

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE**

**Analysis of Narrative voice in R. C. Binstock's
*Tree of Heaven***

By: Tadesse Hailemariam Mamo

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**Analysis of Narrative voice in R. C. Binstock's
*Tree of Heaven***

**A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis
Ababa University in Partial Fulfillment for the Degree of Masters
of Arts in Literature**

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Approval of the Board of Examiners

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ABSTRACT

Fictional narratives are composed of stories. The stories that are in the fictional narratives seek someone to tell them. As a result, there is an agent who is the creation of the author that tells the stories found in the narrative fiction. Readers while engaged in the act of reading a fictional narrative, they hear the speaking voice that tells them the stories. In order to know who specifically is telling the story, readers ask the voice question “who speaks?” The answer to the voice question becomes a narrator. A narrator is the author’s being that speaks out the words of a fictional narrative.

The present study focuses on analyzing the narrative voices employed to narrate the story of a single narrative text, *Tree of Heaven*. In doing so, it analyses textual elements that signal the presence of the narrators in the fictional text. In addition, it analyzes the relationship between the narrators and the author, the relationship between the narrators and the story they narrate, the perceptibility of the narrators, the reliability of the narrators, the temporal relation of narration, and the narrative level to which the narrators belong.

Based on the focus of the analysis, the study shows that the author has employed two narrators having distinct voices to narrate the events of the story. The narrators are distinct for they are male and female. As a result, in reading the novel, we hear the voice of two extra-homodiegetic narrators telling the story by taking turns in the chapters of the novel. The narrators are still autodiegetic for they are the heroes in the story they narrate. Both the narrators are named and sexually determinate. The narrators are easily identifiable and unreliable in the course of narrating the story. The narrators are known as extradiegetic narrators for they belong to the first-degree narrative, i.e., the matrix narrative. The analysis done also shows that the narrators are totally different from the author.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Narratives, being numberless in the world, are present in every age, in every place, in every society (Barthes: 1977, 79). This implies that narratives are just around us. Narratives can be fictional as well as historical, but the focus of this study is on the fictional narratives. Fictional narratives are composed of stories. The stories that are found in fictional narratives can be transmitted either by telling or showing (Jahn, N2.1.2, and Keen, 32). We, humans, all tell stories – to ourselves, to others (Black: 2006, 53). The telling of stories may arise, as Culler (1997, 83) has suggested, from what we humans hear, tell and from our imagination and experience. Each and every story that we find in fictional narratives is told by someone and has to be heard by somebody else (Sylvan et al: 1993, 48). While someone is telling stories, there has to be another one to listen to the stories. Telling and listening to stories, as Black (ibid) has explained, is a human activity. This activity, as Miller (1990, 66) has said, is natural and universal.

The stories, which are in fictional narratives, can be transmitted through different media. They can, as Keen (2003, 32) explains, appear in the written or verbal forms, or in many visual or hybrid narrative forms. The medium of storytelling is language. Narrative fiction can be transmitted orally or in written form. When stories are transmitted orally, they require a story teller who, as Jahn (N1.3) explains, is a flesh-and-blood person, somebody who sees his/her audience, and somebody whom the audience can see and hear.

If there is a story, there has to be someone as an agent to tell it (Fludernik: 1993, 448). The stories in a given narrative fiction, especially the written ones, like the orally transmitted stories, have to be told and seek someone to tell them. The agent who

engages in telling stories is known as a narrator (Sylvan et al, 48). "A narrator," as Rimmon-kenan (2002, 88) has explained, "is the agent which at the very least narrates or engages in some activity serving the needs of the narration." The narrator, according to Rimmon-kenan, is the narrative voice or speaker of a narrative text. In addition, Palmer (2004, 16) explains that the narrator, being the agent responsible for the words on the pages of fictional texts, recounts the situations and events and is accountable in the text as a teller.

A narrative, as Chatman (1978, 28) has stated, is a form of communication. Communication presupposes two parties: a sender or addressor and a receiver or addressee. The sender or the addressor who is the source of the information can be the narrator in a given narrative. The narrator, who is the source of the story, has the command of the story. Jahn explains the narrator and the command he/she has in the story as:

A narrator is the agent who establishes communicative contact with an addressee (the 'narratee'), who manages the exposition, who decides what is to be told, how it is to be told (especially, from what point of view, and in what sequence), and what is to be left out. If necessary, the narrator will defend the 'telability' of the story and comment on its lesson, purpose, or message (Jahn, N3.1.1).

The telling of a story in narrative fiction is fulfilled by the presence of a narrator or a narrative voice. The narrative voice has its own contribution to the communication offered by the narrative (Phelan: 1996, 44). As a result, the narrator is the agent who establishes the communicative contact with the addressee/reader. The reader or addressee as he/she reads the narrative fiction begins to imaginatively communicate with the narrator. As a result, the reader [while reading the narrative fiction] can hear a textual voice of the narrative fiction. This is because as Ricoeur (1991, 32) explains a narrative voice tells the story we read in the narrative fiction. Likewise, the addressee/reader has to ask a question in order to get who specifically is telling him/her the story in the narrative fiction that he/she is reading. Knowing the narrator helps the

addressee/reader to continue the communication smoothly. The question that helps to know the agent who tells the story is “who speaks?” (Jahn N3.1.1 and Martin 1986).

The above particular question helps the addressee/reader to get the agent in the narrative fiction, who is speaking or the voice that is heard as he/she reads the text. The voice heard in reading the narrative fiction, as (Scott: 1988, 126) explained, is not exactly the author’s voice. This indicates that there is another voice that is heard while reading the narrative fiction. The voice heard is that of the narrator. The text contains a number of textual elements that project the narrator’s presence and his/her voice (Jahn, N1. 4). The textual elements that point out the presence of the narrator will help readers to have more information on the quality and distinctness of his/her voice.

This research attempts to answer the voice question, “Who speaks?” in R. C. Binstock’s, *Tree of Heaven*. Answering the voice question helps readers to know the agents that tell or speak the events of the selected narrative text. In doing so, the various textual elements that project the presence of the narrators will be assessed. In addition, the relationship the narrators have with the author, the extent of participation of the narrators in the story they narrate, the perceptibility of the narrators, the reliability of the narrators, the temporal relation used to narrate the events, and the narrative level the narrators belong to narrate the events of the story will analyzed and studied.

Answering the voice question based on the given situation can help to add something to the existing pool of knowledge about narrative voice. It, at the same time, can show the possibility for a narrative text to be narrated by more than one narrator in its main story line. The intention of this study is to reveal how more than one narrator having distinct voices can be involved in the narration of a given narrative text.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This research aims at specifically analyzing and showing how more than one narrator having distinctive voices can be employed to narrate a given narrative fiction.

The study will specifically attempt to address the following points:

- Who are the narrators in the novel?
- What are the textual elements that indicate the presence of the narrators?
- Whose voices do we specifically hear as we read the novel?
- What relationship do the narrators have to the story they narrate?
- What is the role of the narrators in the narrative fiction?
- How distinct are the narrators from one another?

1.3 Significance of the Study

In reading narrative fiction, there is communication in which the reader begins to imaginatively participate. The communication commenced in reading a narrative fiction is not with the author. The author of the narrative fiction may not live in the same place with that of the reader. The reader may not have the chance to know and meet in person the author of the narrative fiction. Then, for readers do not have the chance to get the author, it is not the author that is telling the story in the narrative fiction. There is another specific agent that tells the story and continues the communication commenced. We call this agent a narrator or a narrative voice or a speaker. As a result, in reading a literary text, readers hear the narrator's voice, but not the author's. The communication that the reader begins is with the narrator.

The analysis of the narrative voice helps the reader to have a sound understanding of the story. The story is going to be delivered to the reader with the help of the narrator or the narrative voice or the speaker in the story. The narrator of the narrative fiction has his/her own distinct perception. The way he/she perceives the story helps readers to better understand the story. As a result, the reader has to listen to the narrator in the story to have a detailed understanding of the events in the narrative fiction.

The study, then, shows the analysis of more than one narrative voice in the selected narrative fiction. It will show how identifying the narrative voices involved is helpful in understanding the story in the fictional text. So identifying specifically who the narrators

in the narrative fiction are helps to better understand and imaginatively participate in the experience of the characters.

1.4 Scope of the Study

A narrative is a form of communication. There are participants in a narrative communication. The participants consist of addressor/narrator and addressee/narratee. In this communication, as in the forms of communication there has to be understanding. The understanding between the narrator and the addressee can help to critically conceive the story of the narrative fiction. The identification of the narrative voice of a given narrative text helps to know what goes on in the communication between the narrator and addressee. This helps the reader to comprehend the narrative text he/she has read.

The scope of the study is analyzing and identifying specifically the participants of the communication in the selected narrative fictional text. The participants in the communication process are narrators and addressee. The study then focuses on the narrators of the selected fictional text. The aim is to examine the voices that we hear as we read the novel. This may require looking at the specific textual elements or evidence that indicates the narrative voices of the selected fictional text.

1.5 Methodology of the Study

The study is of a descriptive type. In writing the thesis a review of materials from different sources, i.e., library materials and from the internet, are consulted to write a literature review. Doing the review of literature helped the researcher to develop the theoretical framework of the study to be used in the analysis of the narrative voices involved to narrate the story of the fictional text and show how different this study is from other studies conducted in this area.

Based on the theoretical framework developed from the literature review, a descriptive analysis of the narrative voices of the novel – *Tree of Heaven* – is made. To make the descriptive analysis of narrative voices in the selected novel, passages from the text are

used as data. Passages which signal the presence and quality of the narrative voices are selected for the analysis. This indicates that the research is using the analysis of the selected passages as a method to identify the narrative voices involved in the narration of the narrative text. The theoretical framework used in the analysis of narrative voice in the selected novel is evolved from modern theories of narratology (This is discussed in chapter 2).

1.6 Organization of the Study

The study is organized as follows:

The first chapter, which is the introduction of the study, deals with the general background. It contains the research problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study and the methodology of the study.

The second chapter is a review of related literature focusing on fictional narrative and narrative voice. Based on the review of related literature, a theoretical framework is developed. This part of the study is believed to assist the researcher to identify the most relevant theories and procedures in exploring the narrative voice of a given narrative fiction. In addition, it reviews studies conducted in Addis Ababa University in relation to the narrative voice and show how different this research is from the other researches.

The third chapter focuses on the practical methods that are going to be used to analyze the narrative voices in the novel *Tree of Heaven* in relation to the theoretical framework developed in the previous chapter. The theoretical framework discussed under methodology (see chapter 2) is used to analyze narrative voice in the selected novel. In doing this, the identity of the narrators and the signals that imply the presence of the narrators are identified and interpreted.

Finally, the highlights of chapter three are summarized in the concluding fourth chapter. In this chapter, the findings of the study are discussed.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The aim of this chapter is to review literature works which are related to the topic under discussion, i.e. narrative voice. As a result, different books and materials from the web related to narrative voice are reviewed to evolve a theoretical framework for the analysis. In addition, different research works found in libraries of Addis Ababa University which have relation to the topic under discussion are reviewed.

2.1 A Review of Related Literature

Following are the literatures reviewed to develop the concept of narrative voice:

2.1.1 The Concept of Narratology and Narrative Fiction

Before discussing the concept of narrative voice, which is the main concern of this paper, the researcher would like to introduce the concept of narratology and narrative fiction.

The term narratology, as (Prince 1987/2003, Jahn (N2.1.1) and Fludernik 2009) stated, was first coined by Tzvetan Todorov in 1969. It was after narratology has begun to take shape as a discipline. Narratology according to, Bal (1985, 3) and Prince (1987, 65), is the theory of narrative texts. From this definition, it is possible to say that narratology is a narrative theory that is concerned with the general theory and practice of narrative. Fludernik (2009, 8) explains that the objective of narratology is to describe the constants, variables and combinations typical of narrative and to clarify how these characteristics of narrative texts connect within the framework of theoretical models.

Abrams (1999, 173) explains that narratology is concerned with the general theory and practice of narrative in all literary forms. Narratology particularly tries to investigate what all forms of narratives have in common (at the level of story, narrating, and their relations) and what entails them to be different from one another, and attempts to

account for the ability to produce and understand them. Thus, narratology helps to understand, analyze, and evaluate narratives.

