



Viewpoint and Text World Construction in *A Visit from the Goon Squad*: A Cognitive Narratological Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on viewpoint analysis in relation to world building in “A Visit from the Goon Squad” through linguistic means and deicticals. The text world is actually a reality or scenario that arises in our minds during the active reading process. Being a discourse participant, it is primarily our cognitive schemata that help us identify these worlds and later edify our understanding of text world scenario. To conduct this study, after careful reading and re-reading of the novel, a subtext was created that served as the foundation for linguistic data collection. The analysis focused on identifying world-building elements and function-advancing propositions, sorting out modal worlds to explore varying viewpoints of characters within the text. An integrated method that incorporates both narratological and cognitive-linguistic elements aided in understanding that the instances of speech and thought representation (FDS, FIS, FIT, FDT) and deixis hints at the change in viewpoint of characters. In fact, the narrative events presented through participants or enactors’ perspective influenced the semantics of the text. The meaning varied upon the change in the perspective of a character, context of the participant and already existing schemata. This study is important for linguistics, narratology and education as it explores how disoriented (postmodern) narratives can be better understood using the Text-world approach and the focalization technique. It sheds light on how writers guide us through text worlds using our temporal, spatial, deictic and subjective knowledge.



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INTRODUCTION

A narrative is primarily understood by analyzing words and phrases linked up to convey a thought. The meaning of these words depends on the context of their usage. The reader understands and interprets the narrative by referring to linguistic schemata established with time due to cultural and linguistic exposure of an individual. In other words, the interpretation depends on the interaction between the text’s terms (language) and the individual interpreter’s previous knowledge (Smith, 2004). Furthermore, the reader may understand the text fully by not only analyzing lexical and grammatical components but also constructing text worlds using

cultural knowledge, experiences and cognitive schemata. This approach to narrative comprehension based on mental representation takes its theoretical and methodological inspiration from cognitive linguistics and psychology.

The process of text world building is crucial to narrative comprehension; a reader can comprehend a narrative if s/he is able to create or imagine “a scenario, a text world, a state of affairs, in which that text makes sense” (Enkvist, 1991, p. 7) with the help of linguistic signs. We can imagine the text world when we endeavor to understand the language used in a literary context. The emphasis is put on the linguistic elements like tense pointers, article usage and deictics that are pivotal to the “reconstruction of situation” (Semino, 2014, p. 9). Here the word “situation” means the scenario most likely to be imagined by a reader while reading the words on page. To put it simply, the mental representation of text worlds depends on a cautious investigation of linguistic constructions in a narrative.

The time and space cues help the reader in situating the text world as they lay out the context in a narrative. The spatial and temporal deixis gives indications so that a reader can find a reference in a literary context and imagine the situation from his/her own perspective. As a reader, we need to understand how the linguistic cues such as *this*, *there*, *now* and *then*, etc. coordinate a mental transportation from physical reading process to experiencing the events that take place in a narrative. In the field of narratology, it is termed as “deictic shift”. It facilitates the transportation of a reader from the real world to the text world. To fully comprehend a text, the reader, now turned into an interpreter, invests in the story both mentally and emotionally to recreate a new text world or modify the previous one. Building on the cognitive aspect of storytelling, it may be suggested that narrative comprehension requires incorporation of “cognitive and imaginative responses, encompassing sympathy, the drawing of causal inferences, identification, evaluation, suspense, and so on” (Herman, 2002, p. 5). The cognitive perspective comes from the view that we create mental maps of the narratives we interpret, understanding the storyline through its spatiotemporal orientation. The maps created as a result of the interpretation process are termed “frames” (Emmott, 1997, p. 3), “mental spaces” (Fauconnier, 1994, p. 8) and “worlds” (Gerrig, 1993; Werth, 1999).

The practice of world formation facilitates us to identify a focalized narration. *Focalized* here means that an event or experience is shown from the vantage point of some character or a heterodiegetic narrator who does not belong to the text world and sees the events from outside the text world. The text world here means “mental models” (Ryan, 1991, p. 18) pointing to the doer and the action performed by him in a certain place, time and manner of the action. These models provide the cues to the language users so that they can interpret the implicit happenings in the context of a story. Herman (2002) posits that the interpreters reimagine text or story-worlds using textual hints for the close study of a narrative. It is worth mentioning that these worlds have been termed differently by the narratologists such as “narrative worlds”, “text worlds”, “storyworlds” and “possible worlds” (Gerrig, 1993; Werth, 1999; Herman, 2002 and Ryan, 1991) respectively.

In order to comprehend narratives, we need to engage with texts at a cognitive linguistic level because it enables us to follow the progression of storyline, narrators and characters as they unfold over time and space. Our minds are able to create mental images of the information that is delivered through various narrative techniques and later adjusted in the form of schemas. When necessary, these preexisting schemas assist us in interpreting the incoming data.

Furthermore, the interpretation involves more than just reconstructing events that occur in the story's time and space; rather, it enables the readers to utilize their cognitive linguistic skills to construct fictitious worlds (Tucan, 2013). It also has to do with our imagination to comprehend diverse viewpoints presented by characters depending on their understanding of occurrence. It is possible for the main story to incorporate all of the possible stories (viewpoints) into one. This line of reasoning is consistent with the general topic of the study. It is therefore necessary to elaborate on relevant narratological ideas in order to conduct a thorough analysis of the potential text worlds. For this reason, the scope of this study is restricted to understanding focalization, spatial-temporal and other linguistic cues used in discourse for the construction of text worlds in *A Visit from the Goon Squad*.

