A Study on the Narrative Features of Carmen from the Perspective of Genette's Narrative Theory

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ABSTRACT

Prosper Mérimée's novella Carmen is a significant literary achievement, capturing the fascination of numerous literary enthusiasts and scholars. Its allure stems from its intricate narrative structure, rich historical and cultural elements, and a compelling love story. Genette summarized a set of theoretical systems applicable not only to this work but also to other works and this theory was later used by many researchers to analyze literary works, which includes narrative time, narrative mood, and narrative voice. This paper employs Genette's narrative theory to examine the narrative features in this novel, specifically focusing on the application of narrative level and narrator in the novel, for these two aspects are the most outstanding and essential characteristics of this novel. Through a comprehensive analysis of the distinct narrative levels and the nuanced role of the narrator in Carmen, the paper draws clear conclusions. Mérimée deliberately constructs two narrative levels and employs dual narrators to unveil a narrative that is both intricate and transparent in its development. In Carmen, Mérimée utilizes the first and second narrative levels to unfold a poignant love tragedy featuring protagonists with contrasting qualities. Additionally, Mérimée employs two narrators, the amateur historian and Don Jose, to depict the female protagonist's adventurous life and her unwavering pursuit of freedom. This study applies narrative theory to literary analysis, facilitating interpretation of the author's narrative techniques and encouraging critical engagement with literature. Furthermore, this study is hoped to inspire more scholars and researchers to explore Carmen and Mérimée's other works.

Keywords: Carmen; Genette's narrative theory; narrative features; narrative level; the narrator

INTRODUCTION

The novella *Carmen* (2023), authored by Mérimée, serves as a prominent representative work of the realistic writer. It effectively incorporates the author's reflections on society and human nature in the 19th century (Izmailova et al., 2014). This literary piece possesses significant societal impact and exudes a captivating blending of literary and artistic allure. Since its release, *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023) has gained substantial attention and enthusiastic scholarly research within France and internationally (Pau, 2012). While most scholars predominantly concentrate on exploring the novel's realistic significance, ethical implications, and spiritual depth in relation to its content, this paper takes a different perspective by analysing the narrative features in *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023) through the lens of Genette's narrative theory.

Narratology, a relatively recent term, has evolved alongside human society (Saussure, 2017). Influenced by Russian Formalism, scholars worldwide have produced theoretical works and critical literature on narrative (Fang, 2019). Gérard Genette, a French structuralist critic, has significantly contributed to the development of Narratology (Ma, 2021). Using Proust's renowned novel *A la Recherche du temps Perdu* (1996) as a case study, Genette meticulously analyzed the narrative devices applied in this novel, establishing a theoretical framework applicable to various literary works (Fang, 2019).

The utilization of a dual narrator, comprising both the archaeologist and Don José in *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023), presents a compelling narrative dynamic that intricately intertwines their perspectives on their entanglement with the female protagonist, Carmen. This alternating narrative structure offers readers a multifaceted exploration of Carmen's character and the complexities of her relationships with the two protagonists. Furthermore, the combination of the first narrative level, represented by the archaeologist's perspective, with the second narrative level, embodied by Don José's viewpoint, adds layers of depth to the storytelling. This amalgamation of narrative levels not only enriches the narrative texture but also invites readers to delve deeper into the psychological nuances and emotional intricacies of the characters' experiences. Hence, a thorough examination and specific analysis of these narrative elements are warranted to fully appreciate the narrative richness and thematic complexities of *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023).

Consequently, conducting a study on the narrative devices employed in *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023) bears substantial academic value. By focusing on the narrative level and narrator in *Carmen*, scholars could gain insights into how Mérimée constructs the story, the perspectives through which the events are presented, and the impact of the narrators' voice on the reader's understanding and interpretation of the text. This study can contribute to literary theory, deepen our appreciation of Mérimée's storytelling techniques, and provide valuable insights into the novella's themes and cultural context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vladimir Propp, A. J. Greimas, and Tzvetan Todorov are excellent figures in the field of narratology, each credited with making significant contributions to its advancement. Propp's structuralist narratology theory, Greimas' semiotic matrix theory, and Todorov's narrative syntax theory are considered pivotal milestones in the evolution of narratology (Darren, 2022). These theorists commence their inquiries from the standpoint of narrative, selecting one or more narrative works as subjects of analysis, and endeavour to discern the underlying commonalities and universal, abstract structures inherent in all narrative works. By doing so, they intend to distil the complexity of narrative texts into easily interpretative structures and norms (Fang, 2019). Their approach greatly aids in facilitating the comprehension of the essence of narrative and in interpreting the place of narrative works within the literary system (Ma, 2021).