Prince (1987, 58) puts that “narrative is the recounting (as product and process, object and act, structure and structuration) of one or more real or fictitious events communicated by one, two, or several (more or less overt) narrators to one, two, or several (more or less overt) narratees.” Similarly, Jahn (2005, N2.1.2) and Keen (2003, 32) describe narrative as anything that can tell or show a story. On the other hand, a narrative is the semiotic representation of a series of events meaningfully connected in a temporal and causal way (Onega, S. and Jose Angela Garcia Landa: 1996, 4). The above ideas show that narratives can be constructed from different media: written or spoken language, visual images, gestures and acting, as well as a combination of these. Being composed in such way, narratives should present stories. Stories are a sequence of interrelated events. The stories consisting of connected events need to be told by a narrator.

Rimmon-Kenan (2002, 1-2) suggests that a narrative fiction is one among the elements that a narrative can encompass. The term narrative fiction, as Rimmon-Kenan puts it, is the narration of fictional elements and is characterized by (1) communication process in which the narrative as message is transmitted by addressor and addressee, and (2) the verbal nature of the medium used to transmit the message. These characteristics distinguish narrative fiction from other narratives which are transmitted by other media.

2.1.2 The Concept of Narrative Voice

The stories that are found in narrative fiction need to be narrated. The telling of stories is not done by the author of the narrative fiction. This is true as Scott (1988, 126) has said the author or writer is writing down the words of the narrative text rather than speaking them. From this then, we can say that there is another voice that speaks or narrates the words of the narrative text. The agent that narrates the stories in a given narrative fiction is known as a **narrator** or **narrative voice**.

Narrative voice is used with reference to the act of narrating – the situation involving a teller and audience. This shows that the act of narrating seeks a narrator. A narrator, as Rimmon-Kenan (2002, 88) defines, is the agent which at the very least narrates or engages in some activity serving the needs of narration. A narrator is a speaker or ‘voice’ of narrative discourse. He or she is the agent who establishes communicative contact with an addressee, who manages the exposition, who decides what is to be told, how it is to be told, and what is to be left out (Jahn 2005: N3.1.1). As Martin (1986, 135) suggests, to get the agent involved in the act of narrating – narrative voice, we use the question “who speaks?” Such question answers who the narrative voice is in a given narrative fiction.

Generally, in narratology, narrative voice deals with narrators. That is the voice heard as one reads a given narrative fiction.

2.1.3 The Relation of the Narrator and the Author

As the above definition given to the narrative voice of a given literary text shows, the narrator is the agent who speaks out the words of the narrative fiction. The narrator, who is the agent, has to be created by the author. Gibson (1996, 155) describes that there is a difference between the author of a literary work of art and the fictitious speaker within the work of art. This indicates that the narrator can by no means be the author. And the author can still not be the narrator. Jahn (N1.6) describes that a narrator (a fictional being) and the author (a real person) are not the same. He adds that we should not confuse to the narrator with the author. The real writer who is in flesh-and-blood can use voices in his/her writing that he/she never uses in his/her speech (Scott: 1988, 128). From this, we can say that the narrative voice of a literary text is not exactly identical with the author’s natural speech.

As the above discussion shows, there is another voice, which is different from that of the real author’s, which narrates the events of the story. The voice that narrates the story is different from that of the author. The narrator belongs to a different world, a

fictional whereas the author belongs to the real world. The narrator or narrative voice is a readerly construct but the author is a real person.

2.1.4 The Relation of the Narrator and Fictional Characters

In analyzing the relation between the narrator and the fictional characters, the multiplicity of possibilities is delimited by two polar positions. Either the narrator exists as a character within the world of the fictional events of the novel or else he/she exists outside this fictional reality, not as a character (F. K. Stanzel, 163).

If the narrator exists in the same world as the characters, he is a first-person narrator according to the traditional terminology. On the other hand, if the narrator is existentially outside the world of the characters, we are dealing with third-person narrator in the traditional sense. This concept refers to whether the narrator is a character within the fictional reality or not a character within the fictional reality.

2.1.5 The Relationship between the Narrator and the Story

A narrator can be either present or absent from the story that he/she narrates (Rimmon-Kenan, 95). The presence and absence of the narrator from the story that he/she narrates is based on the relational criterion.

Anybody who tells a story, as Jahn (2005, N1.10) and Stanzel (1984) has suggested, must decide on one of the two basic options: to present in first-person narrative or third-person narrative. In fact, the above options are based on the traditional terms. In this view, if the story is presented in first-person, the narrator is present in the story. Genette calls such narrators as **homodiegetic narrators** when described in recent narratology (Genette: 183). On the other hand, the narrator is absent from the story if it is presented in a third-person narrative. Genette calls such narrators as **heterodiegetic narrators**, (ibid).

2.1.5.1 Homodiegetic Narrator

A homodiegetic narrator is a character in the story that he/she is telling. The narrator tells a story that he/she has experienced him/herself, that is, a story of personal experience. The individual who acts as a narrator in retrospection (the narrating I) is also a character (the experiencing I) on the level of action. Therefore, the first-person pronoun (I) refers both to the narrator (the narrating self) and to a character in the story (the experiencing self) at the same time. From this, as Booth (1983, 151-2) has said, when we encounter an “I” in narrative fiction, we are conscious of an experiencing mind whose views of the experiencing will come between readers and the event.

The presence of the homodiegetic narrator in the story that he/she narrates has to be described in degrees. The degree is required for there is a weak or strong presence of the narrator. As a result, the homodiegetic narrator is present in the story that he/she narrates, at least in two ways: (1) where the narrator is the hero of his/her narrative, Genette reserves the term **autodiegetic** (which to some extent represents the strong degree of homodiegetic) and (2) where the narrator plays a secondary role, which almost always turns out to be a role as observer and witness (I as witness narrator).

A typical homodiegetic narrator is restricted to a largely personal, subjective, and limited point of view; he/she has no direct access to events that he/she did not witness in person; he/she cannot be in two places at the same time (the law against bilocation); he/she has no way of knowing for certain what goes or went on in the minds of other characters. A narrator’s handling of these limitations, and a text’s relative closeness to, or distance from, such typical conditions can tell us a lot about the attitude of the narrative voice as well as the motives for telling the story (Jahn: N1.13).

2.1.5.2 Hetrodiegetic Narrator

A hetrodiegetic narrator is somebody who is not, and never was, a character in the world of the story, but rather one who ‘stands outside’ the world of the story. This

narrator is aware that he/she is telling a story, and may comment on the story being told and on the way he/she narrates.

In some fictional texts, the narrator is not part of the story that he/she narrates. Traditionally, such a narrator was termed as omniscient and limited point of view based on the knowledge he/she has about the story. Recently, Franz Stanzel (1984) suggests the terms **authorial** and **figural** narrator as alternatives to the omniscient and limited narration, respectively. These two divisions are dependent on the narrative situation created. This is because the narrative situation decides the type of narrator to be involved in the process of narration.

Whenever the narrator is not part of the story that he/she narrates, it is difficult to decide on how to gender a narrator especially when there are no text-internal clues which show this. But, there is one agreement that Jahn (2005, N.3.1.3) has called it as *Lanser's rule* which helps to decide on the narrator's sex. According to this agreement, "the narrator is male if the author is male, and that the narrator is female if the author is female." This agreement will have some drawbacks for there are some authors, as Fludernik (2009, 14) has put, who use *nom de plume*, a pen name, for their literary works. Peculiar example is Mary Ann Evans, in English literature, better known as George Eliot. George Eliot a famous author known to be male is the pen name of Mary Ann Evans. From this then, it is sometimes difficult to gender the narrator of some literary texts whenever there are no text internal clues to identify him/her.

2.1.6 Voice Markers in a Narrative Text

When reading a fictional narrative, we cannot see the narrator. This is because what we see is lines of print. But the narrative text contains a number of elements that project the presence of the narrator's voice. Jahn (2005, N1.4) lists the elements which in particular project the presence of a narrative voice in a given narrative text as follows: content matter, subjective expressions, and pragmatic signals.

With regard to **Content matter**, the narrator may talk about different subjects – contents. There are naturally and culturally appropriate voices for sad and happy, comic and tragic subjects. These create conditions for the narrator to use appropriate voice for each and every subject at hand. **Subjective expressions** are those that indicate the narrator’s education, his/her beliefs, convictions, interests, values, political and ideological orientation, and attitude towards people, events, and things. The subjective expressions also include the narrator’s sex, age and his/her background. Under the **pragmatic signals**, we look for expressions that signal the narrator’s awareness of an audience and the degree of his/her orientation towards it. The narrator may address his/her audience in the act of narration. Using these voice markers, any reader can identify the voice that is heard speaking in a given narrative situation.

2.1.7 Narrative Situation

Narrative situation is the mediating process through which the narrated is presented. Stanzel (1984) describes that there are three narrative situations: first-person narrative situation, authorial narrative situation, and figural narrative situation. A narrative situation consists of the narrative voice (Bal: 1981, 45). As a result, the three narrative situations decide the type of narrator to be used so as to tell the story that the fictional narrative is composed of. Prince (1987) describes how the three narrative situations are characterized. Based on this idea:

First-person narrative situation is characterized by a narrator who is a participant in the situations and events recounted. First-person narrative is told by a narrator that exists inside the story world of the characters. The narrator tells a story of personal experience.

Authorial narrative situation is characterized by the omniscience of a narrator who is not a participant in the situations and events recounted. In such type of narrative situation, as Fludernik (1996, 124) has explained, the narrator has a consoling ability to, to see into characters’ minds, to grasp the why, how and where of life, and to uncover life’s riles and regularities. Authorial narrative is told by a narrator that exists outside

the story world of the characters. The narrator tells a story involving other people. Such a narrator can offer panoramic descriptions and observations about events occurring simultaneously in the world of the story.

Figural narrative situation is characterized by internal focalization (and a narrator who is not a participant in the situations and events recounted). In figural narrative situation, the perspective of a reflecting character inside the world of the story overwrites the narrator, whose presence is downplayed. Such type of narrative presents the events of the story as seen through the eyes of a third-person internal focalizer.

The above three categories of narrative situation can be summarized as: first-person, as a character in the novel in the first-person narrative situation, external perspective in the authorial narrative situation, and reflector-mode in the figural narrative situation.

2.1.8 Temporal Relation

Every narrative fiction narrates a life process which is fictitious. The life process has its duration. It begins somewhere some time and exists for some limited amount of time. When a fictional narrative recounts the events that happened in the process of life, it includes different temporal relations. Temporal relation shows the time of the narration. It refers to the time that the narration of the events of the story is done. The chief temporal determination of the act narration is its position relative to the story (Genette, 1980).

It is impossible not to locate the story in time with respect to the act of narration. This is because a story must necessarily be narrated either in present, past, or future tense. In temporal relation, we can get the answer to the question, "*When does the narrator tell the story?*" Rimmon-kenan (2002, 92-94) and Genette (1980, 212-260) classified the various temporal relations of narration with the events of the story under four headings.

The first is **Ulterior Narration** (Genette's subsequent). In this type of temporal relation, the events are narrated only after they happen. This shows that the past events are reported in such types of narration. The second is **Anterior Narration** (Genette's prior).

In such type of narration, though it is less frequent, the narration precedes the events. It is a kind of predictive narration, generally using the future tense, but sometimes the present. In this type of narration events that will appear in the future are presented. The third is **Simultaneous Narration**. In this type of temporal relation, both the event and the narration happen or occur at the same time. It means that as the narration is in progress the events happen or as the events are in progress the narration takes place. The narration is in contemporaneous with the action. In short, the time for both the narration and the events to appear is the same. The fourth heading is **Alteration Narration** (Genette's interpolated). In such type of narration, the telling and acting follow each other in alteration. This means that the narration is done between the moments of the action.

As the above four headings of temporal relation indicate, it can be possible, based on a demand, for a narrator to narrate a story in different intervals of time. Narration, as a result, can entertain the above temporal relations in the course of narrating the stories.

2.1.9 A Typology of Narrators

To distinguish the varieties of narrators in narrative texts, the following criteria are very crucial: the extent of the narrator's participation in the story, the degree of perceptibility of his/her role, his/her reliability, and finally the narrative level to which the narrator belongs. It is therefore according to these criteria that the variety of narrators will be presented. The criteria are not mutually exclusive and allow cross-combinations between the different types.