An Overview of *A Visit from the Goon Squad*

A Visit from the Goon Squad by Jennifer Egan was first published in 2010. Later in 2011, it was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for its unique storytelling approach and interwoven stories that could be processed both individually and as a whole. It includes a selection of tales that spreads through multiple decades and delve into the concepts of music, recollections, and the evolution of time in a peculiar way. Further, the title of the book derives from a phrase coined by one of the key characters, music executive Bennie Salazar, who refers to time's relentless march as the "goon squad" (p. 259).

Egan skillfully combines a range of storytelling approaches, including first-person accounts, second-person narration, and even a chapter that is delivered as a PowerPoint presentation to show how the characters' lives have changed over time due to technological advancements. The narrative looks at the evolution of the music industry from the punk rock era of the 1970s to the digital era of the 21st century.

Rationale for Selecting this Novel

A Visit from the Goon Squad was selected by the researchers for this study because of its creative use of temporal and spatial shifts, which complements the unpredictable nature of reality and facilitates character development, making it appropriate for a text-world approach. The study underscores practical implications for readers and teachers that would help them in understanding a complex narrative such as this one. It is a postmodern text that won a Pulitzer prize for fiction.

Statement of the Problem

In *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (Egan, 2011), a complicated network of interrelated characters and events results in overlapping narratives and uncertain connections between them. The line between fact and fiction becomes less distinct in postmodern narrative style. The creation of each character's mental environment is further complicated by the shifting between several temporal and spatial dimensions. It is challenging to discern distinct connections between the characters and their individual stories, despite the use of linguistic cues and narrative devices to assist readers visualize the characters' worlds. Therefore, there is a need to investigate how these components affect the process of meaning-making, which ultimately leads to better text comprehension. The objectives of this study are to examine the linguistic tools that Egan employed to traverse these overlapping stories (multiple perspectives), and examine the function of one's cognitive-linguistic schemas in narrative comprehension.

Research Questions

This study investigates the following questions:

- 1) What language techniques does Jennifer Egan use in *A Visit from the Goon Squad* to conjure up potential fictional worlds based on the text scenario?
- 2) How do different linguistic items contribute to the understanding of characters’ viewpoints in the text?
- 3) How can one deal with the unforeseen transformations in time and space using spatiotemporal (linguistic) schemata?

Significance of the Study

This study may instruct students on the linguistic and narrative techniques that authors employ to construct the textual world. Understanding the thought process of the characters and sub-worlds creation (epistemic, deontic and boulomaic) in *A Visit from the Goon Squad* would be beneficial for readers in general and students in particular; further, they may understand what and how various language elements are used in the text to portray different characters’ viewpoint. Through reading, the students will have a deeper grasp of the self-projection involved in the function of the deictic center.

Delimitation of the Study

In order to explore the semantics of fictionality, the literary inquiry examines a multitude of storytelling aspects such as characterization, plot, focalization, etc. Nonetheless, the researchers have delimited this investigation to the understanding and construction of potential textual worlds in relation to viewpoint (focalization) of various characters. Additionally, the data is restricted to examining excerpts from Egan’s novel *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2011).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is qualitative in nature as it centers on the linguistic and narratological aspects of a literary narrative. Drawing on the concept of world-builders and function-advancers given by Gavins (2007), this study employs an exploratory approach to examine the characters’ thought processes and the linguistic structure of text worlds in relation to various events occurring inside the story.

Table 1. World-builders Elements demonstrated by Gavins (2007)

| | |
|---|--|
| a | Time: temporal adverbial clauses, adverbs of time, tense variations |
| b | Place: locative adverbs, locative adverbial clauses, locative noun phrases |
| c | Entities: abstract/concrete noun phrases |
| d | Demonstratives (this, that, these, those) |
| e | Referential element “the” |

Table 2. Function-advancers demonstrated by Gavins (2007)

| Text Categories | Predicate Type | Function |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Narrative | sequence, action | develops the plot |

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|--|
| Descriptive (act) | state | advances the scene |
| Descriptive (person) | state, property | enhances the enactors' description |
| Descriptive (routine) | habitual | adding details regarding repetitive action |

Sample of the Study

To investigate how potential text worlds are portrayed in Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, the researchers have chosen excerpts from the book based on recurring linguistic patterns.

Data Collection Method

The researchers read and re-read the novel and then tagged and combined pertinent sections to create a new file or subtext. In accordance with the study objectives, a variety of excerpts were chosen, including Direct Speech and thought (DS, DT), Indirect Speech and thought (IS, IT), internal monologue and spatial and temporal deixis, etc.

Data Analysis Procedures

The researchers identified world-builders and function-advancers to determine the accessibility of the text worlds based on characters' thought processes. Later, these worlds and spatiotemporal shifts are illustrated in the form of figures.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cognitive Narratology

The early to mid-1990s witnessed a cognitive turn in narratology, which was acknowledged by several linguistic and literary departments. Lakoff (1980) proposed integrated linguistic approach and focused on the concept of conceptual metaphor, which is the most prominent cognitive linguistic methodology in the United States. Likewise, the subfields of linguistics such as stylistics and rhetorical studies have adapted analytical techniques from artificial intelligence and schema theory to investigate how language influences a reader's interpretation of story. These techniques expanded to include media studies, educators and literary theorists.