Genette (1980) also contributed a lot to the development of narratology. He argued that narratology encompasses three distinct concepts: story, discourse, and narrating. Genette (1980) uses the term story to refer to the underlying content or meaning of a narrative, while narrative pertains to the actual expression or form of the narrative. On the other hand, narrating denotes the act of producing the narrative and the real or fictional context in which the narrative unfolds (Genette, 1980). By exploring these relationships, narratology delves into the connections between narrative and story, narrative and narrating, and story and narrating. These connections can be further examined through the lens of narrative time, narrative mood, and narrative voice (Ma, 2021).

Genette (1980) believes that the three meanings of narrative time, narrative mood, and narrative voice are interwoven in a complex way. Narrative time is all about asking how and why events are arranged in a certain way (their order) (Wang, 2016). It is also about how often events happen in the narrative (their frequency) and how long they go on (their duration) (Fang, 2019). Narrative mood pertains to the perspective or attitude from which the narrative is presented. Narrative voice refers to the perspective, stance, and characteristics of the narrator or narrating instance in relation to the story being told and it focuses on the manner in which the narrative is presented and the role of the narrator in shaping the narrative discourse. Genette (1980) highlights that narrative voice concentrates on the study of the narrating instance from three perspectives: narrative level, person, and narrator.

Currently, academic research on *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023) primarily focuses on the thematic content, narrative, and interpretation of the character Carmen. The study of the novel also incorporates an examination of the author's biography, the historical background of the era, and other factors. Academic research on Mérimée's works has traditionally focused on his short stories, the characters he created, and the thematic contents of his works. For instance, Zhang Wenjing (2011) explores the portrayal of female characters in Mérimée's short stories in her article *Female Character Images in Mérimée's Short Stories*. Through an analysis of four categories of characters in

Mérimée's works, namely, the type of returning to the wild, the type of holding fatalism, the type of religious redeemer, and the typical aristocratic females, she concludes that Mérimée promotes the untamed beauty free from the alienation of civilization and possesses an aesthetic orientation that negates and criticizes moral concepts. Hou Guoyu (2012), in his work *On Mérimée's Philosophy of Life,* reveals through an exploration of Mérimée's major works that his philosophy of life encompasses three aspects — the pursuit of personal freedom beyond urban civilization, the affirmation of primal human nature, and the completion of deconstruction and transcendence of death. However, research on the novel *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023) is rather limited, and there has been no exploration or systematic analysis of Mérimée's process of generating literary texts.

There has been some research on the text of *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023) and the character of Carmen. As a work that introduces an exceptionally captivating female character, *Carmen* has been studied by researchers from three perspectives: narrative, feminism, and cultural symbolism. Literary critics often view *Carmen* as a product of romanticism and colonialist imagination, considering Spain as exotic, oriental, and feminine. He Qiufang (2009) suggests in A *Narrative Research on the Novel Carmen* that *Carmen* employs a dual narrator — the archaeologist and Don José, which, beneath the seemingly calm narrative discourse, contains multiple layered structures, overlapping perspectives, and surging emotions. In terms of story form, it holds no adherence to the traditional linear but creates a multi-progressive spiral three-dimensional structure. In *A Comparison of the Causes of the Love Tragedy between Esmeralda and Carmen* (2015)*,* Zou Xiang compares the causes of the love tragedies of Esmeralda and Carmen from three dimensions namely the individual, the other, and society. In *Examining Mérimée's Ideological Tendency through Carmen's "Self-consciousness"* (2010)*,* Pei Xudong argues that the author shaped the protagonist Carmen as a typical figure to expose and criticize the hypocrisy of bourgeois civilization while expressing Mérimée's view on morality that true morality lies in upholding individuality and dignity, fully manifesting self-consciousness. In *Present and Poison: Gift Exchange in Prosper Mérimée's Carmen* (2007), Singh-Brinkman Nirmala interprets the connotation of *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023), suggesting that Carmen can perpetually circulate and freely roam in the world as a gift, breaking free from constraints and transcending regional, national, social, and artistic boundaries for free communication.