2.1.9.1 Narrator's Extent of participation in his/her story

The extent of participation of a narrator in his/her story (discussed in 2.1.5) is expressed using two options: present within the story or absent from the story. When the narrator is present in the story that he/she narrates we call him/her as homodiegetic narrator. On the other hand, when the narrator is absent from the story that he/she narrates, it is known as heterodiegetic narrator.

2.1.9.2 Perceptibility of a Narrator

Perceptibility of a narrator concerns with the degree of personification of a narrator. The degree of perceptibility of a narrator can be divided in to two – *overt* and *covert* (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). Following Chatman (1978), the terms *overt* and *covert* are often used to refer to an easily identifiable as opposed to a concealed narrator.

According to Keen (2003, 40) and Fludernik (2009, 21), overt narrator is a narrator that is easily identifiable. Such a narrator announces his/her presence through self-reference. He/she is clearly seen telling the story and articulating his/her own views and making his/her presence felt stylistically as well as on the metanarrative level. Such type of narrator makes him/herself known to narratees in various parts of the text. Overt narrator may or may not identify his/her age and gender, but he/she leaves sufficient evidence of his/her existence in the text to create a sense of distinct personality.

The presence of the overt narrator is seen when he/she offers summaries of time passing or provides bird's eye-view, character identification with capsule descriptions of their traits, past, appearance, and what they think, as well as what they do not think or say. He/she is also one who intrudes into the story in order transmit philosophical or metanarrative comments. The narrator offers such expositions whenever he/she feels they are needed. A named narrator is by personification rendered overt. Overt narrators are common in authorial narrative situation and automatic in first person.

On the other hand, a covert narrator, being hidden in the discourse shadows, helps narratees to hear a voice speaking of events, characters and settings (Chatman; 1978, 167). Such a narrator is linguistically inconspicuous; he/she does not present him/herself as the articulator of the story or does so almost imperceptibly. The covert narrator lets the story events unfold in the natural sequence and tempo. A covert narrator, according to Jahn (2005, N3.1.4), has indistinct or indeterminable voice. This is a type of narrator who fades into the background, one who goes into hiding him/herself. The narrator is not named, and is sexually indeterminate.

Rimmon-Kenan (2002, 96) believes that a complete absence of a narrator is impossible. In any narration a few signs of overttness can be detected in a text whose narrator is almost purely covert. In less pure cases, there are many signs of overttness.

When the narrator is believed to be covert, there are signs of overttness which Rimmon-Kenan (2002, 96-100) and Chatman (1978, 220-52), listed include:

(1) **Description of Setting:** in here, the narrator describes the setting at least in a minimal way. In narrative fiction the description of setting has to be said in language, and the language is that of the narrator's.

(2) **Identification of Characters:** the narrator, for he/she has prior knowledge of the characters, communicates what the narratee – reader does not know about them. In this case, the narrator's role is to communicate to others what they do not know.

(3) **Temporal Summary:** summary presupposes a desire to account for time-passage, to answer questions in a narratee's mind about what has happened in the interval. An account cannot but draw attention to the one who felt obliged to make such an account. Temporal summary implies the presence of a narrator as well as his notion of what should be told in detail and what could be narrated with greater conciseness.

(4) **Definition of Character:** an identification of a character implies only the narrator's prior knowledge or acquaintance with him/her. Definition of characters, in addition, suggests an abstraction, generalization or summing up on the part of the narrator as well as a desire to present such labeling as authoritative characterization. Definitions of characters tend to carry more weight when given by an extradiegetic narrator than by an intradiegetic one.

(5) **Reports of What Characters did not Think or Say:** a narrator who can tell things of which the characters are either unconscious or which they deliberately conceal is clearly felt as an indefinite source of information.

(6) **Commentary:** the narrator gives a commentary either on the story or the narration.

Commentary given on the story may have different forms like:

(a) **Interpretation:** this is a form of commentary given on the story. Interpretation often provides information not only about their direct object – story, but also about the interpreter.

(b) **Judgments:** the judgments given in the act of narration reveal more on the moral stand of the narrator.

(c) **Generalization:** it is a commentary that extends the significance of the particular case in a way which purportedly applies to a group, a society or humanity at large.

On the other hand, besides the commentary given on the story, a commentary on the narration can also be given. In such a case, the concern is not on the represented world but the problems of presenting it. In doing so, the narrator comments on his/her own narration. This is because the commentary given is on the way that the narrator narrates the events of the story.

2.1.9.3 Reliability of a Narrator

Narrators can narrate their stories to their readers principally as scene, or as summary, or most commonly, as a combination of the two (Booth: 1983, 154). In doing so, the narrator has to be accurate in delivering the events of the story in order to make readers accept them – the events of the story. Keen (2003, 42) describes that accurate description of narrative situation is where reliability of narration depends.

A **reliable narrator**, according to Rimmon-Kenen (2002, 100), renders the story and commentary in such a way that readers do not suspect. On the other hand, an **unreliable narrator**, a term coined by Wayne Booth (1961), renders the story and/or commentary on it such that the reader has reasons to suspect. In specific circumstances a narrator, who is unreliable, will lose credibility because he/she violates valid social norms in word or deed. Such an unreliable narrator may give a distorted picture of the fictional reality as a result of being obsessed by certain ideas (Fludernik, 2009). In addition, unreliable narrator, as Walsh (1997, 505) explains, shows inconsistency in the way he/she explains about events and situations of the narrative. Still readers have

reasons to suspect the narrator for his/her perception, interpretation, and evaluation of the matters he/she narrates do not coincide with the opinions and norms implied by the author, which the author expects the alert reader to share (Abrahams, 1999). In this respect, as Keen (2003, 43) has said, unreliable narration suggests that a writer deliberately exploits reader's awareness that the version of the story retold by the narrator should be treated with skepticism.

Plausible reasons for a narrator's unreliability, as Keen (2003, 43) and Rimmon-Kenan (2002, 100) Fludernik (2009, 27) pointed out, include: the narrator's limited knowledge, his/her personal involvement, and his problematic value-scheme, psychological states, such as grief or denial, incapacities, such as a low IQ or incomplete grasp of the language, senility or extreme youth; simple obtuseness; dishonesty or some other kind of motivation to spin a story in a misleading way. In other words, as Chatman (1978, 234) describes, the domain of unreliability is the view of what happens or what the existents are like, not the personality of the narrator.

To get the story's real intention – what the implied author wishes, according to Chatman (1978, 233) Fludernik (2009, 27) and Keen (2003,43), we readers – have to read between the lines, so as to understand that the events and existents could not have been like the way they are given which helps us to suspect the narrator. This is so because an unreliable narration is ironical. The irony expression raises the difference in skepticism. The difference may arise between the message sent and received by the participants in the narrative communication.

2.1.9.4 Narrative Levels

Narrating a story can occur on many different levels (Jahn, N2.4.1). A distinction has to be made between the various levels of a narrative. One distinction arises when a character in a story begins to tell a story of his own or he/she tells someone else's. Such narratives within narratives create stratification of levels whereby each inner narrative

is subordinate to the narrative within which it is embedded. In such a way it begins to create a narrative within a narrative, or a tale within a tale.

Whenever a character in a narrative begins telling a story, not only has the character become a secondary narrator, but a secondary story has also been created (Keen, 111). The narrator of the second narrative is already a character in the first one, and that the act of narrating which produces the second narrative is an event recounted in the first one. The narrating instance of a first narrative is therefore extradiegetic by definition, as the narrating instance of a second (metadiegetic) narrative is diegetic by definition, etc (Genette, 180). The original narrative now becomes a 'frame' or 'matrix' narrative, and the story told by a narrating character becomes an 'embedded' or 'hyponarrative' (Bal, 52). A matrix narrative is a narrative containing an 'embedded' or 'hyponarrative'.

Rimmon-kenan (2002, 94-97) elaborates the analysis of embedded narratives by suggesting the following terms: a first-degree narrative is a narrative that is not embedded in any other narrative (i.e., matrix narrative); a second-degree narrative is a narrative that is embedded in a first-degree narrative; a third-degree narrative is one that is embedded in a second-degree narrative, etc. In relation to the narrators involved in the act of narrating in the narrative level, Rimmon-kenan (ibid) explains that a first-degree narrator is the narrator of a first-degree narrative (i.e., extradiegetic narrator), a second-degree narrator is the narrator of a second-degree narrative (intradiegetic narrator), etc.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Under this part of the paper, the theoretical framework of the study is delivered. As reviewed above in details, narrative voice is the major concern of this theoretical framework. The theoretical framework bases on the review that combines the major ideas of Genette (1980), Chatman (1978), Stanzel (1984), Rimmon-kenan (2002), Jahn (2005), Keen (2003), Bal (1985), Booth (1983), and Fludernik (2009).

The following section gives a brief summary of the important concepts of narrative voice which are thoroughly elaborated in the literature review.

Narrative voice is used with reference to the act of narrating. The act of narrating seeks a narrator. A narrator is, as a result, the narrative voice in a given fictional narrative. Narrative voice is identified on the bases of the relationship the narrators have to the story they narrate, the perceptibility of the narrators, the reliability of the narrators, the temporal relation of narration, and the narrative level to which the narrators belong.

In relation to the participation of the narrators to the story they narrate, Genette (1980) divides them as homodiegetic and hetrodiegetic. A narrator who is a character in the story he/she narrates is a homodiegetic, traditionally known as first-person. Hetrodiegetic narrator, on the other hand, is one who is not a character in the story that he/she narrates, traditionally termed as third-person. Stanzel (1984) describes that the narrative situation decides the type of narrator to be used so as to narrate the story of a narrative fiction. As to him, there are three narrative situations: first-person, authorial, and figural. In first-person narrative situation the narrator is a participant in situations and events recounted. Both the authorial and figural narrative situations are characterized by the absence of the narrator. But, they have some distinctions, in the first the narrator is known for his/her omniscience and in the second the narrator is overwritten by the perspective of a reflecting character.

Following Chatman (1978), narratologists normally use the oppositional pairs of overtness and covertness to analyze the perceptibility of narrators in the story they narrate. The terms overt and covert are often used to refer to an easily identifiable as opposed to a concealed narrator respectively. Rimmon-kenan (2002) believes that a narrator can never be totally concealed. This is because there are signs of overtness even in less pure cases.

Narrators can be analyzed for the reliability they have in delivering the events of the story. if the narrator is reliable, readers do not suspect him/her in the way he/she renders the story and commentary on it (Fludernik, 2009). On the other hand, an

unreliable narrator's rendering the story and commentary on it is suspected due to some reasons on the part of the readers.

Narrators can narrate their stories within different temporal relations of narration. There are four temporal relations of narration: ulterior, anterior, simultaneous, and alteration (Genette, 1980 and Rimmon-kenan, 2002). In ulterior narration, events are narrated after they happen. In anterior narration, the narration precedes the events. The events of the story and the narration happen at the same time in simultaneous narration. In alteration narration, the telling and acting follow each other in alteration.

Story telling can occur at many levels. The matrix narrative is told by a first-degree narrator. The matrix narrative can embed stories. We find narrators to tell the embedded narratives that correspond to the degree embedded.

2.3 A Review of Related Studies

This part of the paper reviews studies which are conducted in Addis Ababa University and are in the catalogue of the libraries which have some relation to the topic under discussion, narrative voice.

Here, in Addis Ababa University, as the catalogue of the libraries indicates, there is no much research conducted in the field of narratology to identify the agent(s) who narrate(s) or speak(s) in a narrative fiction. This specific area of narratology, i.e., the narrative voice of narrative fictions, I can say, is not sufficiently studied. In fact, there are few studies which are conducted and reported by approaching narrative fictions with the traditional approaches of narrative techniques. To mention some: 'An Analysis of Literary Techniques in some of the Prose Works of Ethiopian Women Authors' (by Assefa, 1995); 'Literary Style and Historical Meaning: A Study of Three Amharic Historical Novels' (by Assefa, 1996); 'A Comparative Analysis of Narrative Techniques in the Book of Revelation and Frankenstein' (by Rahel, 2005); 'Narrative Techniques in the Holy Qur'an' (by Yimam, 2009); 'A Study of Narrative Techniques in the Chronicle of

Yohannes' (by Tadewos, 2009). The above studies deal with narrative techniques by focusing on point of view, plot and setting. As a result, the studies all use the so called traditional approach in the analysis of the narrative techniques. It should be noted, however, that none of these studies tries to analyze the narrative voice contained in them using the recent theories of narrative.

