

The Pictorial Narrator

In our everyday discourse we make frequent reference to pictorial narratives. We exclaim on the hunt scene in the cave painting (Lascaux), mention the frenzy unfolding amidst a human catastrophe in the spray paint (Banksy, 2006), talk about the triumph of the lost toy in the printed illustration, and whisper about the wickedly funny devastation of a marriage in the oil painting (Hogarth, 1743). Yet, a more precise question concerning *narrators* and their relation to these so-called pictorial narratives remains overlooked.

This is a presentation in two stages. The first stage briefly sets out what is meant by 'pictorial narrators' by providing a succinct and up-to-date guide to the discussions that have touched on this issue. The second (and constructive) stage explores whether we should be receptive to the possibility that pictorial narratives imply pictorial narrators.

PART 1

1. Narrative and Narrators

The Standard View (literary cases)
The Extension to pictorial cases
Exemplars

2. Sceptics and Friends

Sceptics
Null Response (Kendall Walton)

Friends

Explicit Narrators (Erie Watkins)
Effaced Narrators (Jenefer Robinson)

Part 2

3. Pictorial Perspectives

How does the viewer experience the picture? Three options: In looking at a picture...

- A. the viewer veridically perceives a representation.
- B. the viewer occupies, in imagination, the pictorial perspective.
- C. the viewer accesses pictorial content from a pictorial perspective.

You might think that (A) entails (B), and (B) entails (C). Or you might think that, even if (A) does not entail (C), (C) is true. For avoidance of confusion - I am advocating (C) here.

4. Pictorial Narrators

The positive claim

Objections:

The Null Response

The Robust Realist Response

The Author Response

The Arousal Response