While researchers have extensively studied *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023), most of the existing studies lack new insights or investigation into the underlying themes and structure of the novel. There is also a scarcity of research that applies Genette's narrative theory to analyze *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023). This paper aims to fill this gap by examining *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023) through the perspective of Genette's narrative voice, with the goal of illustrating the narrative strategies used by Mérimée in crafting the novel. Additionally, this study aims to contribute to the application of Genette's narrative theory in literary studies and enhance the interpretation of the novel *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023).

METHODOLOGY

Gerard Genette, a renowned French narratologist, systematically addresses gaps in narrative theory in his influential work, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (1980). He further elaborates on the concepts within narratology, introducing the terms story, narrative, and narrating. According to Genette, "story" refers to the underlying content or what is signified, "narrative" refers to the means of expression or the signifier, and "narrating" refers to the act of producing narrative action within either a real or fictional context. This differentiation highlights narratology as an examination of the dynamic relationship between story and discourse, discourse and narrating, and story and narrating. These relationships are further elucidated by exploring narrative elements such as time, mood, and voice (Ma, 2021).

Narrative time investigates the arrangement, frequency, and duration of events within a narrative framework (Wang, 2016). Narrative mood pertains to the perspective or attitude from which a narrative is presented (Akimoto, 2019). Genette's narrative theory defines narrative voice as the viewpoint, position, and attributes of the narrator or narrating instance relative to the story, emphasizing their influence on narrative presentation and discourse (Ma, 2021). He underscores three dimensions in examining narrative voice: narrative level, person, and narrator. According to the structure and narrative characteristics in *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023) which employs intricate narrative levels and narrators, this research utilizes Genette's narrative theory to examine how the narrative levels and narrators are utilized in this novel.

The narrative level of the novel *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023) belongs to the combination of two narrative levels. The first narrative level is out of the external homonarrative narrator-an archaeologist who, in the early autumn of 1830, embarked on a long journey to Andalusia, attempting to solve historical mysteries. The second narrative level is out of the internal homonarrative narrator - the true male protagonist of the novel, Don José. The former encounters the latter, initially impressed by his eloquence, then helps him escape from pursuers, and coincidentally meets him again dramatically in the city. Several months later, he listens attentively to Don José's final confession of love in prison. The archaeologist is fascinated by Don José's life experiences and patiently listens to and records everything Don José recounts. Influenced by him, the archaeologist even disregards his original academic mission and becomes interested in studying the origins and history of the exotic people that drove Don José to madness.

Don José's narrative in the second narrative level, which forms the main part of the novel, is conducted under the observation of the external homonarrative narrator. Thus, the entire novel becomes a narrative about narration, a story within a story, and memories within memories. In other words, the backbone of the novel is revealed in the beginning: it is "a little story" that the archaeologist tells "to everyone" before solving the unresolved geographical problems. In the second part, his encounter with Carmen becomes an episode in the small story, and Carmen becomes a presence in the archaeologist's retelling. By the third part, in Don José's retelling, Carmen becomes

the focal point of the story that has undergone several retellings.

NARRATIVE LEVEL

Genette's narrative theory introduces the notion of narrative levels, which involves the hierarchical arrangement of different narrative instances within a story (Ma, 2021). It focuses on the distinctions between various levels of narration and their interrelationships. Genette (1980) classifies narrative levels into three types: first narrative level, second narrative level, and metanarrative level.

The first narrative level represents the primary level of narration where the main storyline unfolds (Fang, 2019). It introduces the key events, characters, and actions that form the core of the narrative. This level also features the primary focalization, providing readers with direct access to the story world. The second narrative level exists within the first narrative level and involves narratives within the main narrative (Ma, 2021). It occurs when a character or narrator within the story recounts or relates another story. The second narrative level encompasses alternative perspectives, different temporalities, or additional layers of storytelling embedded within the primary narrative. The metanarrative level, also referred to as the third narrative level, involves commentary or discussion about the act of storytelling itself (Fang, 2019). It encompasses instances in the narrative where the narrator or characters reflect on the process of narration, the role of the narrator, or the nature of fiction. The metanarrative level offers a higher-order perspective on the narrative and its construction (Wang, 2016).

Genette's concept of narrative levels aids in analyzing the intricate structure and relationships within a narrative (Ma, 2021). It allows for the examination of nested narratives, embedded storytelling, and the interaction between different narrative instances. The distinction between narrative levels provides insights into the composition of the narrative, the focalization employed, and the multiple perspectives at play within the text.