However, with regards to the study of narrative voice, there are three researches conducted which appear on the catalogue. One was conducted by Yideg Alemayehu (2004), which is entitled, "A Practical Critical Analysis of two Narrative Techniques: Focalization and Voice in *Things Fall Apart*". In this research, narrative voice of the novel is not studied as an independent narrative technique. It is studied together with the narrative focalization. The findings in this research, particularly with regard to narrative voice, show that the novel studied has a single narrative voice within its main story line. All the incidents which the novel contains within its main action level are narrated from the point of view of a single narrator who is not part of the story that he/she narrates. Yideg in 2009 has developed his M. A. thesis into a PhD Dissertation with a title, "Approaching Prose Narrative with Modern Narrative Theory of Focalization and Voice: A Comparative Study of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Feikremarkos' *Land of the Yellow Bull*." In this research, Yideg has made an extensive analysis of narrative voice and narrative focalization in the two novels. Still, like his M. A. thesis, he did not study the narrative voice of the novels as an independent and self contained narrative technique. The narrative voice of the novels is studied together with the narrative focalization, another narrative technique.

The other research was conducted by Mebrahtu Gebreegzabiher (2005). It is entitled, "A Critical Analysis of Narrative Voice in Sebhat Gebreegzabiher's *SEED and Other Short Stories*". Mebrahtu made an analysis of narrative voice in the five short stories of *SEED and other Stories* written by Sebhat Gebereerziabher. In his research, Mebrahtu has examined the narrative voice of the five short stories by focusing on one short story at a time. Each short story has a single narrative voice in its main story channel. The narrator

in each of the five short stories is a single one. Here he has not shown any pattern that can be arrived at from the five short stories studied and analyzed concerning the narrative voice they use. That means the short stories are studied and discussed separately for the narrative voice they contain. These research works cover some areas in the field of narratology, specifically in relation to aspects of narration and narrative voice.

The above mentioned researchers and their studies focused on narratives which have single narrators to tell the stories they are composed of. Their findings reveal that readers while reading the literary works, novels and short stories, hear the voice of a single agent in the narrative fiction. The review of studies in this area shows that there is no continuous and exhaustive study done in this area, showing the various possibilities of narrating a fictional text. Because of this, there seems to be a space for conducting research to see how a single narrative fiction can be narrated by more than one narrator or narrative voices in its main story line.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE VOICES IN *TREE OF HEAVEN*

The objective of this chapter is to analyze the narrative voices used in the narration of the story in *Tree of Heaven*. Before giving the analysis of the narrative voices in the selected narrative fiction, the researcher presents a synopsis of the novel.

3.1 A Summary of *Tree of Heaven*

Tree of Heaven is set in the Japanese-occupied town of China – Manchuria. Kuroda, a junior Japanese officer, rescues a young Chinese woman, Li, from being raped by his troops. He takes her with him as a servant so as to look after her. While living together, the relationship between her and Kuroda deepens gradually into companionship and subsequently into love. Both Kuroda and Li suffer the consequences of the intimacy they developed. Kuroda is wracked with guilt at being unfaithful to his wife in Japan by taking Li as a mistress. Li is considered as a traitor by other Chinese she meets. Despite all this, the relationship they have is the only thing that sustains them. She does her best to please him and Kuroda with all his effort looks after her. The story ends putting Kuroda to death and Li to face what she has been saved from, being raped by the soldiers.

3.2 Analysis of the Speaking Voices in the Novel

In R.C. Binstock's *Tree of Heaven*, like in all narrative fiction, we have narrative voices responsible in speaking the words given in the narrative text. The narrative voices that are responsible for narrating the words of the narrative text, as Rimmon-kenan stated (Refer to section 2.1.2), are known as narrators. In this novel, when asking the voice question "who speaks?" we come to learn that there are two speakers in the words of the narrative fiction. This means that the two speakers or narrators are responsible in narrating or speaking the words of the novel. The two narrators can be heard speaking in the narrative text [while we are reading the text]. In the novel, the narrative voices

who speak in the course of the story are easily identifiable from the given words. This is because there are many textual elements which signify the presence of the narrative voices in the selected fictional narrative.

To begin with the analysis, at the very beginning of the narrative fiction, there is an agent – a narrator, particularly in this part, who is responsible for the words on the pages of the narrative text. (The researcher’s analysis of the narrative voices begins with one of the narrators who start the act of narration by speaking about the events and the situation.) This agent engages in the act of narration and we hear his voice as we read the narrative text. The narrator who is responsible in the beginning of the act of narration is male. There are textual elements such as subjective expressions in the first chapter and in elsewhere of the text that reveal his sex.

To support the analysis with evidences, we hear the narrator speaking about his wife as the narration begins. The narrator is heard speaking about what his wife has said in her letter that she sent him. The content matter of his speech reveals that he is a male narrator. The way he speaks can be seen as:

- i. *[. . .] I was plainly reading a letter from home. It was a letter from my wife that I have now read over at least ten times because I find it oddly distant. As if the experiences of the last year have spun a curtain between us, a veil. Somehow I fear as if she is the one in the foreign land, while I sew and wait for her return; when she writes to me of this neighbor or that shopkeeper, people she implies I should well remember. I ask, why does she expect me to know these strangers? [p. 4]¹*
- ii. *[. . .] I went into my tent and tried to answer my wife’s letter. After twenty minutes of effort I gave that up and lay instead on my cot, remembering a few of the events I have been party to and attempting to order my recollections into some sort of sequence [. . .] [pp. 7-8]*
- iii. *I see my wife in our home, cooking rise, and our daughter at her school [. . .] [p. 33]*

¹ The page numbers without other details throughout the paper refer to pages in R. C. Binstock’s *Tree of Heaven* (1995).

The content matter of the extracts [numbered i-iii] given above signal that the voice we hear speaking is that of a man. The speaking man [number i] tells that he has wife and that she has sent him a letter. He speaks that he has read it many times. In addition [number ii], he says that he has tried to answer his wife's letter. Still [number iii], he speaks about imaginatively seeing of his wife. All these textual elements signal that the speaker is male. In addition, he explains that he is a man in another part of the text saying, "*I am . . . a man*" [p. 45]. Here, he explicitly makes it clear that he is male by saying that he is a man. The narrator's use of subjective expressions reveals his identity. We know that he is speaking about himself for he uses the first-person pronoun 'I' in the story that he narrates. From this, we can say that the narrative voice, which is heard at the beginning of the story, is from a male narrator.

The name of this male narrator is given in the third chapter of the text when one of the officers – Suzuki, calls and speaks to him. In their dialogue, Suzuki says, "*Kuroda, you ignorant fool,*" [p. 18]. As the expressions in the dialogue reveal, the name of the male narrator is Kuroda. At the same time, the narrator mentions his name when speaking about himself. He says, "[. . .] *with every hour that passes I get farther from recovering myself, from being Kuroda, from being whole; with every day I am less able, I think, to heal in some . . .*" [p. 67]. Furthermore, Li – a female character in the narrative mentions his name saying: "[. . .] *Kuroda was not there but some paper and a pen lay scattered on the table . . .*" [p. 75]. We come to learn that Li lives with the narrator in the story.

From the above instances, we can see that there is one definitely known narrative voice. In addition, there is also another narrator who is still responsible for the rest of the words on the pages of the narrative text. This agent, the other narrator, like the previous one, Kuroda, performs the act of narrating. This narrator begins the act of narration in the second chapter of the narrative text.

The second narrator's sex is found to be female. The sex of the narrator is identified with the help of markers given in her speech everywhere within the narrative text. She, for example, speaks about herself, which are vivid examples of subjective expressions. In

her speech, there are expressions of self-reference that clearly indicate her sex. The following extracts show how she speaks about herself:

- i. [. . .] *I am grateful for the fact that I have not been shot or beaten or violated I must be sorrowful for them, and this is what I cannot do. I cannot do this and continue to care for myself, to remain intact through each hour. The only thing I can do for them is to survive, in the act I must refuse them; I must become the cruel stone woman they have always believed me to be. [p. 10]*
- ii. [. . .] *I thought her [the old woman] eyes had spoken to me; they had accepted some part of my food and my concern and showed affection. Perhaps I'd reminded her of her eldest granddaughter. After that I felt relief and then I was angry . . . [p. 11]*
- iii. *Understand: I have seen my sisters raped and lying by the road. I have seen the red limbs, twisted. But this has not come to me. I am ready for it – I think I have actually willed the nerves of my genitals to disappear, or to cease their function . . . [p.12]*
- iv. [. . .] *though I knew none of the others and in fact exchanged no words with them and not even a friendly glance (unless you count the appraising look of the younger man, who considered me for a replacement wife). I felt almost kindly . . . [pp. 20-21]*

In the above extracts [numbered i-iv], the narrator makes subjective expressions showing that she is female. The speaker addresses herself using the first-person pronoun 'I'. This indicates that the subjective expressions that she makes in her speech refer to her. She [in number i] speaks about becoming a cruel stone woman. In the next extract [number ii], she says that she thinks that she reminds the old woman of her eldest granddaughter. Still, in her speech [number iii], she says that she saw her sisters raped and lying by the road, but unlike her sisters, she is not raped. In the next extract [number iv], she speaks about the appraising look of the young man. She thinks that the man considers her for a replacement wife. All the subjective expressions in the extracts refer to a female one. From the content of the extracts, we can say that the voice heard, particularly in this part of the narrative text, comes from a female narrator. There are also textual elements that signify what the name of this narrator is. The name of the female narrator that narrates the story in the narrative text is indicated as follows,

“What is your name?” he [Kuroda] asked.

“Li.”

“Is that your family name?” [p.41]

The narrator when asked to tell her name, answers saying Li. The name of this narrator is made known in the sixth chapter of the narrative fiction. Her name is also mentioned in various parts of the narrative text. To cite an example, “[. . .] *Li is different and I [Kuroda] do not want her here . . .*” [p.66]. This is said when Kuroda speaks about her [Li] calling her name when she is not there with him to listen to what he is saying. In addition, “[. . .] *I’m . . . Li . . .*” [p.157]. This subjective expression is made when she speaks about herself by addressing her name in the narrative text. These and elsewhere in the novel make clear the name of the female narrator to be Li.

Thus, there are two distinct narrators who are involved in the act of narrating in the novel studied. The use of these two distinct narrators in speaking the action level of the story as Carl R. Wooding (1957) has said has to be appreciated as an innovation. The author has created two narrators to present the events and situations of the novel. The two narrators are Kuroda – a male narrator, and Li – a female narrator. These two narrators are engaged in the act of narrating the story having their turns in the chapters of the narrative text. The narration in the first chapter begins with the speaking voice of the male narrator as already mentioned, and in the second chapter with the speaking voice of the female narrator. The narration continues in such way until the end of the text letting one narrator speak in one chapter and the other in the next chapter. In the novel, there are twenty four chapters. Twelve of the chapters given with odd numbers are narrated by the male narrator and the rest twelve chapters in even numbers are narrated by the female narrator.

3.3 The Relationship between the Narrative Voices and the Author

The analysis done in the previous section of this chapter makes clear that the narration is done by the two narrators, male and female. On the other hand, the narrative text is written by a single author known as R.C. Binstock. The author, Binstock is engaged in

writing down the words of the narrative text but the speaking of these words is not done by him. This means that we do not find him in speaking the words he has written. This is because the speaking of the words of the narrative text is done by the agents that he has created in the narrative text.

Hence, the narrators involved in speaking the words of the narrative text should not be confused with the author (Refer to section 2.1.3) of the text. From this, we can say that the speaking voices of the narrative text are not the same as that of the author. The author of the narrative text is a single person named as R. C. Binstock. It is possible to find this author in person on the surface of the earth, in fact if he is alive. We can write him a letter; we can ask him to sign our copy (supposing he is alive). Even if he is dead, we readers who appreciate his work ensure his lasting reputation. The condition with the narrators – the speakers in the narrative text, is different as compared to the author. We cannot in person get the narrators. They belong to a fictional world. It is impossible for us to speak to them, but we can imaginatively interact with them while reading the text. We cannot write them a letter; we cannot ask them to sign our copy. This is because the narrators are readerly construct from the printed words of the text.