There is a strong evidence that language users are able to identify and construct stories in any narrative format (oral or written) owing to the efforts of numerous distinguished researchers who have explored the areas of human cognition and mental mapping. The stories here mean both the ordinary stories we read aloud without much consideration, and the literary stories we interpret with almost identical mental processes. Turner (1996), a cognitive scientist, builds on the same concept and posits, "If we want to study everyday mind, we can begin by turning to the literary mind exactly because the everyday mind is essentially literary" (p. 7). Turner (ibid) wants to convey that although stories are all around us, we ignore them because we are preoccupied with our environment. It is possibly for this reason that examining the brain processes that are relatively comparable in both literary and popular narratives may help scholars delve further into this area.

Within the discipline of cognitive narratology, scholars have developed many approaches to reevaluate literary interpretation with respect to narrative as a comprehension tool. This helps explain our sensations and the functioning of the brain. For instance, Gavins' TWT theory facilitates readers to map the locations that a character or narrator visits in detail. It focuses on how text worlds are mentally represented. These universes are intended to exist in various forms and order, and the reader is free to navigate between them in order to fully understand the plot. This technique is peculiar since it is based on the notion that the building of a text's reality greatly depends on the reader's filtered awareness. As text worlds are primarily "products of the perceiving mind", it is therefore impossible to understand them without considering the cognitive component (p. 10). Expanding upon Gavins' concept, we consider text to be created haphazardly and then reconfigured by the reader who at last organizes each hierarchical role independently inside the text. Such structures are unquestionably not pre-built systems.

World-building and Text-World Approach

Text worlds are mental images that enable us to generate information about the people, places and things that are either directly mentioned in the story or suggested by specific clues scattered throughout the text. Similarly, one may concur that stories and texts act as a means to picturize the events being recalled; for example, when a reader thinks along the lines of who did what to whom, when, where and why, s/he fortifies the boundaries of a text world. Generally speaking, narratives—whether they come from texts or visual art—provide "blueprints" for building and altering these kinds of magical worlds (Herman, 2009, p. 107).

TWT's primary goal is to investigate the area of world-building via linguistic signals. In light of this perspective, text worlds are projected using what we refer to as "world-building elements" which are deictic signals in a text. This aids in defining the temporal and spatial limits of our mental images as well as the characters that exist in the real world (referred to as actors in Text-world jargon). Function-advancing propositions broaden the plot by describing acts, events or states in order to build on the situation. Participants in the discourse, readers in this case, can extract all pertinent information from their prior knowledge, comprehending the creation and reception of the environment while feeling fully engaged in the discourse world.

The text-world building approach was first proposed by Werth (1995) who expanded on it in his posthumous research work named *Text Worlds: Representing Conceptual Space in Discourse* (Werth, 1999). Drawing on the cognitivist perspective, Werth (1999) postulated that "all of semantics and pragmatics operate within a set of stacked cognitive spaces termed as mental worlds" (p. 17), discovering that the discourse-driven nature of the numerous processes, the situational effect, and human experiential knowledge are crucial for this strategy. It becomes copiously clear that metaphor is necessary to convey a wide range of experiences for which we lack a precise language expression.

Text worlds are created and understood at the discourse world level using world-building material (deictic elements) (Hallam, 2013). Through these components, we obtain the necessary instructions as well as information about time, space, the actors in the action and the objects. On the other hand, function-advancing propositions aid in the discourse's progression. To modify the current scene or situation, we intend to advance the character, scene, routine, theme, storyline, or argument (Werth, 1999).

Gavins first reframes Werth's world-building paradigm in light of Halliday's (1995) Systemic Functional Linguistics. Relational processes (circumstantial, intense, or possessive) and function-advancing propositions in the pattern of material processes (intention) could be used to identify world building elements. She reworks the idea of sub-worlds and in favour of an even (horizontal) conceptualization, she levelled out Werth's hierarchical (vertical) cataloguing of worlds, saying that "deictic alternations that are initiated by discourse-world participants trigger a world switch to a new text world (rather than creating a participant accessible deictic sub-world)" (Hallam, 2013, p. 14). Gavins disputed Werth's overemphasis on the initial text world by pointing out that a fictional story frequently experiences deictic alternations. She argues that when a reader leaves the initial text world, there are less chances to return to that same world as it contributes slightly to reader's interpretation of the text. However, the reader's mental image of a text world may take on a hierarchical structure.

This opens up the topic of attitudinal and epistemic sub-worlds, which are grouped together under modality. Simpson's (1993) modal grammar is expanded upon by Gavins (2005), who distinguishes between three types of modal worlds: boulomaic, deontic, and epistemic. Boulomaic worlds are created when someone expresses wish or desire using verbs like "want," "hope," and other modal auxiliaries, or through participle constructions. They are similar to want-worlds (Werth's model). Any verbal expression of obligation or responsibility (may, must, should, etc.) creates a deontic modal world. As a result, the final kind—epistemic modal worlds—are created based on the degree to which a speaker accepts the suggested idea. The terms "perhaps," "could", "maybe", "I wonder", or "I think" etc. are used to convey this (Gavins, 2005, p. 86).

