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## Narrator in the novel “Village Ghost” by Trinh Thanh Phong

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### Abstract

In Vietnamese literature, the role of the narrator in novels written about the countryside during the renovation period is usually the narrator in the third person and the narrator in the first person. The article studies the character of the narrator in the novel "Ma làng" (village ghost) by Trinh Thanh Phong. Research results show that there are two narrators: the latent third-person narrator and the first-person narrator. The narrator is the one who leads and guides the reader to better understand the background or events in the character's life. To be able to cover the reality reflected in the work, the narrator must choose for himself an authentic point of view.

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### 1. Introduction

A narrative is always conducted from someone's side. In epics, fairy tales, short stories, and novels directly or indirectly, there is a narrator. The narrator not only organizes the language but also plays an important role in terms of structure, governing the character's language. According to Tran Dinh Su, "The narrator is the conventional image of the narrator in a literary work, appearing only when a story is told by a specific character in the work. That is the author's character, of course, should not be completely identified with the real-life author, maybe a special character created by the author, maybe someone who knows a certain story. A work may have one or more narrators". Although the narrator is not identical to the author, in some respects the author's shadow can be seen through the narrator because the narrator is the person who appears on behalf of the author in the work of observation and description.

### 2. Content

#### 2.1. First person narrator

A first-person narrative is a story told by a narrator present as a character in the story. That "I" character is usually the central character or can act as a narrator, or an element in the character system participating in the story's situation. The use of the first person in autobiography in literary works is not arbitrary or random, but it is historical, associated with the objective needs of the time. The narrator in the story plays an important role because it requires the stories to be written by people who have lived in that situation.

With this first-person narration, the narrator actively performs the task of narrating the story, can stand up to tell his own story, tell someone else's story, participate in storytelling with the characters, or actively authorize the characters to tell themselves. "I" – the subject of the story and also one of the characters of the story, is the commentator from the inside, as well as the participant in the happening.

In the form of a first-person narrative with a direct participant, the image of the "I" character here not only performs the narration function, but also expresses his thoughts, contemplations, and personal feelings. Its person. This has created a special type of character: Sensitive, emotional, and reflective characters who freely observe the world around them with comments that evaluate events add to the appeal. Of the story. The 'me' narrator is omnipresent: he knows the murderer and manipulates the reader into the logic of the story.

In Ghost Village, Trinh Thanh Phong let the character narrate his own life, expressing his thoughts and views, or sometimes the character ponders and dialogues. As time passed, the character "I" was busy with business, folded envelopes, hesitated, but then decided to return to Loc village: "I rented a car, put on a black suit, and carried a bag, big bag...I told the driver to stop at the big rice tree, near Gay Wharf. Stepping out of the car, I was shocked to see the rim around the foot of Mount Cham flashing red and blue electricity, the sound of radio and TV buzzing. My God, Loc village changed skin so quickly, I hesitated and smelled fried fish, fragrant boiled fish overflowing from the shop under the rice tree. The character "I" continues to narrate the conversation with the characters after not seeing each other for a long time, that is Do. They told each other about the changes in Loc village, talking while drinking. "I fell asleep. It wasn't until he patted my ass that I woke up. The sun was shining all over the river. On the patches of fish, the people of Loc village are busy grazing, pouring bran for pigs, and feeding fish. The narrator witnessed the whole scene happening around him and narrated vividly, attractively, from the simplest images. Recounting a series of actions and events that took place in the voice of the character "me": "Recognizing me, everyone shouted: "Village ghost" is back...I climbed the fish plates! The heart is naturally quiet, strangely poetic. Looking at the fat, chubby pigs that are scooping bran, the school of fish under the belly floats up to grab the bait. All are born from the diligent, miraculous hands of the farmer. Serenity pervades the mind. I believe in loving more and more human life. In the afternoon, I walked up to Loc village. At the junction of the steep slope of the pagoda, look at the two rows of straight umbrella trees running straight into the towering pagoda in the middle of the village... I respectfully greet: Hello, comrade secretary of the district party committee. Mr. To, hello Mr. To, I have also returned to work as a citizen. Peaceful, happy as Tet. Come here and have a drink. He took my hand and we walked into the archway. I was startled when I saw in a corner the gate of the little hut over the cot...I turned pale."