The above analysis indicates that we do not have to associate the author of the narrative text with the narrative voices. The narrators are two male and female. The author is one and male. It is impossible for the author to be two, male and female at the same time. In addition, the author is a real person and the narrative voices are fictional beings created by the author. We can identify them from the printed words of the narrative text.

3.4 The Relationship between Narrators and the Story They Narrate

The analysis of narrative voices in the selected novel shows that there are two narrators who are engaged in the act of narration. This means that there are two distinct narrative voices that we hear speaking in the narrative text. The two narrators when analyzed for

the relationship they have with the story they narrate, we can see that both are present in the story as characters.

For instance, Kuroda is present as a character in the story that he himself narrates. He uses the first-person pronoun 'I' in his narration. Addressing himself with the first-person 'I', the narrator engages in narrating the events that he has experienced on the action level of the fictional world. As a result, the voice that we hear following him is then that of a character in the action level in the given novel.

The above analysis can be supported with evidence taken from the narrative text. The following extracts can be used to show that the narrator is engaged in the action level of the story:

- i. [. . .] I [Kuroda] was plainly reading a letter from home. It was a letter from my wife that I have now read over at least ten times . . .
- ii. With Suzuki staring directly at me and the letter I [Kuroda] had to fold it and return it at my pocket. I had risen to salute him [. . .] I asked if he had eaten and offered to have the orderly serve him [. . .] I lit for him and then we sat . . . [p.4]

The first person-pronoun in the given extracts [numbered i – ii] show that the speaker is performing some actions or is present in the action level of the narrative text. In the first extract [number i], we learn that the speaker is performing the act of reading the letter. In the next extract [number ii], the speaker is doing all the actions mentioned with the verbs in his speech: folding the letter, putting the letter in pocket, rising to salute, asking to offer food and serving, lit for Suzuki and sitting. Various actions are expressed with the verbs in the given extracts. The 'I' in the extracts is speaking the words with the action verbs. As a result, Kuroda, the speaker of these actions, is present there in performing them. These examples in the narrative text show that Kuroda is a participant in the story that he narrates.

Similarly, the female narrator – Li, is also present as a character in the story that she narrates. Li takes part in the actions of the story as a character. This is to mean that she

performs some actions or is present in the action level of the story world as a character in the process of narrating the story.

The above idea can be supported by taking some evidences from the narrative text. The following extracts can show how Li is involved in performing actions in the story:

- i. *Today I [Li] washed my clothing [. . .] once when the sun went behind a cloud I shivered, and wished the riverbanks really were mountains ten thousand feet high [. . .] I had put my things on wet despite the chill, if I was proud enough to wash my clothes I wasn't going to stand around naked – and as I walked toward it I felt myself to be a dancer in a stage play, or a monk in a ritual; I felt I was following instructions and doing rather well at that . . . [pp. 21-22]*
- ii. *[. . .] I [Li] had been lying awake, deciding to go south. I had been telling myself for that I could make it through the winter [. . .]*
- iii. *I [Li] lay there on the ground with dirt on my face [. . .] I found it odd – incredible that with all the effort I've made it was still possible for me to retain my judgment, my curiosity even, at such a moment [. . .] [p.36].*

The person given in the first-person pronoun in the extracts [numbered i-iii] given above performs the actions mentioned with the verbs. In the first extract [number i], we see that the speaker is engaged in washing clothes, shivering due to the coldness, and putting on the wet clothes. In the next extract [number ii], the speaker was awake from sleeping but still lying there, decides where to go. The last extract [number iii] indicates the speaker is lying on the ground with some dirt on the face, understands the oddness of the situation, and collects judgment. These actions are done by the speaker who uses the first-person pronoun in the given extracts. As a result, the speaker-Li is present as a character on the level of action. These examples in the text show that Li, like Kuroda, is a participant in the story that she narrates.

The voices we hear [as we read] are called, in the traditional way, first-person narrators. The reason is that both narrators use the first-person pronoun in the act of narrating the events of the story. Kuroda and Li, use the pronoun 'I' in the narration of the events they perform and experience. However, according to recent narratology, the narrators who participate in the story they narrate, according to Genette (Refer to section 2.1.5.1) are known as homodiegetic narrators. As a result, both the narrators of the selected

narrative fiction are homodiegetic. We hear them speaking about what they have performed and experienced, what they want, what they feel, etc. The narrators who are present as characters in the story they narrate, that is Kuroda and Li are the heroes of the story. As a result, both deserve to be called autodiegetic narrators, according to Genette.

3.5 Narrative Situation of the Novel

Narrative situation of a given narrative fiction consists of the narrative voice. This is to mean that the narrative situation decides the type of the narrative voice to be used in order to narrate the story that a fictional narrative is composed of.

The narrative situation of the selected novel is first-person (Refer to section 2.1.7). A first-person narrative situation is characterized by the use of narrators who exist in the situation and events narrated. For the narrative situation of the novel studied is first-person, the narrators are participants in the story they narrate.

The narrators, for they are participants in the action level of the story, are engaged in narrating a story of personal experience. In the novel studied Kuroda and Li are participants in the story they narrate as characters. This is to mean that the narrators exist inside the story world of the characters as characters.

3.6 Perceptibility of the Narrators

Perceptibility of narrators is concerned with the degree of personification of the narrators. In other words, it is connected with the way the narrators of a given narrative fiction make themselves explicit in the act of narration. As the analysis of the speaking voices the narrative text (See section 3.2) indicates, the narrators in *Tree of Heaven* are not concealed in their act of narration. This is to mean that the narrators make themselves explicit in the act of narration. The explicitness of the narrators can be sensed with the help of some demonstrable communication.

To begin with, the narrative situation of in this novel is first-person (See section 3.5). In first-person narrative situation narrators refer to themselves in the first-person pronoun. Narrators given in the first-person are known as homodiegetic. The overtness of homodiegetic narrators is automatic (Refer to section 2.1.9.2). In other words, in first-person narrative situation narrators are overt.

In addition, the narrators announce their presence through self-reference in various parts of the narrative text. This means that the narrators speak about themselves in the act of narration. As a result, the narrators of this narrative fiction are heard speaking about themselves in the actions of the story.

Here, examples are given to show how the narrators overtly make themselves explicit in the act of narration. If we take Kuroda, at the very beginning, in addition to using the first-person pronoun, he is a named narrator. To be a named narrator is good evidence that he is overtly there to speak about the events of the narrative text. The other evidence about this narrator's overtness is the identification of his sex. The sex of an overt narrator is easily identifiable. As a result, Kuroda's sex is known to be male (See section 3.2).

In various parts of the text, Kuroda gives various expressions of self-reference. This means that he speaks about himself in the act of narration. The expressions that the narrator makes about himself show that he is overtly there in speaking about events of the story that he narrates. At the very beginning of the narration, he speaks about the way he lives in: [. . .] *I [Kuroda] live among these dark and muddy plains and hills . . .* [p.4]. In addition, we learn that he is a scholar from what he has said in the act of narration. This is given first when he speaks with Suzuki. In their speech Kuroda says, [. . .] *I [Kuroda] am a scientist. . .* [p.6]. Later, in other parts of the text, while speaking with Li, he gives expressions of self-reference by saying that he is a botanist. She – Li asks him saying, [. . .] *“You’re a professor?”* Kuroda answers, *“That’s right. A botanist.”* [p.86]. The instances given here show that the narrator is speaking about himself in the narration of the events of the story. These self-references that the narrator has made indicate that

he is overtly speaking about himself while narrating the story. The way he speaks about himself is the indication of his presence and it helps readers to know him well.

The other evidence that reveals the narrator to be overt is the awareness he has about his audiences. Kuroda addresses audiences in his narrating of the events of the story. The narrator speaks being alone, without the presence of anyone in the action level of the story to listen to what he says. Based on this idea, we can say that the audiences that he addresses are not characters in the story. The audiences addressed by the narrator are expected to be readers who are out of the story that follow his narration.

The use of the expression 'you' in his speaking signals the awareness narrator has about his audience or audiences. In the course of narration, when no one is there with him in the action level of the story to attend to what he is speaking about, we find him saying "you" while speaking about the events. This indicates that he is conscious of an audience who hears his voice as he speaks about the events of the story. The following example cited from the story shows this:

[. . .] no matter how you try to live they will humiliate you. It is inevitable. If there is a way in which you might fail they will find it and expose it. And there will be such a way; they will see to that too. [p.81]

Overt narrators can explicitly address their audience in the act of narration. As the above extract shows, the narrator is speaking to no one in the action level of the story, but in his narration he addresses someone saying "you". "You" can refer to singular and/or plural audience. He narrates by addressing someone who is not there with him in the story world saying "you" which signals that he is aware of an audience that attend his speaking. This is additional evidence showing that the narrator is overtly felt in speaking out the words of the fictional text.

Still, Kuroda, for he is an overt narrator, also makes an exposition of setting. The voice that we hear while the setting is exposed indicates that he is there to describe it. In the act of narration, exposition of setting is given in various parts of the text. The following are examples showing this:

- i. [. . .] *it was a very odd topic to raise in the chilly noonday sun, sitting before my tent on the hillside in this vast camp on this enormous rising plain . . . [p.6]*
- ii. [. . .] *all I saw were the same shallow rolling hills and fields I have looked on every morning for weeks. They are dark yellow and brown, and though they hold farms and houses they hold very little life. Behind me was the town I had just left, and here and there were huts and groups of huts and a few old and brittle-looking donkeys and goats. Pathetic rickety fences, that hadn't been torn down for firewood. Stands of stunted trees. The wind was blowing steadily but aside from the sound it made and cry of an occasional bird . . . [pp.15-16]*

The speaker in the above [numbered i-ii] examples is engaged in describing the setting. In the first extract [number i], the narrator explicitly describes the setting. The narrator describes the time to be noonday and the weather condition to be chilly. He still explains that his tent is placed in the hillside of the camp. In the next extract [number ii], the narrator explicitly talks about the setting that he sees time and again, every morning of the week. He says that the setting he sees is shallow rolling hills and fields. In addition, he explains that the setting he has described holds farms and houses and little life. Such descriptions of setting in a narrative text show that the narrator is overtly there to speak and be heard about them.

The other evidence that signals the overtness of the narrator is the description of the characters that are found in the story. Kuroda for he is an overt narrator is engaged in the description of the characters of the story. This means that we hear the narrator describing characters found in the story world. Various characters, at different times, are described by the narrator. This can be backed up by indicating how the narrator is engaged in describing some characters in the act of narrating the events of the story. Below are some examples that show how he describes one of the characters:

- i. [. . .] *She [Li] sleeps in the outer room, next to the stove. She makes meals and launders my clothing and sweeps. When I speak to her she answers. She sits and stares out at the hills.*
- ii. *When I looked at her [Li] I see: a plain young Chinese woman, taller than most but not too tall, dressed in the clean, rough simple clothing found for her by one of my soldiers. Her skin is good on the whole. There is a small but peculiar scar on the rear portion of her right cheek, near the back point of the jaw. She walks with independence, even pride, but at the same time she has manners and great*

dignity. Her joints are loose. Her wrists are small. I know she was raised by loving parents. I know she was never hungry before this year.

- iii. [. . .] *Her [Li] accent and vocabulary are rapidly improving, though we don't really converse. [pp. 44-45]*
- iv. [. . .] *This girl [Li] is mostly silent; I can't look to her to help me . . . [p.65]*
- v. [. . .] *I turned angrily around but was surprised to find her [Li] smiling. Not broadly, just very slightly, but she was smiling as she walked. [. . .] [p.84]*

In the above examples [numbered i-v], Kuroda describes the character – Li. From the descriptions given, we can learn different ideas about the character. In the first example [number i], we know where the character sleeps, what she does, and when she speaks. In the following example [number ii], we learn about her height as compared to other Chinese women, the scar on her cheek, the manners and dignity she has, and the size of her wrists. The descriptions given in this example show the appearance of the character. Still, from the descriptions given, we learn that there is an improvement in the character's language use. This is seen in her accent and vocabulary [the example numbered as iii]. The other example [number iv] shows that she is silent. The description given shows, she is not the one to begin speaking while she is with Kuroda. In the last example [number v], we learn how the character smiles. The description given about her reveals the way how she smiles. All the above descriptions about the character are given by the narrator for he is overtly there to tell in the story that he narrates.