In the light of world-formation concept, it actually necessitates choosing a specific space grid element since it could help us narrow down the story's happenings. Depending on the plot, the viewpoint can be either spatial or temporal and will align the narration with the specified spatiotemporal dimension of any narrative space. The macro-level phenomena take in narrative voice, temporal and spatial dimensions of the narrative and micro-level phenomena include "focalization" or "who sees" (Genette, 1983). Viewpoint and perspective are more general terms that are applied in broad contexts. These terms have visual implications, implying that narrative events can be viewed visually. Nonetheless, focalization encompasses many more methods to look at the scenario from subjective lens, whether that be narrator's or character's perspective. Toolan (2001) suggests discussing this topic in terms of "orientation," which promotes some kind of spatial alignment. To put it briefly, the phrases "focalization", "orientation" and "viewpoint" refer to similar occurrences, albeit from distinct perspectives.

Having established the fundamental understanding of key concepts entailed in the study, it is crucial to mention that the pivot of this study is unique because the previous researches have utilized literary approach to examine thematic content and postmodernist techniques used in *A Visit from the Goon Squad*. Even some of them have analyzed the author's interviews to understand her point of view about her carefully curated characters. For instance, David Cowart (2015) explores the novel's postmodernist features, asserting that Egan follows in the footsteps of postmodernists by engaging in the deconstruction of stunted metanarratives. He argues that while postmodern writers challenge established norms, they still draw influence from modernist traditions. Egan expresses this duality by adapting from modernist literary culture while simultaneously dissenting from them. Similar to authors like Virginia Woolf and Marcel Proust, Egan deftly manipulates time and consciousness, creating an intricate narrative that mirrors the

phenomena of lost time and its recapture. This practice results in a disoriented narrative structure where meaning is fragmented across diverse spatial and temporal dimensions; it effectively portrays the chaotic lives of the characters.

Similarly, Azadanipour et al. (2022) examine *A Visit from the Goon Squad* through the lens of metamodernism, a contemporary critical approach that blends elements of modernism and postmodernism. Their study identifies several metamodern characteristics in the novel, particularly focusing on the relationship between irony and sincerity. They describe the novel as a post-ironic bildungsroman, where the rise and fall of characters are depicted through a wave of irony and its connection to sincerity, reflecting contemporary perceptions.

These analyses by Cowart and Azadanipour et al. provide valuable insights into Egan's narrative techniques and thematic explorations, yet a significant research gap remains unaddressed.

Research Gap

The researchers notice that the literary approach has taken away the focus from the linguistic aspect, which deters the comprehension process and readers find themselves in a quandary. The cognitive linguistic approach offers solution to this conundrum by equipping the scholars and readers with the linguistic means to understand the narrative better. Thus the researchers employ integrated cognitive and narratological methodology to understand the novel's focal ambiguity, frequent shifts in time and space, and multiple narrative voices.

DATA ANALYSIS

Linguistic choices, situation and world formation

Opening of the first chapter:

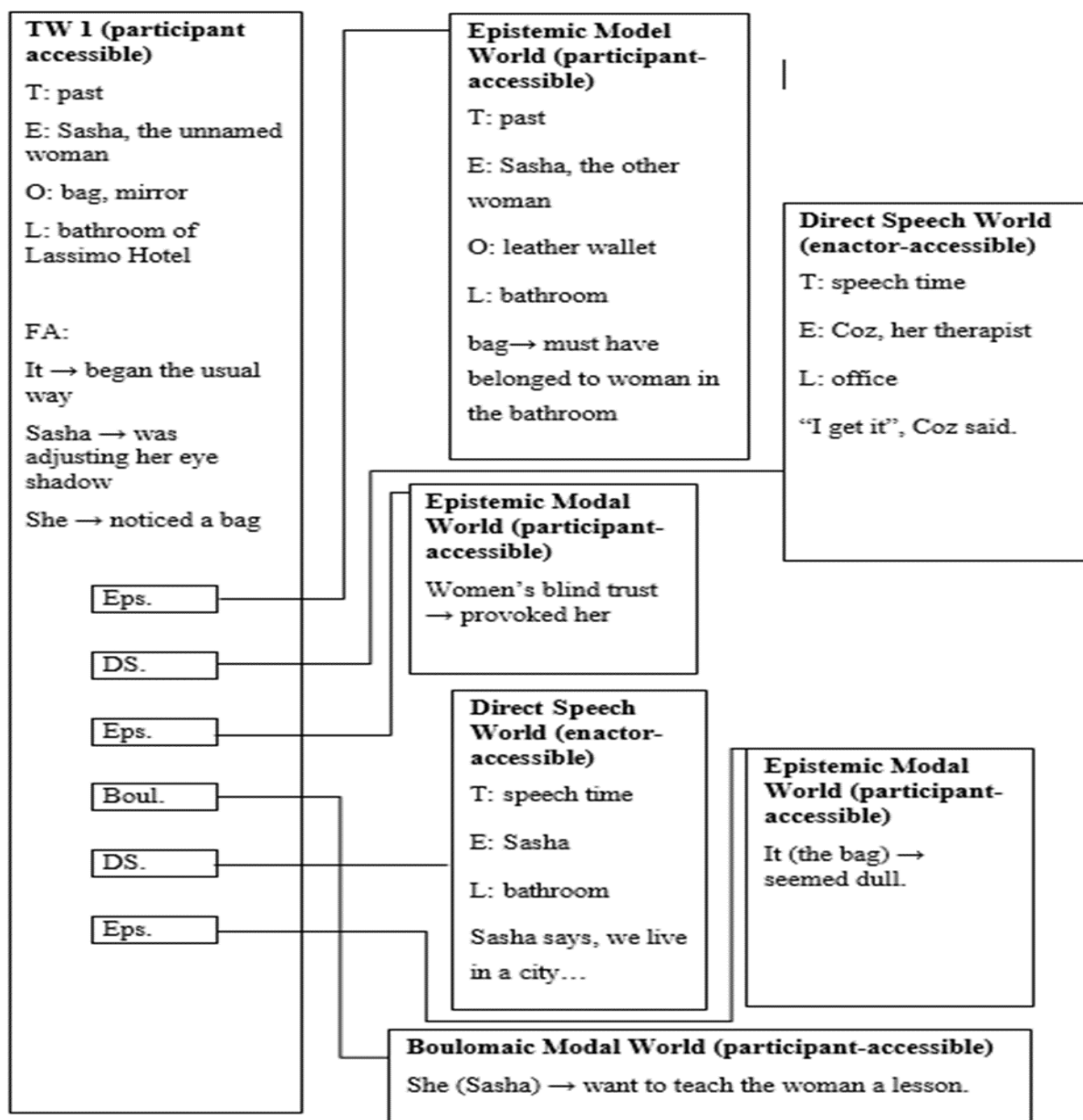
It began the usual way, in the bathroom of the Lassimo Hotel... (for reference go to Appendix, para 1).