At the end of the story, I recounted how Mr. Thuong asked the character to print and continue to write volume II: "Thank you, I held Mr. Thuong's hand tightly and my heart was filled with the fishing wharf at Goy Rock and I saw the trip. My story of Loc village is interesting and meaningful this time, although I still haven't met all of my characters".

## 2.2 Third person narrator

Unlike the case of the narrator in the first person, the narrator appears directly calling "I", when the narration is in the third person, the narrator is not directly present, but hidden, hidden (exactly "translating". shoulder"). Here, the narrator witnesses the story and tells the whole story in his own way; the story is told from a different point of view, language, and tone than direct (first-person) narration. The narration is in the third person in the form of "narrator" (created by the author), so it is "objective", "neutral". The third person narrative not only has the task of recreating but also analyzing and explaining the objective world, characters and events in the work. This true ceiling appeared from a long time ago, very popular in folklore and medieval literature. According to M. Bakhtin, indirect narrative writing can be divided into two types: the first is a one-tone indirect narrative, which plays the role of recreating and commenting on the phenomena of the world in its inherent objective meaning of

them; The second type is two-voice indirect speech, which coordinates, "absorbs" the character's words, in the narrator's utterance at the same time there may be both direct words or indirect thoughts of the character. This second type allows the author to move the narrative "point of view" and creates a polyphonic nature in the narrative language, the language of the novel.

The role is told in the third person, allowing the narrator the opportunity to comprehensively observe human life and destiny and reflect it into the work in a concrete and objective way. The narrator seems to be the one who knows everything, can judge, evaluate everything. Here, the narrator stands behind the characters and events, pushing the character in front of the reader to tell. Therefore, in front of the readers' eyes, they do not see the speaker, only the presented reality. In a way, the narrator in the third person is no different from a person who takes notes and narrates those things.

Narrative language is used thoroughly by the author. Acting as the omniscient narrator, the author described and recounted the story in Loc village. With this point of view, the author plays the role of someone who knows everything that happens to each character and each situation. Mr. Do came back from drinking wine to see the scene of Nii flirting with his wife, the old man chased him but couldn't keep up, returned home: "push the door loudly and shout the lamp. Dumbly asked: What is that? What is your father's knife chasing like chasing evil intentions? The baby b...! Which one is lying with your mother? Damn it!... Thought it was your father. The father of the child...! What kind of human life!...<sup>[2]</sup>. When describing the scene where the villagers were covered in mud all year round, but were oppressed by the village ghosts, they could only curse out of their throats: "The people and the country are their father's grave!. These days it's all about saying one thing and doing another. I can't believe it..."<sup>[2]</sup>. Or while Mr. Do sold his signature to serve old Tong's infamous tricks to get money: "He was startled to touch his pocket, his money was thick and bulky, he clicked his tongue: stop that, okay. that. What is life?"<sup>[2]</sup>. Mr. Do knows money is important, so he doesn't care about life because to him now life is nothing.

In the passage where Luong stood up to chair the meeting, his voice was more poignant: "There is another important thing: The poverty reduction project has been poured into the commune by the bank, but it has not yet reached the poor. This matter, Comrade Lai, must be seriously considered. I know that amount of capital, which you have loaned to business people with high interest rates, I also share that part. Here, the envelope is still sealed, the comrades gave it to my family, I know in this clause... Another thing, 5 gold trees when Comrade Tong was still alive, gave it to me, when he died suddenly, he couldn't make a will. The brothers asked for a share, but doubted that I wanted to eat the whole thing. This number is due to ambiguity from the payment of brick kilns, left kilns, and livestock farms at the time of dissolution of senior cooperatives...No, I'm not crazy... The things I just mentioned in the review are completely voluntary..."<sup>[2]</sup> The writer was very sharp when recounting the moment before old Tong died: "Old Tong lay on the bed, sometimes his body twisted like a bean pod, his mouth still groaned. Mr. Tinh gently lifted the wound. Seeing that there were many streaks of blood on his abdomen, he carefully used traditional techniques to squeeze the blood out of the wound. The more he squeezed, the more blood splattered, all his efforts were in vain. Old Tong's whole body still twisted like a bean pod. He