NARRATOR

Gérard Genette's narrative theory encompasses a comprehensive examination of various aspects of narration, including the role and characteristics of the narrator (Liu, 2020). It further emphasizes the significance of the narrator in shaping the narrative and influencing the reader's interpretation of the text (Fang, 2019).

Genette (1989) classifies narrators into four categories based on their involvement in the narrative and their connection to the story: external heteronarrative, external homonarrative, internal heteronarrative, and internal homonarrative. The differentiation between hetero-narrators and homo-narrators is grounded in their relationship to the subjects of the narrative, with the former being external observers narrating the stories of others, and the latter being characters narrating their own or closely related stories. This categorization is also influenced by the narrative level within the novel, where the external level encompasses the entirety of the narrative,

and the internal level includes narratives within the narrative, such as character perspectives, recollections, and fantasies.

Genette (1980) discusses the concept of reliability and unreliability of the narrator. A reliable narrator is one whose account of events aligns with the reader's understanding of the story, while an unreliable narrator may distort or manipulate the narrative in some way, leading to a divergence between the narrator's perspective and the actual events of the story (Wang, 2016). Furthermore, Genette (1980) explores the relationship between the narrator and the characters within the narrative. He considers how the narrator's perspective influences the portrayal of characters and their motivations, as well as the reader's engagement with them.

Overall, Genette's narrative theory offers valuable insights into the role and function of the narrator in storytelling, shedding light on the complexities of narrative construction and interpretation (Fang, 2019).

FINDINGS

In *Narrative Discourse* (1980), Genette states that voice refers to the relationship between speech acts and the subject where the subject not only refers to the person performing or undergoing the action, but also to the person recounting the action, and possibly even to all those involved (even passively) in this narrative activity. Genette (1980) adopted the term voice to convey his idea because he agreed with the assertion that "subject exists in speech". Genette (1980) believed that the relationship between sentences and the subject producing those sentences should be the main targets of examination, rather than the sole focus on the sentences. In his study of voice, Genette (1980) presents three factors that influence voice: narrative level, person, and narrator. The following part is dedicated to clarifying the application of narrative level and narrator in Mérimée's novel *Carmen* (2023).

NARRATIVE LEVEL

The findings showed that the narrative structure of *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023) involves the division of narrative levels, typically categorized as the first narrative level and the second narrative level. In the novel, the initial narrator referred to as "I", is an amateur historian who intends to publish an academic paper. Before presenting his findings, this amateur historian has a personal story to share, and the novel begins with his story. Thus, the historian's narration belongs to the first narrative level. According to Genette's narrative theory, this narrative level corresponds to the outer layer of the story.

To explain how this corresponds to the outer layer of the story, we can look at how Genette defines narrative levels. The first narrative level, or extradiegetic level, is the primary narrative frame within which the main story (the diegetic level) is embedded. In *Carmen*, the amateur historian's account serves as this primary frame, setting the stage for the deeper narrative layers that follow. The historian's personal

account, which includes his experiences and motivations for studying Carmen, acts as the outer narrative layer that encloses the main events of the story.

Evidence from the text supports this structure. For example, the novel opens with the historian recounting his travels and the circumstances under which he meets Don José, a central character whose story forms the core of the narrative. This initial narrative sets the context and provides a framework for the subsequent narrative level, where Don José recounts his own experiences with Carmen. By positioning the historian's narrative as the outer layer, Mérimée establishes a clear division between the narrator's perspective and the embedded story of Carmen and Don José.

This narrative structure, where the first narrative level functions as an outer layer, aligns with Genette's theory, emphasizing the importance of the framing narrative in guiding the reader's understanding and interpretation of the embedded stories. The historian's role as the outer narrator adds a layer of commentary and analysis, bridging the gap between the reader and the inner narrative.

Genette (1980) emphasizes that the act of narration and the content of the narrative do not exist at the same narrative level. Consequently, a new narrative level is introduced when "I" embarks on a research trip in the early autumn of 1830, encountering the hero Don Jose and the heroine Carmen. "I" then visits Don Jose, who is facing execution, and learns about his tragic experiences. This episode represents the narrative action within the inner layer of the story, as defined by Genette.