The novel begins with the third-person pronoun "it". The noun phrase "the usual way" specifies that the course of action discussed in the coming passage has formerly instantiated. This infers that narrator is not directly a part of the narrative (a heterodiegetic narrator in Genette's terms) but well-informed about the story. The narrator seems to be only reporting events without adding any personal opinion because of the observant and objective style of narration. The narrative opens at the Lassimo Hotel's lavatory. The prepositional phrase "in the bathroom" modifies the independent clause in the first line, which describes the character's typical routine and determines the act's spatial orientation. Even if we have not visited this specific hotel, we can easily imagine one with the same layout.

Additionally, the independent clause in the second sentence introduces us to the female character "Sasha" and highlights her attention to detail. Her character is shaped by the manner she detects the green leather wallet dangling from the bag—lying far away. The prepositional expressions such as "through the vault," "beside the washbasin," and "on the floor" help us visualize the immediate situation from Sasha's lens. This notion is unquestionably supported by the verb phrase "barely visible," which indicates that she could not see through the bag because it was far away from where she was standing. She spotted the wallet and remembered its colour and material in the first sight. The narrator familiarizes us with her character through the meticulous

use of adjectives to describe the things which catch her attention. The reason she was “provoked” to steal the bag then becomes increasingly evident as the scene progresses. The woman’s inconsiderate behaviour got Sasha into trouble. The word “provoke” connotatively suggests that the woman bears equal responsibility for this theft as Sasha. The noun phrase “looking back” indicates that the narrator is indirectly reflecting on the entire occurrence.

Figure 1: Modal worlds emerging from Text World 1 i.e. Sasha’s world



Note. Multiple worlds emerging from Sasha’s actual world (TAW)

Structural Desire: The much younger temporary female mate of a powerful male will be inexorably drawn to the single male within range who disdains her mate’s power.

The statement given above is declarative in kind because it presents an observation based on the situation in the novel. The colon (:) following the noun phrase “structural desire” infers that the subsequent statement offers explanation for a romantic relationship in terms of attraction, power and social hierarchies. In other words, it describes a behavioral pattern within romantic relationships. The noun phrase in the beginning of the statement nominates “mate” as the head around which the rest of the phrase is structured. The adjectives “female”, “temporary” and “much younger” act as modifiers. These specify the gender of the mate, the mate’s status and the age relationship between the female mate and the other referent. The writer has used more general adjectives to construct a broad structure, which may be pertinent to those who share the same characteristics. Also, the prepositional phrase “of a powerful male” does not complement the head directly but rather can be considered an adjunct providing additional information about the mate’s partner. The verb phrase “will be inexorably drawn” (material process) indicate the action of the sentence; “drawn” and “inexorably” being the head and modifier respectively. The mental process “disdains” shows the single male’s attitude towards his potential powerful rival. It adds to the meaning and provides insight into his inner retort. The circumstances such as “within range” specify the spatial context, suggesting proximity between the single male and the female’s powerful mate. Moreover, the relational phrase “of a powerful male” draws our attention to the power dynamics and social hierarchical system that influence any character’s interactions.

The world-formation in this particular sequence is based on the observation of the narrator who gives direct access to the reader, so we can call this world participant-accessible. The text-world created then extends to the characters’ life, Lou and Mindy. Through an objective perspective, the narrator sets a foundation for their character buildup. Though the narrator does not specify time, but uses future tense which increases its probability to occur in future. According to Gerard Genette (1983), the narrative tense is an important element in the temporal structure of the story. The order in which the events are narrated is relative to the order in which they occur. When a writer uses future tense, he intends to use it as a form of “flash-forward” or “prolepsis”, where the narrative temporarily shifts to a future point to foreshadow the events. For the same purpose, the narrator has used this technique in the sequence under discussion hinting at what is to come, thus propelling the story forward. Further, Jahn (2021) highlights the psychological effects of time manipulation in storytelling. He discusses how a reader’s perception and involvement with a tale can be affected by tense. The use of the future tense may imbue the story with dynamic twists, as the events being described are more likely to occur. They are not merely possibilities but probabilities.