had to use the best medicine. After preparing the medicine, he gently lifted Tong's head up. Lao Tong looked at him with his mouth wide open, Mr. Tinh gently poured the medicine cup into it, but strangely, the medicine could not be washed away but kept coming out. Mr. Tinh still gently supported the cup of medicine, as if encouraging Old Tong to try and drink. Lao Tong rolled his eyes, his two hands tried to reach out and grab Mr. Tinh's hand. But it was too late, his whole body naturally curled up like a bean pod, he collapsed and exhaled heavily. Mr. Tinh shook his head. His children and grandchildren screamed and sobbed, his eyes still wide open" [2].

### 2.3. Point of view

The point of view is the basic, key issue of the structure. Point of view is the position and standing to consider, describe and evaluate things and phenomena in the work. In a narrative work, the relationship between the writer and the narrative theme or between the narrator's point of view and what he tells is especially important. Point of view is a concept that has been mentioned quite early, especially in the UK and the US. According to MH Abrahams (A Glossary of Literature terms), the point of view indicates "the ways in which a story is told – one or more modes established by the author by means of a meaning that is independent of the author. The author is introduced to the personalities, dialogues, actions, settings, and events that the narrative constitutes in a work of fiction".

And Tran Dinh Su in the textbook of poetic essays said that "The point of view of the text is a method of utterance, presentation and description in accordance with the author's way of seeing and perceiving the world. The concept of point of view is metaphorical, including all perceptions, evaluations and feelings of the subject towards the world. According to the Dictionary of Literary Terms, "The distance, the angle of the narration to the plot constitutes the look" [4]. In general, the point of view can be understood as a method of speaking, presenting and describing in accordance with his way of seeing and perceiving the world. It is the position used to observe, feel, evaluate.

In a literary work, the narrator acts as a bridge to create the relationship

between the character - the narrator and the reader. To be able to observe and capture the reality reflected in the work, the narrator must choose for himself a certain position to observe and reflect reality. This position is called the narrative point of view by theorists and literary researchers.

The narrator is in the inner point of view when giving the responsibility to observe the character, in the outer point of view when seeing his character act and communicate. Especially the novelists of the innovation period do not tell stories from beginning to end alone, but always put characters in dialogue situations. And thanks to the dialogue, the issues in the work are raised and considered from different points of view. "The conversational tendency of the point of view results in the fact that the writer and narrator often move the point of view along different subjects. In addition, the need for contemplation and self-reflection before reality makes the point of view always tend to shift from the writer and storyteller to the character; from the outside point of view to the point of view inside". The characters in the work through these many points of view will appear more dimensional, multifaceted and more realistic.

### 2.3.1. Outside view point

The external point of view (in the third person - the author) is a common point of view in traditional literature with an objective view, not belonging to a specific object. Theorists call it the "foreseeing" perspective, with this perspective, the narrator holds the entire development of the plot as well as the character's fate and retells it from his own point of view. When participating in telling activities, the narrator must not speak about events and characters, and do not delve into the inner activities and psychology of the characters. Here, the narrator stands in a position to observe and record all the words, actions, and events that take place for the character. From her point of view, the narrator gives a realistic, accurate narrative and creates vibrancy through dialogue with the characters. However, this point of view also has certain limitations, that is, the narrator only generalizes what happens outside the character such as actions, words, and character's appearance without going into the psychological factors reason inside the character is.