It is essential to recognize that the inner narrative level is separate from the events involving Don José and Carmen, which form the second narrative level. This second level is distinct from the first to create a clear differentiation. In *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023), the narrative level continues as various characters tell additional stories within Don José's narration. These smaller stories are part of the second narrative level. The Amateur Historian's Introduction (First Narrative Level) in the novel establishes the historian's account as the primary narrative frame, or the first narrative level, which sets the context for the story: "I was travelling through Andalusia, gathering material for my academic paper when I met a rather intriguing man, Don José (Mérimée, 2023)." His story promised to shed light on the mysterious Carmen, whose tale I was eager to document.

Don José's Narrative (Second Narrative Level): "Don José began his tale with a deep sigh, recalling his first encounter with Carmen at the tobacco factory. She was unlike any woman I had ever met, captivating and perilous. His eyes reflected a mix of love and regret as he spoke (Mérimée, 2023)." These words mark the transition to the second narrative level, focusing on Don José's experiences and interactions with Carmen.

Smaller Narratives within Don José's Story: "Carmen would often tell me about her youth in the wilds of Andalusia. 'I was born free, and I will die free, she would declare.' She recounted her early adventures with a blend of pride and defiance (Mérimée, 2023)." This segment is a smaller narrative within Don José's story, where Carmen shares her own background. This embedded story enriches her character and is part of the second narrative level.

Another Embedded Story: "Once, Carmen and I visited a fortune-teller who predicted our tragic fate. 'You are both marked by destiny,' the old woman said, examining Carmen's palm. 'Your love will be your downfall (Mérimée, 2023)'". This embedded story, recounted by Don José, adds another layer to his narrative. The fortune-teller's prediction introduces an element of foreshadowing, contributing to the complexity of the second narrative level.

Carmen's narrative structure involves distinct levels. The amateur historian's outer narrative (first narrative level) frames the story, while Don José's narrative (second narrative level) delves into the main events. Within Don José's account, additional stories, such as Carmen's childhood and the fortune-teller's prediction, further enrich the second narrative level. These excerpts demonstrate how Mérimée employs nested narratives to create a multi-layered and engaging storytelling structure, underscoring the importance of distinguishing between different narrative levels.

In the novel *Carmen*, the first narrative subject is "I", the amateur historian who serves as the outer-level subject. The second narrative subject serves as the real subject of the story. The author designs the complex narrative structure to provide depth and intricacy to the novel's composition.

THE FIRST NARRATIVE LEVEL

The initial part of the story that we have analyzed so far only constitutes the first narrative level of the novel. It introduces the identity of the narrator, "I" and the reason behind "my" travel and investigation. Initially, it may not appear to have a direct connection to the main story. However, the author provides numerous seemingly unnecessary details about the first-narrative-level narrator "I", as a form of imitation or mimesis, aiming to achieve a sense of perfect imitation. By detailing the experiences and motivations of the first-person narrator ("I"), the narrative creates the impression of a real individual engaging in a specific profession, travelling, and conducting research, thereby enhancing the authenticity and reliability of the character's existence and endeavors. In fact, Mérimée could have entirely omitted the first narrative level and directly described what "I" witnessed during the trip. However, this would significantly reduce the credibility of "I" since their identity and purpose would become vague.

Another reason behind this approach is evident to those who are familiar with Mérimée's other works. The author has a penchant for portraying the first-narrative-level narrator as someone who shares a similar occupation or experience with himself. This makes it easier for readers to believe that the "I" in the story is the author and that the experiences depicted are genuinely unfolding, thereby enhancing the novel's credibility.

Additionally, the author deliberately arranges the narrative of this novel with a specific purpose. From a temporal perspective, the first level of the story occurs chronologically prior to the second narrative level of the main plot. When the narrative behavior occurs after the story's timeline, Genette (1980) categorizes it as post-event narration, which falls within the narrative time category of Genette's

narrative theory. The author employs a post-event narration as the narrator is able to analyze their own or other characters' behaviors and psychology at that time and even provide additional information about unknown situations after comprehending the entire story's process. In *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023), the "I" in the first level of the story not only embodies the "I" in the second narrative level of the story but also takes on the role of Don Jose in the second narrative level of the story. Consequently, numerous critical remarks are made in the text, such as "I love playing tennis too much, and my life is ruined by it... Is this the stupidest thing I have ever done (Mérimée, 2023)?" These critical remarks will be further analyzed in detail in the following section regarding the narrator's function.