At its core, the statement explores the power dynamics that describe the relationship between Lou, Mindy and Albert. Lou’s wealth and authority contrasts with Albert’s youthful idealism, and it symbolizes a metaphorical rebellion against power structures and critiques superficial authority a man holds over a woman only because of his financial power. The transient nature of Lou and Mindy’s relationship, marked by Lou’s history of divorces (mentioned in the chapter “Grass” (p. 54)) and the temporary aspect of their union, metaphorically underscores the brief quality of relationships built on power and convenience. Furthermore, Lou’s attempt to reassert dominance through physical means in the developing scenes shows how sexual politics comes into play. Drawing upon Kate Millet’s (1970) concept of power and sex, it can be said that today, sexual relationships have turned into power-structured relationship, whereby one person is controlled by another. Lou wants to “win” (p.71) and gain control over Mindy, and does not care

how she feels about it. Mindy's economic dependency on Lou for a luxurious lifestyle complicates her situation, illustrating how material desires can trap individuals in unfulfilling relationships. In simpler words, Lou views his relationship as contest of power and control.

Figure 2: *Text World built around Lou, Mindy and Albert*

| |
|---|
| <p>Text World (participant accessible)</p> <p><u>World-building elements:</u></p> <p>Time: future</p> <p>Entities: younger temporary female mate, powerful male, single male</p> <p>Location: unspecified</p> <p><u>Function-advancers:</u></p> <p>Female mate → will be inexorably drawn (passive material process)</p> <p>Single male → who disdains her mate's power (mental process)</p> |
|---|

Note: *Text world which corresponds with the actual world of discourse participants (i.e., the author and readers)*

She recognized the litany of excuses even as they throbbed through her head: winter is almost over... (for reference go to the Appendix, para 2).

The paragraph opens with the phrase “she recognized the litany of excuses...”, anchoring the deictic center around the character “she”. The use of personal pronoun “she” and objective pronoun “her” project the sequence and this being the instance of internal focalization aligns our perspective with the character's subjective experiences. The narrator uses linguistic indicators to establish viewpoint of the character, Sasha. Her character has already been introduced to us in the preliminary paragraph. The use of color adjectives such as *bright*, *yellow* and *pink* in describing the scarf directs our attention to Sasha's perspective (how she views the scarf).

The text introduces several entities like a female character (using “she”), scarf, children, kids, etc. and sets spatiotemporal dimension for the text world. The scarf is a significant referential element that captures our attention as it is situated within Sasha's perceptual field. This world is the extension of Text World 1 (based on Sasha's immediate world). The vivid description helps us build a clear and engaging image of the object, emphasizing its importance in her life. The setting of the sequence is subtly changed from the location where the scarf is found to the house, and it is cleaned and folded, illustrating how she interacts with her environment.

The narrative moves forward through material processes such as “return it”, “seeing it fall”, and “pick it up” etc. These actions act as function-advancers and show Sasha's experience with the scarf. Additionally, it shows how meticulously the narrator constructs the text world of Sasha, acknowledging her subjective understanding of the event. The usage of terms like “recognized” (mental process) and the long list of justifications show how critically she thinks about the circumstances. The statements such as “I could easily not have seen it fall” and “I'm just noticing it now” are examples of how the writer (discourse-participant) uses epistemic modality to expose

Sasha's internal reasoning and explanations, giving insight into her feelings and thoughts. In other words, these thought processes, which show her internal turmoil and moral reflections on the scarf, are essential to comprehending her point of view.

Focalization and Accessibility Relations

It had a beautiful screwdriver in it, the orange translucent handle gleaming like a lollipop in its worn leather loop... (see the remaining part in the Appendix, part 3).

In the passage given above, the language creates a reality that is filtered through the enactor's (Gavins' term) subjective lens. The deictic (referential) elements help us visualize the scene and situate ourselves in the story here-and-now. For instance, the demonstrative "it" presupposes familiarity with the context, situating the screwdriver within Sasha's immediate perceptual field. Then, the vivid description of the screwdriver and the enactor's response to it adds to the scene. Sasha describes the screwdriver as "beautiful" having an "orange translucent handle gleaming like a lollipop", "worn leather loop", and a "silvery shaft" etc. The copious use of adjectives creates a tangible image of the screwdriver in our mind and shows how livable the experience is for her.

Sasha's subjective perspective is further anchored in the story by the use of simile, "gleaming like a lollipop" and the visual emphasis on the screwdriver's physical attributes, which allude to her curiosity and attraction to the object. Moreover, the use of the verb "felt" denotes a change in focus, showing her physical and emotional response to the screwdriver. The mental monologue, which depicts a moment of great connection with the object, sheds light on her psychological condition. The metaphor "contract around the object in a single yawn of appetite" highlights her need and attraction towards the screwdriver by evoking an instinctual, almost unconscious reaction (her kleptomaniac instinct).