The outside point of view is the most objective point of view, the narrator stands from the outside to observe the story. It is aimed at the objects that are the external expressions and actions of the character, the character's psychology is not analyzed but left to the reader to feel, the narrator allows the reader to freely comment on the actions of character. With an external narrative point of view with a relatively objective narrator, Trinh Thanh Phong has created for himself a favorable viewing angle to soberly record the stories of the characters when telling around relationships, events, and relationships society's bondage and conflicting view of oneself. The writer builds an outside point of view to quietly observe, sometimes strangely calm, sometimes incarnate into the character to witness pain, happiness and explain the contradictions that take place.

Before being helped by Mr. Tam to become an honest businessman, the character Lo was the daughter of Dieu Thuyen's mother, who often took the story of one family and sold it to another to make a profit. In order to portray the portrait of Ms. Lo who lives by the profession of "northern place to listen to" in addition to describing her appearance and psychology, the author pays attention to describing Lo's actions. Actions that show an impolite, deceitful posture, always seem to be hiding something, but always appear poetic, honest, gentle, prompting all news. Observe the actions of Ms. Lo in the case of Pham Tong's family and her family. Rain: Cai Lo "is gentle enough... Lo's voice tells the story. Lo hesitated and still drew a hairpin to show his shyness" [2]. look at the old man's dripping voice " [2], pretending to smack his mouth" [2]. The result of that first meeting with Tong to sell news. Found a fifty-thousand dollar bill. "His eyes widened, but his sensitive hand was still spread out and Leaf quickly picked up the bill and tucked it into the rim of his pants. Lo Qin stood up, hands clasped in pigtailed, pretending to be shy to ask permission to leave." [2] The second time he went to old Tong's house, " Cai Lo came in" [2] selling news., got another banknote : "Looking at the gentle old man, he then folded the banknote into his pants, bowed his head and walked straight away" [2]. This time, old Tong put the green banknote in Lo's hand. Lo hesitated and then stretched out his hand to tuck the bill into his trousers" [2] After handing Lo the package of the abortion pill, he pulled the bill out of his pocket and put it in Lo's hand trousers" The narrator in the short stories told from the outside

narrative point of view of Nam Cao and Lu Xun sometimes appears to be very objective, seeming to be somewhat cold towards the truths being told - the naked, pitiful truths distant. The narrator is innocent of the character's world and the events that take place around it. For example, when recounting the death of the slut Rat (Poor), the narrator in Nam Cao's short story is completely nonchalant when describing in detail each of his actions when looking for death, from forced rope to putting it on the neck. The reader is stunned by the brutal reality that is coldly recounted at the end of the story: "The Rat slut hissed his teeth. Two angry legs kicked the chair to the ground. The shaft retracted sharply. The skeleton wrapped in skin struggled like a chicken in a trap, and in the end, it only jerked slowly under the dangling rope. In the alley, Rat's mother and daughter cried and begged. Mrs. Huyen is determined to catch a new batch of rice to deduct the six-dollar debt she owed Ms. Mouse two months ago to give her husband medicine." [5]. A tragic end: the slut Rat hanged to death in the sound of debt collection in the yard of Mrs. Huyen and in the sound of her little girl's begging. The reader cannot hold back tears at this ending but the narrator is completely indifferent. Similarly, in Tomorrow, Lu Xun lets the narrator also be objective and a little cold when recounting the tragedy of Sister Tu Thien when she lost her only son. In particular, the narrator proved to be quite objective when recounting her witness to the estrangement, cruelty, and irresponsibility of those around her: "Mrs. Chin... took two sets of chairs instead of Tu, horses and five sets of clothes, they can take two silver coins, provide food and water for those who come to help [6]. Anyone who has a hand in their work, or opens their mouth to show her this and that, eats them rice socks... Those who eat rice also seem to want to go home. Then they all left." [6]. With the composure of the narrative, the narrator frequently detaches himself from empathy for the characters and directs the reader's attention only to the pure outcome.