The narrator, in addition, provides description of other characters that are found in the narrative text. To mention some examples, he describes the way Suzuki laughs saying, *"Suzuki, with his offensive braying laugh, was as always hinting that he knows more than he reveals . . . [pp. 3-4].* In here, the narrator is overtly describing about the way Suzuki laughs. The narrator feels that Suzuki is braying as he laughs. In giving such description about Suzuki, the narrator is passing his personal view in relation to the way the character laughs. The narrator also describes another character saying, *"He [Lieutenant Nagai] speaks not only the language but even the dialect they use here, more than well enough to be understood. And this assignment suits his temper."* [p.82].

The description given about the language ability of the lieutenant results from the overtness of the narrator. The narrator is heard speaking about the language ability of this character. As a result, Kuroda is an overt narrator that can give descriptions of characters when he is narrating.

Like Kuroda, the other narrator of this fictional narrative is also an overt narrator. The overtness of this narrator, in addition to using the first-person pronoun, is known clear by identifying her sex. The narrator, through self-references, makes herself known in various parts of the text to be female. In addition to identifying her sex, the name of this narrator is known to be Li, showing that the narrator is overt (See section 3.2). A named narrator is a tangible evidence for a narrator to be overt.

The other evidence that signals the narrator to be overt is the awareness she has about her audience. There are instances in which the narrator addresses audience in her act of narration. The audience that she addresses is not there with her in the story world to listen to what she is speaking about. Li, as a narrator, recounts the events of the story and what she thinks. In doing so, she appears to be speaking to someone while she is alone in the time of speaking. In her speech, she repeatedly addresses someone saying “you”. This indicates that she is aware that someone is listening to her. The following examples can support this:

- i. *[. . .]not even a friendly glance (unless you count the appraising look of the younger man, who considered me for a replacement wife), I felt almost kindly . . . [p.21]*
- ii. *[. . .] in a war you don't have choices; you can't see an inch beyond your belly. There is no reason for your actions, no rhyme to your will, no meaning behind your location in space. You are worse than a scrap on the wind or a worthless coin, less than a looted opium pipe claimed in a game of cards. Despite yourself you recall for a moment, just a moment, your former life that made you real, and then you remember the raged corpses by the road, the ghosts outside the western gate, and you think: that could be me. I could be those. And you know well what you are. [pp. 58-59].*
- iii. *[. . .] but all of that is pleasure. Pleasure, too, is altered in bad times. You continue and you struggle and survive and nothing matches anymore, not the way it used to, things like hardship and reward and balance don't mean*

anything. You want them to but they don't and then you give them up, because everything comes and goes as it will. You content yourself: you take what you can find, what you can find when you need it. And I have needs . . . If you can find it you take what you need. [pp. 106-107].

In the above examples [numbered i-iii], the narrator is heard speaking being alone in the act of narration. But in her speech, she addresses someone saying “you” repeatedly. This – the use of “you,” is a pragmatic signal that the narrator is aware that there is someone or audience attending to what she is speaking. “You” can refer to singular and/or plural audience(s). The audience addressed as ‘you’ is not a character in the story, for she is there alone to speak the given words. For example, in the first extract [number i] she is heard saying, *“unless you count the appraising look of the younger man, who considered me for a replacement wife,”* but there is no one by her side to attend to what she has said i.e., about the appraising look of the young man. The idea about the appraising look of the young man is given in brackets. The brackets indicate that the information is there to give extra explanation about what she is saying. This means that she is giving extra information to help her audience understand to what she is saying. Still, in the second example [number ii], the person addressed as “you” is still not there with her while she speaks the given words. This indicates that she is speaking with no one to listen to what she is saying in the action level of the story. The “you” in the last extract [number iii] also does not refer to any character in the story as she speaks. The narrator is still saying the given words while she is alone. This shows that there is no one to hear her voice as she speaks them in the action level of the story. As all the above evidences indicate, the narrator is referring to an unspecified audience. To speak to unspecified audience results for the narrator is an overt one. These all happens for overt narrators can explicitly use pragmatic signals to address their audience in the act of narration.

Li, who is an overt narrator, is also involved in the description of characters. She describes different characters in her narration. Through her description, we [readers]

can get a picture of various characters that are part of the story world. For example, an old Chinese woman is described as follows:

Last week I [Li] met a woman in a broken-down hut. It was clearly not her home but she had somehow ended up there. She was very old. I could see she had not eaten in many days. She was thin and very ill. If she had been a man someone would have brought her something but she was just an old woman, some proud boy's mother, whose son was gone and her husband long gone and her son's wife and grandchildren and servants all gone and everyone pretended the hut was empty. [p.11]

In the above extract, the narrator explicitly shows what the old woman looks like. We learn how the woman lives in a broken-down hut, how old she looks, what her physical appearance looks like, and her health condition in the descriptions given about her. The old woman is revealed through the way the overt narrator describes her.

The narrator also describes other characters that are found in the action level of the story. She describes Kuroda in different parts of the text. The following are some of the ways in which she perceives Kuroda:

- i. The man [Kuroda] who captured me is not a soldier. I am certain of that. He is Japanese and wears a uniform and officer's markings but he was not bred to this army, nor welcomed to it, and he intends to leave it when he has the opportunity. When his emperor allows him to. I suppose; when the war is over and we are all dead and broken and they have made wide bridge across the . . . [p.34]*
- ii. [. . .] that he wouldn't harm my body – but the last one seemed very reasonable, even likely. He is certainly a kind man, or in any event less cruel than his countrymen . . . [p.95]*

In the extracts [numbered i-ii], the narrator describes Kuroda. In the first example [number i], the narrator states that the man [Kuroda] does not look like a soldier. She also describes that what he wears, the markings in his uniforms signal that he is a soldier. She also describes the condition of the man in the army as if it shows that he is not interested in it and wishes to leave the army in convenient opportunity. In the other example [number ii], the narrator explains that Kuroda's not harming her and his

kindness as compared to his countrymen. The narrator who is overtly there in the act of narration could describe the given man.

The other character that the narrator describes is Yawata – a corporal. We learn that this character has gone to the market with her as he is ordered by his officer. She describes the physical appearance of the man. She said, “. . . *the corporal [Yawata] I had come with, so freakishly tall for a Japanese, standing a few feet away . . . [p.69] . . . He was far the tallest person in the market. . .*” [pp. 72-73]. The character with the help of the description given about him was known to be tall. The narrator also describes a character known as Nagai. In the act of narration, she described the physical appearance of the man saying, “*The lieutenant [Nagai] was with him [Yawata], a very ugly man with steel glasses and bad brownish skin, and he grabbed my arm and made me stop . . .*” [p. 74]. In the description given, we can see that the Lieutenant is ugly. She also describes the color of his skin and states that he wears steel glasses. The character is known, for the narrator is overtly there to describe him. Thus, we can say that Li is an overt narrator of the events of the story.

3.7 Reliability of the Narrators

A narrator, at least, based on what he/she knows about the events of the story that he/she narrates can be termed as reliable or unreliable. What the narrator knows may be reasons to separate or not to separate him/her from the events and/or things that are in the story he/she describes or reflects upon. What the narrator knows and misses about the events of the story can be reasons for his/her accurate delivering of the events in which his/her readers can accept or suspect his/her way of narration (Refer to section 2.1.9.). Based on this assumption, Kuroda, the male narrator in the narrative text, is unreliable. This means that there are some events of the story that he does not fully know. This condition shows that the narrator is separated from the events of the story. As a result, the narrator is suspected for the reliability he has in giving us [readers] an accurate rendering of the events. Therefore, we cannot rely on the narrator’s opinions about the events of the story when he offers an interpretation in the act of

narration. The suspicion we have on the narrator is based on the evidences that we get in the text. This is because what the narrator says about the events of the story may not be right.

When Kuroda speaks about the events of the story, he doubts about some information. The information can be about him and/or the events of the story and/or other characters in the story. This is to mean that he has limited knowledge about him, the events that he tells and about the characters involved in the story. Even if he knows that he has limited knowledge, he speaks about himself, the events in the story and the characters that are in the story. Speaking about events of the story without having full knowledge of them is an indication that the narrator is unreliable.

The following extracts show that Kuroda has limited information about himself and the events and the characters in the story that he narrates:

- i. [. . .] *Still there is delay. Not that any notice is ever given, or explanation – it is not that sort of army – but by now we are confounded by their mystery and deceit. My own suspicion grows and grows. Even if I do not question the authority of our leaders, or their skill, I must question their intent; this is not simple conquest . . . [p. 3]*
- ii. [. . .] *I fear him [Suzuki] because I do not know why I am here, and I suspect he does. [p.4]*
- iii. [. . .] *I don't see why I should feel a special guilt over her [Li] situation, why I should add her to all that for which I am responsible. . . [p.67]*
- iv. *Revelation: there are things I don't know, things I should have known. Things I would have known, if I were like the rest of them [Japanese soldiers] . . . [p.80]*

The above extracts [numbered i-iv] show that the narrator, i.e., Kuroda, has limited knowledge about the events of the story in the act of narration. The first extract [number i] shows that he is not able to know the reason for the delay of the orders to depart from the place where they are. For he is not certain of the reasons, he states as his suspicion grows. The way he speaks about the situation reveals that he is separated from knowing what really happens or will happen. The other extract [number ii] illustrates that he even does not for sure know why he is afraid of his superior – Suzuki. He speaks that he does not know the reason why he is there [in China] as a soldier and

an officer with the army. Being an officer with the invaders' army in China, he does not for certain know why he is part of the army. This indicates that he has limited knowledge even about himself. Instead, he suspects that Suzuki does know the reason about his being there. To add another reason for his unreliability [number iii], he speaks about the feeling he has for Li. In his narration, he states that he is not able to know the reason why he has special feelings for her. In the last extract [number iv], he explicitly announces that there are things that he does not know. He, in his act of narration, ensures that he does not know what the other soldiers know. He compares the knowledge he has with the other members of the army [what he refers to saying 'them']. As a result, as the above evidences reveal, we can say that Kuroda is an unreliable narrator because there are things that he does not know in his act of narrating.

It, as the above analysis reveal, seems that he does not know much about himself and the events and/or things of the story. This does not mean that he is lying in his telling them. Instead, it signifies that he has limited knowledge of the events of the story. Kuroda is an adult and a Japanese officer in the army, but he speaks about things and events which he does not fully know. As a result, the knowledge he has can be a reason for him not to render accurately the events of the story and still reasons for readers to suspect him.

In the act of narrating, we find him presenting and interpreting events of the story according to his own beliefs and what he thinks. The actions of the narrator can still make him to be unreliable. From the narrative text different examples can be extracted to show how he presents and interprets according to his own beliefs and what he thinks. Let us take the coming extract as one example:

[. . .] I believe he [Suzuki] was in training as a schoolteacher before he entered the Academy and I think he must be of an influential family, else he could not have been commissioned at all, or rise so high. If generals confide in likes of him I am very surprised. . . [p.4]

In the above extract, the narrator clearly states that he does not have enough information about what he has said concerning the background of Suzuki. As a result, we can see that all the information that he renders about the character is not expected to be accurate. This is well supported in his speech for he says, “*I [the narrator] believe, I think, I am very surprised.*” These words show that the speaking voice we hear is not sure about the information he gives. The narrator is heard speaking about what he believes to be right, what he thinks to be correct, and what surprises him if it happens. What the narrator believes to be right and what is certain in the world of the story may not be identical. As a result, the situation of the narrator indicates that he is speaking about what he believes and thinks about the actions and events that he narrates but not sure of it.