Charlie feels it, too. In fact, this particular memory is one she'll return to again and again, for the rest of her life, long after Rolph has shot himself in the head in their father's house at twenty-eight... (full paragraph given in the Appendix, para 4)

In order to create the immediate deictic centre around Charlie, the passage begins in the present tense. Present tense verbs like "feels" and "is" are used to place the story in a particular point in time, building a rich textual world around Charlie and her brother, Rolph. We situate ourselves in this present moment where Charlie, as a teen, dances with her brother. Descriptive elements such as "her brother as a boy, hair slicked flat, eyes sparkling" use vivid imagery to allow us to visualize the scene through Charlie's eyes. But then the use of linguistic clues like "this particular memory" and "again and again, for the rest of her life" signals a change in perspective towards the future. The use of "will" in "she'll return" projects the narrative into the future, constructing a future text world where this memory persists.

The shift from Charlie to Charlene signals a change in identity and perspective. The narrator, as an internal focalizer, highlights her evolving internal state through the verbs like "feels", "will return", and "won't be". The internal focalization allows us to engage deeply with her emotional evolution and the enduring impact of her brother's death on her. The independent clause "she'll want to..." reflects her desire to name her son after his brother, thus putting a foundation of boulomaic modal world; however, the following phrase "but her parents will still be too

shattered” shows an obligation or social constraint that would prevent her from doing so. This is an example of deontic modal world.

Spatial and Temporal Deixis and Modal-world Building

Collette was standing in front of a console, holding the Stop/Go CD. Everyone seemed to be waiting. “You want to hear this?” ... (read the whole paragraph in Appendix, para 5).

The opening line of this paragraph sets the scene using spatial deixis. The prepositional phrase “in front of a console” situates Collette within the physical space, providing a specific location that we can visualize. The detail of “holding the Stop/Go CD” adds to this spatial grounding, indicating a physical action and the presence of an object that guides the scene further in our minds. Further, the mentioning of time particularly present tense (on-going action) in the second line of the paragraph situates the scene in the story here-and-now. It creates a sense of suspense and anticipation, suggesting that an event is about to occur. Due to our active role in the comprehension process, we find connection with the character’s life and get engaged in the moment. The focus then shifts to Bennie who is stuck in memories from twenty years ago. The temporal transit adds to the complexity of time within the narrative. The phrase “from twenty years ago” is a clear temporal deictic marker that transits us to a different time frame, juxtaposing the past with the present. The modal world created as a result blurs the boundaries between story then and now because the past and present coexist in Bennie’s mind. The colon (:) segregates the story here-and-now from the old sequence of events, i.e. Bennie leaping across the ledge in the direction of Mother Superior. The repetition of “again” highlights the cyclical nature of Bennie’s memory and the temporal disjunction it causes. Therefore, the world created in this scene is not stable because the past continuously intrudes upon the present.

Considering the spatial deixis, the phrases “lunging over the sill” and “toward the Mother Superior” conjure up a bodily action in a particular spatial situation. The allusion to “some haywire figure on a clock” gives the action a strange, almost mechanical feel. It gives the scene a realistic tint and helps to establish the modal-world by fostering a sense of distorted and fragmented time. Overall, the story uses temporal and spatial deixis to build a rich, multi-layered text world. The interplay of spatial and temporal elements not only grounds the narrative in specific, tangible details but also augments the psychological depth of the characters, allowing us to engage more fully with the text and its underlying themes.

Figure 3: Image of Alison’s slide journal (Egan, 2011, p. 222)



Note. Adapted from Egan’s novel (Egan, 2011, p. 222)

In the figure given above, the deictic expressions such as “three stops down”, “from our deck” and the use of present tense set out the spatial orientation of Alison’s world. Though her name is not explicitly mentioned, but the context nominates her as a narrator. We measure the distance between the deck and the desert from Alison’s standing point because as a reader we transport ourselves to the text world of characters. Apart from location, the text world creation crucially depends on time of the action performed. So, the narrator gives hints to set out the backdrop of the scene. The phrases such as “sky full of stars”, mountains looking like “cutout paper shapes” hint at night time when the scenery gives off blurred effect. The reason could be that they are looking at the sky with the naked eye. The phrases “fading into the dust”, “too cold”, and “careful of snakes” add to the information about story-now. We know that deserts’ nights are cooler in summers, so snakes become more active during the cooler evenings and nights. Alison fails to provide comprehensive information about her immediate setting necessary for text world construction; however, we could build a text world around the situation due to spatiotemporal hints given by her. We are aware that, based on the reader’s background and context, the world might indeed exist and prosper. Resultantly, the reader’s imagined world may differ from the narrator’s or any other character’s imagined world (Herman & Vervaeck, 2005).

FINDINGS

The study reveals the inclusion of present spatial-temporal coordinates, such as “here” and “now”, and even though the entire line is written in the past tense, aids the reader in understanding the viewpoint of the character. It usually indicates a change of viewpoint. The adverbs and prepositional phrases like “along”, “above”, “over”, “under”, “alongside the East River”, “near the Williamsburg Bridge”, “beside the fence” and “over the railing” etc., redefine our position and allow us to locate ourselves in the characters’ world. In essence, the deictic elements enable us to assess the narrative event’s immediacy based on the character’s current location.