THE SECOND NARRATIVE LEVEL

The above analysis has explained the author's purpose in setting the first narrative level of the story. By cancelling the narrative behaviors of the characters in the first level, "I," the amateur historian or Don Jose, can tell the whole story in its entirety. Then, the two narrative levels can be combined into one narrative level, but Mérimée does not arrange the narrative line in this way.

If Mérimée removes the narrator Don Jose and narrates the story of Don Jose and Carmen from the perspective of "I", the amateur historian, which means that Don Jose tells the story to "me", then the relationship between the character Don Jose and the reader may seems to be less intimate and the narration less credible. This alteration involves not only a shift in perspective from "I" to "he" but, more significantly, it creates the impression that the narrator "I" learned the story from an unknown source by chance and is relaying it to the reader.

The narrative unfolds with the introduction of the first-person narrator ("I"), who describes their academic pursuit through Andalusia: "I was travelling through Andalusia, gathering material for my academic paper when I met a rather intriguing man, Don José (Mérimée, 2023)". This initial encounter sets the stage for the story, but it also raises questions about the reliability of the narrator's perspective and their motivations for documenting Don José's tale. As the narrator expresses eagerness to document Don José's story about Carmen, the reader is prompted to consider the potential for omissions or fabrications in the narration: "His story promised to shed light on the mysterious Carmen, whose tale I was eager to document (Mérimée, 2023)". This statement suggests the narrator's interest in uncovering Carmen's story, but it also leaves room for speculation regarding the completeness and accuracy of the narrative presented. Within the recounting of events, such as the visit to a fortune-teller with Carmen, the reader is further immersed in the uncertainty surrounding the narrator's reliability: "Once, Carmen and I visited a fortune-teller who predicted our tragic fate (Mérimée, 2023)". While the narrator presents themselves as a participant in the event, the exact accuracy and authenticity of their portrayal remain questionable, hinting at the potential for modifications or alterations in the storytelling process.

Consequently, it remains unclear whether the narrator, "I", has omitted, altered, or

even fabricated any parts of the story. The reader may have the impression that this narration is not conveyed in the original text. While Don Jose recounts the story to "me", the amateur historian, it is the "me" who transmits the story to the reader. However, the changes in narrative levels gradually diminish the presence of the "me" in the process of Don Jose's storytelling. This allows readers to perceive it as if the hero is directly speaking to the reader, fostering a closer connection between the reader and the characters.

Furthermore, the presence of two narrators in the text serves to provide readers with two perspectives through which to observe this love tragedy. Don Jose's perspective allows readers to experience the tragic emotions of love through his eyes. On the other hand, the "I" in the narrative, functioning as a historian studying academic matters, treats Carmen's tragedy as a mere tragic story from a more detached standpoint. This enables readers to transcend the dilemma of the situation and recognize that the story encompasses more than just a love tragedy. Primarily, the author aims to reflect the clash between two societies and cultures by contrasting the Gypsy nation's wildness, naturalness, and pursuit of freedom, represented by Carmen, with the falseness and hypocrisy of the French bourgeoisie, represented by Don Jose.

There is another hypothesis as well that the narrator "I" is replaced by Don Jose as the narrator. In doing so, readers would not only lose the dual perspectives mentioned earlier for observing Carmen's love tragedy but also miss the opportunity to observe the hero from an external standpoint. Readers would lack the ability to objectively perceive the hero's appearance, personality, and behavioural traits, leading to a significant loss of potential information. Additionally, irrelevant information pertaining to the main storyline would be omitted, not to mention the exclusion of information related to the narrator "I". If *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023) were to become a novel with a simple structure, written solely in chronological order of the story's development, it would fail to engage readers as effectively as the original work.

THE NARRATOR

The narrator, as Genette (1980) states, is the character who performs the action of narration in the text. In *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023), Mérimée employs two narrators, "I" and Don José, as revealed through the analysis of narrative levels. According to Genette's narrative theory, the narrator represented by "I" is considered an external homonarrative narrator, while Don José is designated as an internal homonarrative narrator. The "I" narrator exists within the story but assumes the role of a bystander, lacking the ability to influence the events or outcome of the novel. This narrator recounts observations or speculation about the experiences of other characters. On the other hand, Don Jose, as an internal homonarrative narrator, not only exists within the narrative but actively participates in the unfolding story, narrating his own experiences. In terms of reliability and emotional impact, Don Jose's narration appears more trustworthy and poignant. They respectively narrate the experiences of the "I" during the journey in the first narrative level and the love story between Don Jose and Carmen in the second narrative level.