The other point that makes Kuroda to be unreliable in his narration of the events of the story is his personal involvement. The personal involvement he has in the action level of the story can be another reason for him to be suspected in his narrating the events. This can be seen in the way he expresses things and events of the story and in the way he gets engaged in the actions of the story. This idea can be supported with the following extracts:

- i. *[. . .] I do not want her [Li] here. I have no interest in her. I have no interest in any Chinese, I have no interest in this country [. . .] I am also a man and she is young, healthy, in no way crippled or disfigured. She is at my absolute command and depends on me for life. It makes me anxious. I can barely stand her near me. So far I am behaving well but for how long? How long? [. . .] [p.45]*
- ii. *[. . .] I went to find Li. I wanted to go walking, to get away from Nagai and the sergeants and the men and the machinery of war, to pretend that I was elsewhere. But I had no desire to be alone [. . .] [p.83]*

As the above extracts [numbered i-ii] signal, the personal involvement the narrator has in the actions of the story can be reasons for him to be suspected in the way he narrates the events of the story. This is because what he says about the events as compared to what he is doing in the action level of the story is not consistent. We know that Kuroda has some feeling for Li. He saw her for the second time and saved her from the soldiers.

He has never saved any other Chinese girls/women from the soldiers. After saving her, he asked her to go with him so as to cook for him and clean his house. In doing so, he wanted to protect her from being raped and killed by the soldiers. What he has done for her shows that he has some feelings for her although he does not understand it. But, he, as the extract [number i] show, says that he does not want her here [with him in the place where he lives] and he has no interest in her. At other times, as the extract [number ii] indicates, he does not want to be alone and he goes to find Li so as to go walking with her to get rid of Nagai and the sergeants, the men and the machinery of war, from the events that happen in the blown bridge. From this, we can see that what he is saying in the act of narration and what he is doing in the action level of the story are not consistent. As a result, readers do not find what he narrates to be plausible. His personal involvement shows that he is not speaking frankly about his feelings and his interaction with the character named Li. The inconsistency that the narrator has can be evidence to term him unreliable in his narration.

The female narrator i.e., Li, is similar to the male narrator, in that she is also unreliable. She, as her actions reveal, is an adult and mentally normal character in the action level of the story that she narrates. As an adult and mentally normal character narrator, we do not expect her to speak about things for which she does not have sufficient evidence. But she often speaks about things she does not fully know. Speaking about events without full knowledge makes her to be an unreliable narrator. This is noticed in the act of her narration again and again. The events and things of the story that she does not fully know indicate that she has limited knowledge. The following can be cited as evidence from the text:

[. . .] This was the end, I knew: they would shoot us now. Because we'd started a fire or polluted the water upstream of the troops or just because we were there and so were they, and we were not them and they were not us . . . [p.23].

In the above given extract, what the narrator is speaking about, claiming that she for sure knows it and what has really happened in the action level of the story is not consistent. The man that they [the narrator together with the women and men] have

seen in the river bank is not interested in shooting them. In the course of the action, we learn that the man does not shoot any of them. The narrator, for she has limited knowledge of the events of the story, particularly about the man, speaks as if definitely knowing that they will be shot but this does not appear to happen in the action level of the story. As a result, we can say that the narrator is narrating the events of the story without having sufficient evidence. The given situation can be an evidence to call the narrator unreliable in the act of narrating the events.

To add another extract that signals the narrator's limited knowledge, let us consider the following:

[. . .] I lay there on the ground with dirt on my face. There were four of them [Japanese soldiers]. They were as surprised as I was, I think, and for a moment they didn't know what to do with me. What they probably wanted most was their beds . . . The last one stepped back and aimed his weapon at me. I guessed that he wanted me resist, so that he could shoot me, and I weighed this course of action, but it soon occurred to me that he did not want to kill me . . . [pp.36-37]

In the explanation given about the soldiers that found her [the narrator – Li] as the above given extract reveals, Li speaks about what she thinks, what the soldiers probably wanted, and what she guessed. The use of these expressions by the narrator is clear evidence that she does not for sure know what could happen in the action level of the story that she narrates. In here, we suspect the accuracy the narrator has about the event that she narrates in the given situation. Our suspicion arises for she, in the act of narrating, is not certain of the happenings in the action level of the story.

The following extracts can also show that Li's knowledge about the situation in the action level of the story is limited:

- i. *[. . .] his [Kuroda's] smell is alien; I don't know about a Japanese smell but his is foreign, peculiar, distant, odd. It makes me think of Canton . . . Canton was always different to me, it was the place that Wasn't Home, and no matter how bored and dull I become from the sameness of life and unchanging days I could think back on it and summon the strange sights and sounds, the intriguing aromas, and regain that sense that somewhere else was in the world.*

Somewhere not the same. His odor is like that – an exotic experience – but with fear added in . . . [pp.52-53].

- ii. *[. . .] I know nothing about him [Kuroda]. I don't know who he really is. If I had some idea of his job, even, of his street address, of the name of his wife, of favorite toy when he was small, I could better gauge him. I could be more certain of him, of this man who preserves me . . . [p.57]*

In the above extracts [numbered i-ii], we can see that the narrator does not have a full knowledge of the things she speaks about. In the first extract [number i], she speaks about the smell the character Kuroda has. He, in the first place, is Japanese. Having no knowledge about Japanese smell, she termed his smell to be alien. Here, readers may ask themselves, “what if all Japanese smell like him?” She in her own words expressed that she does not know what Japanese smells. As a result, in her explanation, we can understand that she has faced a strange smell, different from what she used to. What she says in this particular situation shows that the way she speaks out has inconsistencies. Having inconsistencies in her act of narrating is a good evidence for her to be unreliable. It, the way she speaks, lets us suspect what she speaks out in the act of narration. In the next extract [number ii], she speaks that she does not know anything about Kuroda. The only thing that she knows about him includes: his job, his street address, and his wife’s name. She in her own words explains that she has limited knowledge of the character. Having such limited knowledge about the character, she speaks being certain about him. As clearly given in the narration, her speaking of about this character is full of inconsistencies. As a result, we can say that the voice we hear speaking about this character is unreliable.

The other evidence which shows that the narrator is unreliable includes the personal involvement that she has within the events of the story. The narrator, for she is a character in the actions of the story, is involved in the events of the story. Her participation in the actions and events of the story and in the narration of the events can make her to speak and act differently. As a result, what she speaks about and what she does, as a character, can be evidences for us [readers] to suspect her while she speaks in the story. This idea can be well supported with the following extracts:

- i. [. . .] *I suppose I have been waiting for him [Kuroda] since. I knew he was still here, that it was just a question of time . . . I remember him. This time I was glad to see him. I thought my luck had run out at last and I was preparing myself to be taken . . . [p. 58]*
- ii. *I have made a certain offer. I don't know why. To say it even to myself brings me alarm. I did it quickly, without planning it; it came into my head only an instant before. "Do you want to sleep with me?" I asked . . . yes: it was me. Apparently it was something I felt was proper, something I had a need for . . . it was appropriate. He had given me and I wanted to give him in turn. So I considered the question of what I had available, as we talked; I took inventory of my person, I know at start that there was little there to offer . . . [pp.93-98]*
- iii. [. . .] *he'll be killed or I'll be killed or something will happen to ruin our relationship. To make it impossible . . . I sleep with him so gladly . . . I have only him . . . [p.166]*

The above extracts [numbered i-iii] taken from different parts of the text show that we can hear the narrator speaking about the love she has for Kuroda. From the beginning [number i], she speaks that she is ready to be taken by the character. This reveals that she is the one who is interested in him and waits until the question of time is answered so as to be taken. Still, as the second extract [number ii] shows, she speaks about the strong feeling that she has for him. In her speech she mentions that she has asked him if he wanted to sleep with her. In asking this question she did not think about what she is asking him. This is because she, at the time of speaking, was in a strong emotion. She even wishes [extract number iii] that the relationship she has with him not break. On the other hand, she is heard speaking, "[. . .] I know I did not love him [. . .]" [p.172]. Although she speaks that she does not love him, her actions reveal that she loves him to the extent of thinking that life is difficult without him. As a result, the personal involvement she has and what she says in her act of narration can be good reasons for us to say that she is unreliable. In her own words she said, "*I kissed him again and told him I loved him.*" [p.207]. The personal involvement that she has in the story with this character and what she speaks out about the character makes her to speak and act differently in the actions of the story. The way this narrator participates as a character and the way she speaks about the actions, for they are different, we call her unreliable.

3.8 Temporal Relation of Narration

Temporal relation of narration refers to the time of narration. The temporal relation shows the time that the narration of the events of the story is done. From this then, narrative voice can be analyzed with reference to the time used to speak out the events of the story. To know the temporal relation of narration, we ask the question “When do the narrators tell the story?” In the selected narrative fiction, we get the same answer with both the narrators on the temporal relation of time they use to narrate the story of the narrative fiction. As a result, the two narrators are engaged in narrating the events of the story mostly with a past tense, but there are instances in which the present tense is used in the act of narrating.

To begin with, let us take the temporal relation in which the male narrator uses to tell the story. He uses the two temporal relations mentioned earlier throughout his narration. In the very beginning, Kuroda speaks about events that happened some time earlier, i.e. past events. This means that he narrates past events in his speaking of the events of the story. When past events are narrated, we call it ulterior narration (Refer to section 2.1.8). This idea can be supported with the following examples taken from the narrative text:

Suzuki was here again today, just after luncheon. [. . .] [p.1] [. . .] I saw further evidence of a disturbing trend. [. . .] [p.4] [. . .] I went into my tent and tried to answer my wife's letter. After twenty minutes of effort I gave that up [. . .] [p.7] [. . .] as I walked I came across a scattered pile of cheaply printed papers, all red and white. I recognized them as propaganda fliers, dropped by our planes before the army arrived. [. . .] [p.16]

In the above extracts, the verbs used to express the events are in their past. The past forms of the verbs indicate that past actions are narrated. This is to mean that there are events that are narrated after they happen. The verbs used in the narration signal that the narrator speaks about events that happened in the past. From this, the temporal relation of the narration used by the narrator is said to be ulterior type.

In addition to the ulterior narration, Kuroda's narration includes the simultaneous temporal relation of narration. In here, we find him speaking about events that happen at the time of speaking. This idea can be supported with the following example:

But I am forced to. I am forced on. And then what do I see? I see my own bloodied hands; I see the careful faces of my men [. . .] What else do I see? I see a nation defended. I see a giant tidal wave. I see a rotting small Japan, a Japan of the weak and the frightened, living in damp caves, speaking ever more softly, serving out the sentence of its shame forever. [pp. 32-33]

As the above extract indicates, Kuroda uses the present forms of the verbs to speak about the events of the story in his narration. The use of the present form of the verbs signal that the events are in progress as the narration takes place. This is to mean that the time for both narration and the events to appear is similar. The temporal relation of narration used to narrate the events of the present situation is known as simultaneous narration. As a result, Kuroda uses the simultaneous temporal relation of narration in his act of narrating.

In analyzing the temporal relation of Li's narration, we learn that she uses both the ulterior and simultaneous temporal relations of narration in her speaking of the events of the story. Li begins her narration by explaining the situation she is in at the time of speaking. In her narration, she uses the present tense of the verbs to narrate the events that are in progress at the time of her narration. How she narrates the present events can be seen with the following example:

I want not to feel. I cannot possibly say how the earth can have come to this state, but I want to feel nothing about it. I want not to know but that is impossible. Failing ignorance I seek numbness. I seek coldness and hardness. I want not to care. I am far from home and among strangers and even in better times they would find me grave and unapproachable, surely, and queer, because of my fear of them, the fear I have always supported through distance, but now I am not afraid [p.9]

The above extract indicates that the narrator is speaking about the present situation she is in. All the verbs used by the narrator in the narration of the situation indicate what is happening at the time of speaking. This is true for the verbs found in the speech of the

narrator are in the present tense. When a narrator speaks about what happens at the time of speaking, it is known as simultaneous narration.

In addition to the simultaneous narration, Li uses the ulterior narration. This is to mean that she narrates events that happened earlier to her narration. The following extracts can show how Li narrates events that happened before her narration:

Today I washed my clothing. I could almost believe that everything was as it had been. There were about a dozen of us there – mostly women but also two men, who'd been reduced to it – and we were all strong enough to walk to the river and scrub, all physical intact (as far as I could see) and not starved to death yet [p20].

In the above extract, the narrator recounts the events after they happened. The verbs used to describe the events of the story that are given in the extract are in the past tense form. The past forms of the verbs used by the narrator indicate that past actions are reported. In this narration, for the events are narrated after they happened, it is called ulterior narration.

