessing 1976, 171).

Table 1 gives a summary analysis, by sentence, of the use in the passage of the four elements of the presented narrative technique: method of speech presentation, narrative level on which the speech is presented, personal or impersonal language situation and the subject of focalization.

No	Sentence	Method of speech presentation	Narrative level	Personal/Impersonal language situation	Focalizer
1	The Whites, as if nothing had happened to our world, were off on a journey, and Janet was saying: 'Oh quick, do let's go, let's go. Mummy, Daddy, it's horrid being here when there's no one left.'	Narrative text and direct speech	First and second	narrator's personal language situation, actor's personal language situation	character-bound narrator and focalizer [NP-(FP)] and character-bound focalizer (FP1)
2	I stood silent, watching the Whites fuss and arrange, seeing my past, our pasts: it looked comic.	Narrative text	First	narrator's personal language situation	character-bound narrator and focalizer (FP)
3	It was comic.	Narrative text	First	narrator's personal language situation	character-bound narrator and focalizer (FP)
4	We always had been ridiculous, little, self-important animals, acting our roles, playing our parts...it was not pretty, watching the Whites, and seeing oneself.	Narrative text	First	narrator's personal language situation	character-bound narrator and focalizer (FP)
5	And then we all said goodbye, quite in the old style: it was nice to know you, I hope we'll meet again, all that kind of thing, as if nothing much was happening.	Narrative text and direct speech	First and second	narrator's personal language situation and actor's personal language situation	character-bound narrator and focalizer (NP-FP) and character-bound focalizer (FP1)
6	They had discovered that a coach was going out of the city that afternoon, ten miles to the north, on some kind of official business.	Apparent indirect speech	First	narrator's personal language situation and actor's personal language situation	character-bound narrator and focalizer (NP-FP) and character-bound focalizer (FP1)
7	Not for the use of ordinary citizens, but they had bribed and urged their way into being on this coach, which would set them down a mile from the airport, with their luggage.	Apparent indirect speech	First	narrator's personal language situation and actor's personal language situation	character-bound narrator and focalizer (NP-FP) and character-bound focalizer (FP1)
8	An official flight was scheduled for the extreme north this afternoon: again, while no ordinary person could ever get on such a flight, the head of the department and his family might just manage it, if they had the money – astronomical, of course, not for fares but, again, for bribes.	Apparent indirect speech	First	narrator's personal language situation and actor's personal language situation	character-bound narrator and focalizer (NP-FP) and character-bound focalizer (FP1)
9	What bartering and promises and threats and appeals must have gone into this journey, what a fearful effort – and all of it entirely in the new style, our new mode, that of survival, of surviving at all costs – but not a trace of this showed in their manner: Goodbye, goodbye, it was nice to have you both as neighbours, see you soon perhaps, yes I do hope so, goodbye, pleasant journey	Narrative text and direct speech	First and second	narrator's personal language situation, actor's personal language situation and narrator's personal language situation	character-bound narrator and focalizer (NP-FP) and character-bound focalizer (FP1)

Table 1. The use of narrative elements in the selected passage.

The exact calculation of the number of occurrences of particular narrative elements is given in Table 2:

Method of speech presentation	No of instances	Narrative level	No of instances	Personal/Impersonal language situation	No of instances	Focalizer	No of instances
Direct speech	3	second level	3	actor's personal language situation	3	character-bound focalizer (FP1)	3
Indirect speech	0	first level	0	actor's impersonal language situation	0	character-bound narrator and focalizer [NP(FP)]	0
Apparent indirect speech	3	first level	3	actor's personal language situation and narrator's personal language situation	3	character-bound narrator and focalizer (FP1)	3
Narrative text	6	first level	6	narrator's personal language situation	6	character-bound narrator and focalizer [NP(FP)]	6

Table 2. The calculation of the number of instances of particular narrative elements in the selected passage.