It is important to note that the amateur historian (the narrator) and the "I" within the story, as well as the narrator Don Jose and the Don Jose within the story, form two pairs of characters referred to as the "narrating me" and the "narrated me". Genette (1980) argues that these two pairs are "distinguished by differences in age and experience that cause the former to treat the latter with a certain condescension or cynical superiority". Hence, the presence of post-narrative in the narrators mentioned above leads to the inclusion of post-explanatory or evaluative language in the text. Genette (1980) categorizes this situation as part of the narrators' functions.

Genette (1980) suggests that the discourse of the narrator can serve various functions. He (1980) classifies the functions of the narrator into five types: narrative function, management function, communication function, witness function, and thought function. In the novel *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023), besides the basic strict narrating function, the most notable function of the narrator is the witness function, which relates to the mentioned post-narrative. The narrator in the novel narrates the content of the story indicating the source of their information, the accuracy of their own memories, or the emotions evoked within them by a particular event. The role of the narrator in the novel can be characterized as purely testimonial, as evidenced by sentences such as, "In the prison at Seville I saw a man who interested me greatly (Mérimée, 2023)". Here, the narrator recounts an observation without injecting personal commentary or interpretation. This straightforward presentation of events aligns with a testimonial function, where the narrator serves primarily to relay the story's events rather than providing analysis or reflection.

Due to the post-narrative nature of the story, the narrator, through the passage of time and their understanding of the entire story, separates themselves from the "I" within the story. This allows the narrator to incorporate their own insights and emotional expressions into the narrative. Examples of evaluative language, as mentioned in the previous section, align with the category of the narrator's testimonial function. For instance, when describing a character's demeanour, the narrator states, "The man's face expressed despair, mingled with a sort of wild hope (Mérimée, 2023)". Here, the narrator presents the observation without interjecting private opinions or interpretations, maintaining a neutral and descriptive stance. This approach underscores the narrator's role in providing testimony to the events unfolding in the narrative, without veering into subjective evaluations or commentary.

Therefore, the reason for the author's effort to employ this function of the narrator is worthy of investigation. Firstly, these explanatory or evaluative statements not only add details to the narrative, enriching the plot but also bring readers closer, as if the characters are stepping out of the book and engaging in a close conversation with the readers. Secondly, by using the characters' voices to comment on the actions of other characters in the novel, the author is engaging in an indirect dialogue with the reader. The author does not appear within the novel itself, as this allows the author to maintain a certain distance from the characters and the plot (Liu, 2020). Consequently, readers can immerse themselves in the story without being reminded of the presence of an author (Wallace, 2018). This approach ensures the coherence of the plot for readers and fosters a stronger belief in the story, becoming fully engrossed in the

experiences of the narration.

CONCLUSION

Building upon Gérard Genette's narrative theory as expounded in *Narrative Discourse* (1980), this analysis delves deeply into the intricacies of the novel *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023) through the lens of narrative levels and the narrator. Mérimée adeptly employs two distinct narrative levels and utilizes two narrators to weave together a narrative that is both complex and yet remarkably cohesive. Through these techniques, Mérimée crafts a narrative style that is concise, composed, and detached, presenting readers with a poignant tale of love and tragedy.

Mérimée's disposal of the narrative level and the narrator also adds depth and dimension to the narrative, allowing for a nuanced exploration of the character's motivations and desires. As the story unfolds, the alternating perspectives provide insight into the complexities of human emotion, inviting the reader to question the nature of freedom, love, loyalty, and sacrifice.

Through his masterful manipulation of narrative levels and narrators, Mérimée invites readers on a journey that is at once captivating and thought-provoking. This study holds significance for the literary world as it provides insights into the narratology of texts, particularly exemplified in *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023). Mérimée's narrative mastery showcases the power of storytelling not only to entertain but also to delve into the complexities of the human condition. Through his portrayal of love and longing, Mérimée captures the essence of these universal emotions with clarity and poignancy. By understanding the intricacies of narrative techniques employed in *Carmen* (Mérimée, 2023), scholars and enthusiasts alike can gain a deeper appreciation for how storytelling shapes our understanding of human experiences and emotions, thus contributing to the broader discourse on narratology in literature.

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