3.9 Narrative Level

Kuroda and Li having equal share in the action level of the story are engaged in the act of narrating the story of the fictional narrative. The narrators are using the chapters of the narrative text as their turns to narrate the same story in which both are participants as characters. The narrators for they are characters in the story they narrate we call them homodiegetic narrators.

The narrators are engaged in recounting the story of the first-degree narrative. This is to mean that the story they narrate is not embedded in any other narrative. In other words, what they narrate is the matrix narrative. When narrators are engaged to narrate the matrix narrative, they are called extradiegetic narrators (Refer to section 2.1.9.4). As a result, both the narrators of the novel studied are called extra-homodiegetic narrators.

In the narration that Kuroda and Li perform, there are characters that are part of the story. Of the characters who are part of the story, there is no anyone that narrates a story that can be leveled as an embedded narrative. This is to mean that we do not find an embedded narrative in the selected narrative text.

3.10 Advantages of Using Two Narrators

In the act of narrating, both the narrators, for they are homodiegetic, are narrating their personal experience taking turns in parallel in the chapters of the novel. Homodiegetic narrators (Refer to section 2.1.5.1) are restricted to ordinary human limitations: they cannot have direct access to events they did not witness in person, they cannot be in two places at the same time (the law against bilocation). They can never know for certain what other characters are thinking or thought about (a restriction which is called the 'other mind' problem). The use of two narrators in this novel has its own advantage, it at least challenges some of these limitations of the homodiegetic narrators.

R.C. Binstock has created and implemented two narrators that speak out the words of the narrative text in parallel in the chapters of the narrative text. The two narrators are different from one another in gender, nationality – where from, educational background and life experience. The use of these two narrators helps, at least in a minimal way, to fill up the limitation that the homodiegetic narrators have.

One of the main advantages that the author has gained from the use of two narrators is to let the narrators speak out the events that happen/happened at different places at the same time. These two narrators can be involved in providing information about what is happening in different places at the same time in the turn they have. We learn that the narrators take turns to speak out the events of the story in the chapters of the text. In doing so, they are heard speaking about the various events that appear in different places at the same time one after the other.

To begin with, Kuroda is a soldier. He speaks about what happens in the soldier's camp. In here, what he says about the events that happen in the camp show what the Japanese soldiers are doing at a given time. This can be seen with the following extract:

In a military way there is not much to do because there are no longer any Chinese soldiers to fight, or living prisoners to be guarded, and no pretense of exercising control over men; so long as they show proper deference to us we do not care how they behave. [p.8]

The idea in the above extract shows what the soldiers are doing at a specific time. It is known for Kuroda is there with the soldiers to witness the activities of the soldiers. This is what happens in the specific place that the soldiers are in at a definite time.

On the other hand, Li speaks about what happens in another place at the same time. Her speaking of the events is seen as:

[. . .] These are the ruins of my country. I am the remnant of its horror. If I were free I could start walking from this spot and walk for miles and pass the looted farms and the burning villages, pass the graves of hundreds of brothers and sisters and uncles and aunts, thousands, who would demand gratitude for my survival, for my deliverance from their fate, and also many more still living but savaged, who might well ask the same. [p.10]

The above information given about the people of China and the country is with the help of the female narrator. For Li, being a Chinese, is there to witness the events of the story, we can learn how the people suffered from the consequence. These events are seen in the town due to the presence of the soldiers. The way this narrator addresses the events can show what is happening at the given time in the specific place.

The story of the novel studied revolves in one of Chinese towns – Manchuria. In the place there are Japanese invaders and Chinese dwellers of the town. The Japanese soldiers live in a camp. The camp they live in is out of the town. The Chinese dwellers live in the town. These two groups of people experience different things where ever they are in. The use of the two narrators, for they are from the two groups, as a result, helps to get what these two groups of people have in their peculiar places by taking

speakers from each group. Kuroda is Japanese and Li is Chinese. The condition given shows that both the narrators have different experiences based on the place they are in.

From the way the two narrators speak about the events, we learn that there are different feelings of the two groups of people at a given time. For one thing, Kuroda is not able to tell what the Chinese people in the town are feeling about the situation they are in. This is because he is not there with the Chinese dwellers to witness to what they are feeling about the situation after their [the soldiers'] invasion. As a result, we do not find him to speak about it. Instead, he speaks about what happens in the camp, the situation of the soldiers, and the feeling they have in the present situation they are in. Similarly, Li is not able to tell about the condition of the Japanese soldiers. This is so for she is not part of the soldiers and not sure of the feeling the soldiers have about the condition they are in. Instead, she speaks about what has happened in the town and its dwellers.

From what has been said above, we can learn that the narrators are not speaking about what happens in the place that they are not present to witness the events. In this way, the author has gained the advantage of presenting events that happen in different places at the same time by the two narrators. We, readers, can learn about the feeling the narrators have in the situation they are present in and are able to witness it. As a result, in the novel studied one of the limitations of the homodiegetic narrators, i.e., presenting what happens in different places at the same time, is challenged.

Another advantage is, homodiegetic narrators are not able to narrate their death. In this novel, the narrators are involved being in the first person. Then, the limitation is there with them not to narrate their death. The author by using two narrators has created conditions for one of the narrators to tell the death of the other narrator – character. In the course of the narration, we learn that Kuroda dies somewhere near the end of the events of the story. Kuroda, the male narrator, is not able to speak about his own death. This is true for a dead person is not able to speak. But, Li, the other narrator, announces his death. The way she narrates the death of the male narrator is like this:

He is dead. How did this happen? [p.202] [. . .] But something changed as he talked, and the balance slowly shifted. He found it harder to go on, ever harder with each sentence, but I was shocked and then reluctant and then compelled and then finally avid, and I wanted to know more. [p.206]

Kuroda, for he is not able to narrate his death, we do not find him to speak about it. Instead, his death is made known in the events of the story by Li, the other narrator. This is to mean that the death of the male narrator is known with the help of the female narrator. Then, this limitation of the homodiegetic narrators is at least backed up in using the two narrators in parallel to narrate the events of the story world of the selected narrative text.

But, it has to be clear that homodiegetic narrators may still speak about other characters that are part of the story world. This means that the limitation of homodiegetic narrators is not all in all backed up by the use of the two narrators but, at least supported. The use of the two narrators to speak the events of the story minimizes the subjectivity of the homodiegetic narrators of the text in some extent. This is because each narrator does not have direct access (or authority on) events that he or she did not witness in person. However, in this novel there are events and feeling that are vividly made clear with the use of the two narrators to speak the words of the story world taking their turns in the chapters of the text.

As a result, the above limitations of the homodiegetic narrators involved in the narrative act of the text, though not in a full account, are supported by the use of the two narrators in the narrative text. Supporting the limitations of the homodiegetic narrators has to be appreciated and appraised as an advantage gained by the use of the two narrators.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

In this final chapter the findings of the analysis made in the previous chapter are summarized. The summary touches upon the following points: where the narrators are located, how overtly or covertly the narrators make their presence felt and what relationship the narrators have to the story they narrate, the temporal relation of the narration, the narrative level the narrators belong to, and the advantage of using the two narrators.

The analysis made to identify the narrative voices of the selected narrative text answers the question, “who speaks?” In reading the novel *Tree of Heaven*, as the answer to the voice question reveals, there are two narrators who are engaged in speaking out the words of the narrative text. These two narrators are distinct from each other. The two narrators are named and sexually identified in the narrative text. There are textual markers that signal the name and sex of these narrators. The analysis made shows that there can be a possibility for a single narrative text to be narrated by two narrators.

The name of one of the narrators is Kuroda. Kuroda is male. And the name of the other narrator is Li. Li is female. These narrators take turns in the chapters of the narrative text to be involved in the act of narrating. The narration begins with Kuroda in the first chapter and continues with Li in the second chapter. In such a way the narration goes up to the last chapter which is narrated by Li. As a result, in asking the question to know who narrates this narrative text, we get that Kuroda and Li are taking turns in the chapters of the text to narrate the events of the fictional narrative. This means that the voice heard as we read the narrative text is that of the two narrators.

The analysis made to check the extent of participation of the narrators in the story they narrate shows that the two narrators are present as characters in the action level of the fictional world. We find the male narrator to address himself in the first-person pronoun

in the course of narration. The 'I' of the narrator is a signal that he is there to participate in the story as a character. The narrator is actually involved in the action level of the story that he narrates. For the narrator is present in the action level of the story, we call him a homodiegetic narrator. Being a character in the actions of the story, Kuroda is the star of the events narrated. For he is the star in the story of the narration, he deserves the term autodiegetic narrator.

Similarly, Li also participates in the action level of the story as a character. In her narration, she addresses herself using the first-person pronoun 'I'. The use of the first-person pronoun indicates that she is present in the action level of the story. Li for she is present in the action level of the story as a character, we call her homodiegetic. Besides addressing herself in the first-person pronoun, she is one of the hero characters in the action level of the fictional world. She also deserves to be called autodiegetic, for she is the hero of the story.

The narrators are also analyzed for the reliability they have in the course of narrating the events of the story. The analysis made shows that the narrators are unreliable. Kuroda appears to be unreliable narrator for he has some knowledge limitation in the course of narrating. The limited knowledge that he has makes him to give a distorted picture of the reality of the narrative text. This is because he tells that he doubts the information that he narrates and this is clearly seen in his own words. In his narration, he presents and interprets things and events based on his belief. This also makes him to be inconsistent in the way he presents the events. The other point that shows the narrator to be unreliable is the relationship he has with a character in the action level of the story. The personal involvement the narrator has in the action of the story signals that he loves Li but in his speaking he hides this from explaining it.

Similarly, Li is also unreliable narrator. In her narration, she appears to give description of events that she does not fully know. In her narration, though she knows that there is some information in the action level of the story, she speaks about them. As a result, this can be tangible evidence for her to be unreliable. The other evidence that we have

for the narrator to be unreliable is the personal involvement she has in the action level of the story. Li appears to hide the feeling and relationship she has with Kuroda, her protector. But what she does in the action level of the story indicates that she loves him.

The narrators are at the same time analyzed for the perceptibility they have. The analysis shows that the narrators are overt. The overtness of Kuroda is given through the self-reference that he makes in the course of narration. One of the self-reference that he made include referring to himself using the first-person pronoun. The other evidence of his overtness is to be a named narrator. Still to add evidence, he has the awareness that there are audiences who are outside the action level of the story following his narration. The narrator for he has the awareness of audiences, he addresses them saying 'you'.

Like Kuroda, Li is an overt narrator. She is easily identified to be telling the story. We find her providing descriptions about herself which is making self description in various parts of the narration. In the very beginning, she is an 'I' narrator. In addition, she is a named narrator. These can be evidences for her to be an overt narrator. Still, in the course of narration, we find her explicitly there to address audiences who are not part of the story. Addressing audiences indicates that she has the awareness that there are some audiences who are actively following her narration. This is because she is there to tell the story.

The analysis made about the temporal relation of the narration indicates that the narrators use the similar temporal relations to narrate the events of the story. Kuroda uses both the ulterior and simultaneous temporal relations in his act of narration. This means that he recounts past and present events in his speaking of the events of the story.

Similarly, Li recounts events after they happen which is the ulterior temporal relation of narration. At the same time, she narrates events that appear to happen in the time of speaking, i.e., simultaneous temporal relation of narration.

Both the narrators, Kuroda and Li, belong to the first-degree narrative, i.e., a matrix narrative when analyzed for the narrative level to which they belong to. For both narrators being homodiegetic belong to the matrix narrative, we call them extradiegetic narrators. As a result, in this novel, we have two extra-homodiegetic narrators to speak out the words of the fictional world. In this fictional narrative, there is no any other character that tells a story so as to be put as an embedded story.

The author by creating two narrators to speak the events of the story in the novel studied has gained some advantages. Homodiegetic narrators are restricted to personal limitations. In this fictional narrative, the two narrators recounted what happens in different places at the same time in the turns they have in the chapters of the novel. Narrating what happens in different places at the same time is one advantage that the author has gained from the two narrators. This helps to reduce the subjectivity of the homodiegetic narrators and help readers to follow the narration smoothly. A homodiegetic narrator can never speak about his/her death. But in this novel, the death of one of the narrators is announced by the other one. As a result, the two narrators have presented what is difficult for a single homodiegetic narrator.

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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Date June16, 2010