It is interesting to note that the narrative makes no reference to the “time” when various events in the characters’ lives occur. In essence, the title is symbolic. According to a figure named Bosco in chapter 7, *time* is a goon that snatches people of their friends, happiness and youth. Time is not explicitly acknowledged in the story despite the to-and-fro transition from the present to the past, past to the near future or vice versa; resultantly, there is a plenty of room for examining temporal clues and using all of our preexisting schemata to understand how the story progresses. The protagonist of the tale, music producer Bennie, tells the story of his career advancement. He keeps having flashbacks and flash-forwards to his personal life, which allow us to follow the plot as it develops over time. The other characters in the novel, including his ex-wife Stephanie, Sasha, Rhea, Jocelyn and Scotty, are all present at different points in time and space with Bennie serving as the main character. It becomes clear from the data analysis that temporal deixis—that is, *now*, *then*, *that day*, *late in the evening*, *that day*, and so on—helps us visualize various textual worlds.

Furthermore, the researchers found that the Direct Speech (DS) world is formed in a text using capitalization without inverted commas. The reporting verb “go” or “goes”, depending on whether a word is singular or plural, is used to express directly spoken speech or a character’s thought. The speech representation purposefully removed the inverted commas. There is, however, a comma (,) between the speech and the addresser, and the reported speech is presented

in present form, for instance, “Scotty goes, Can we see them? and Alice goes, My uniforms? but Scotty goes, No, your alleged sisters” (p. 37). These linguistic patterns make it easier for the researchers to understand that the spoken discourse was purposefully produced in an unusual way to shed light on the tumultuous and unstable lives of these punk rock musicians.

Additionally, the way text worlds have been created aided in the examination of the narratological aspect as well. For instance, the variety of narrative voices in this book—first person *I* or *we*, third person *he/she* and you (plural or singular)—expands the possibilities for investigating focalization concerns related to world building. One of them is that there is a shift from external to internal focalization in the same passage. The study finds that the TWT framework has been essentially useful in this situation for outlining the represented worlds. The distinction between the enactors, the action being advanced, the nature of the action being carried out, and the result of the action has then been made by the world builders and function advancers.

Table 3: Linguistic Indicators for Viewpoint and Text-world Formation

| Linguistic Indicators | Examples from <i>A Visit from the Goon Squad</i> | Significance |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| Deictic words | “now”, “then”, “here” and “there” etc. | These words direct the story in a specific time and place, guiding our orientation within the text world. |
| Temporal references | “the past”, “future”, “yesterday” “tomorrow”, and less common examples such as “sky full of stars” (p. 222) etc. | Such references help situate a narrative event in a temporal structure, crucial for understanding the timeline in a non-linear narrative. |
| Spatial references | “in the park” or “Tompkins Square Park” (p.249), “at the office”, “home”, “the Williamsburg Bridge” etc. (p.171) | These phrases provide spatial context, aiding in visualizing the setting and navigate the physical space of the text world. |
| Use of adjectives | “bright yellow scarf with pink stripes” (p. 17), “pale blue lines”, “dog-eared photos” etc. (p. 19) | The narrator’s choice of adjectives gives us information about the viewpoint of characters. |
| Referential element “the” | “the scarf” (p.17), “the concert” (p.45), “the letter” etc. | Repeated mentions of key objects or events keep the reader’s focus on significant aspects of the narrative. |
| Internal monologue | “I’m just noticing it now”, “litany of excuses”, “I’ll actually be doing him a favor” (p. 19) | Direct insight into a character’s thoughts and emotions, enhancing the internal viewpoint and cognitive engagement. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Use of similes and metaphors | “like a million antennas pricking up from his head” (p. 41), “time is a goon” (p. 107) etc. | Their usage reveals viewpoint of characters by showcasing their personal perspective, emotions and cultural context |
| Use of modal verbs and expressions (both grammatical and ungrammatical) | “seems, may, could, must, would, probably, possibly, likely, certainly, surely” (epistemic modality) “should, ought to, have to, need to” (deontic modality), “ will want to (p. 74), hope, wish, desire, would like, it was clear that, it appeared that” etc.(boulomaic modality) | Epistemic modal worlds are based on uncertainty and subjective realities; deontic modal worlds establish social norms and power dynamics, and boulomaic modal worlds reflect characters’ desires and fears. |

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, the cognitive-linguistic and narratological elements are useful in a comprehensive analysis of the potential text worlds. More precisely, the spatiotemporal schemata aid in our understanding of the time and space elements of various text worlds, which in turn establish the framework for a fictitious world. The spatiotemporal cues allow us to mentally visualize any story occurrence using pre-existing, comparable schemas. In addition, the characters’ epistemic awareness of the unexpected foreshadows what would happen next. Each character views the world through a unique lens; however, all the perspectives are not delineated at the same time, but different points in story-time. By providing further details about the characters and their actions, the noun, prepositional and verb phrases, and clauses enhance the process of world building. We can follow and assess the perspectives of many characters owing to narrative ideas such as viewpoint representation and focalization.

The present study emphasizes the exploration of text-world construction in a post-modern text and gives explanation for uncertainties stemming from an unconventional narrative style. However, there is a need to examine how readers who participate in a real classroom respond to questions and use their cognitive schemata to comprehend the given novel. As readers build their knowledge stack differently, it may also imply disparity in their reading experiences.

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