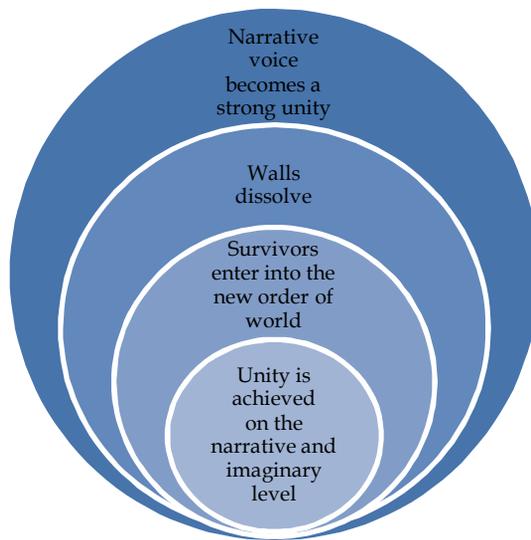
The breakdown given in Table 2 reveals the following paradigm: frequent occurrence of direct and apparent indirect speech, combined with an actor's

and narrator's personal language situation (six instances) and a lack of indirect speech forms (zero instances); focalization performed by the character-bound narrator and focalizator (six instances) and character-bound-focalizator (six instances), accompanied by shifts in focalization; narration conducted by a perceptible character-bound narrator, combined with the narrator's personal language situation (six instances) and absence of external narration (zero instances). Despite the fact that the passage comes from the novel titled the *Memoirs* (which under normal circumstances would entail the dominance of the voice of narrator and the relating of events in the indirect speech), the technique of the frequent use of the personal language situation and focalization by character-bound focalizators as well as extensive employment of direct and apparent indirect speech forms result in an artistic creation of a veritable cacophony - a multiplicity of voices speaking - exemplifying the conflict behind the tale. The conflict continues for some time but then the events start to take on an unexpected turn.

On the narrative level, the events of the finale are related by the Survivor. The narrative technique employed by Lessing is that of a narrative text and narrator's personal language situation (marked for example by the use of "I"). The focalizator and narrator are one person: "but no, I did not see that, or if I did, not clearly," "No, I am not able to say clearly what she was like," "I only saw her for a moment," "all I can say is... nothing at all" (Lessing 1976, 190). At one moment, there appears a sign which alarms the Narrator: "Then, one morning, a weak yellow stain lay on the wall, and there, brought to life, was the hidden pattern" (Lessing 1976, 189). The Narrator has a feeling that something important will happen soon, so she calls her companions to join her. It is for the last time in the story that we hear her speaking in the direct voice: "Emily - Emily! Gerald and Emily, come quickly. Hugo, where are you?" (Lessing 1976, 189). On the plane of events, the Narrator, Emily, George and Hugo go through the wall and enter an imaginary world, being a colorful collage of all the possibilities that the Survivor experienced on her former visits in the space behind the wall. The people they meet there are also a fusion of former worlds, including Emily's father and mother and the children of the street. An iron egg forms a part of the scenery and when it falls apart a patterned carpet appears out of it. It comes back to life each time one of the persons surrounding it finds a matching piece. The new world is a whirling colorful whole:

[T]hat world, presenting itself in a thousand little flashes, a jumble of little scenes, facets of another picture, all impermanent, was folding up as we stepped into it, was parceling itself up, was vanishing, dwindling and going – all of it, trees, and streams, grasses and rooms and people (Lessing 1976, 190).

As the multiple voices of a broken world, manifest in the narrative of conflict, flow into one narrating voice of the Narrator and the characters of the novel, the Survivors, enter the new order of world: “[A]nd they all followed quickly on after the others as the last walls dissolved” (Lessing 1976, 190), the final unity through synthesis is achieved on the narrative and imaginary level, and the world undergoes a final reconciliation.



**Figure 2.** Final reconciliation.

To sum up, in my article I have presented the key tenets of the theory of narrative with regard to narrative text analysis, as proposed by first Gérard Genette and then Mieke Bal. I have applied Bal’s theory to the analysis of narrative in *The Memoirs of a Survivor* by Doris Lessing. In my research, I have focused on the four elements of the narrative technique employed by the author: method of speech presentation (direct, indirect and apparent indirect

speech and narrative text), narrative level, and personal/impersonal language situation and focalization. I have analyzed selected excerpts from the novel with regard to the application of those elements by the author and the stylistic effect which this brought about. I have argued, and to my best belief proved, that the narrative technique employed by Doris Lessing in the novel via the initial effect of the multiplicity of voices speaking works toward the artistic creation a broken world which is, however, brought to unity as the narration, flowing into one voice, comes to a closure and the final reconciliation on the narrative and imaginary levels is attained.

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