Trinh Thanh Phong also shows us that Karma also has a fate no less tragic and painful. As a person with a will to learn, the future is opening up in front of him. But life pushed Karma to become a prisoner, then suppressed, making him extremely resentful. Going to prison for five years, returning to Karma without her mother or being allowed to integrate into the community, she still couldn't keep her head down. The crazy karma is still not let go because his talent makes too many people jealous. It seemed that life kept pushing and pushing those two people, but it was true that heaven had eyes, those two people had the energy to go above all to do business and get rich in their own homeland. And meeting the harmony in their souls, sooner or later they will have a happy ending for their arduous life series. And perhaps, the happy endings that Trinh Thanh Phong built have made his work more humane than Nguyen Khac Truong and Dao Thang. People, even though life has ups and downs, suffering, moments of despair and resentment, but through difficulties, they still find happiness for themselves. A genuine, good-hearted person will have a happy ending. [2]. By building images of characters like Pham Tong, Luong, Luon and their wings with all kinds of tricks to harm people, the writer has vividly portrayed a picture of realism or portraiture. rural individuals. The "dark areas" of reality are clearly seen and illuminated by the writer, thereby explaining deeply, the source. He saw the essence of the problem, all stemming from a conservative mind, self-interest inherent in people's thinking and behavior, now has the opportunity to erupt and

become a restrained cancer. rural development. However, Trinh Thanh Phong is not pessimistic. In addition to a fairly accurate view of the negative side of reality, the writer also sees the positive factors that create a balance for rural social life. While Pham Tong and his followers tried to conspire to gain their own benefits, Tam, a soldier who returned to his homeland to join labor and assume the position of commune captain, was very calm. He clearly understands the nature of the Party - the Party belongs to the people, so he has no rigid behavior and rigid principles. He fully understands the nature of the people like Mr. Do and Ms. Lo as well as the duties of Party members in peacetime. When the relatives around him still did not understand the Party properly, and even intended to join the Party to make friends like the Pham family, he explained: "In the past, the nation was still under the yoke of foreign slaves. State, Party members were imprisoned and sacrificed to save our nation from the yoke of oppression and exploitation. Now that the country is independent, the main task of a Communist Party member, regardless of position, is to rally and unite all classes of people to save the country and its people from poverty. [2] It was that right thought that helped him have a suitable behavior, against the cunning schemes of the Pham family. Trinh Thanh Phong proved to be knowledgeable about the temperament, lifestyle, speech and emotional development of characters such as relatives and brothers in his hometown. He sees all the hidden corners behind the scenes of life, a life full of tragedy, he honestly reflects the dark, dark manifestations of life right in the human soul and resolutely struggles with it with his fingers. the pen of a responsible writer. With many details and unique narrative style, the author has made the reader understand that in many cases people are both victims and perpetrators of mistakes in their lives. They are the culprits when there is always a struggle between the bad and the good inside, but they let the bad win like in the case of Miss Rain letting go, Lo closed her eyes and let them do whatever they wanted. Mr. Do - a person who looks like Chi Pheo in modern times, but according to the author's own words, Mr. Do is the most humane person who always knows how to help people around him, has to live in the tricks of the peasantry. The bondage in the village makes him only dare to "tell the truth" while drunk. The reason for this is in the character because in the Red there is a struggle between one side being bad and the other being good. Mr. Do is a man who knows very well the crimes of his father, son, uncle Pham Tong, he used to loathe them, but he did not have the strength to fight them, so he chose "Chi Pheo way of life": "Tao I Plowing during the day, plugging in an eel sword at night, making a scythe, but having to be full of it... It's as good as your ears, itchy eyes, whatever, you can't help but be afraid of being a recluse like you." [2] However, in the end, Mr. Do also realizes the good, the light: "This crazy guy and me too, if not for the good wind of Mr. Tam to blow to this village, the Do will just be the Red and the Red. the eel pipe groped year round at the beginning and the end of the beach. Also, Nghiep is the same, just a crazy guy who can only cup three palm leaves and stay in the same plate." [2] Not only deeply describe the conflict of good and evil in the farmer himself, but the author successfully describes the conflict of good and evil in the minds of key officials in the government. That is Mr. Tinh, a Party secretary, 50-year veteran of the Party who chose to live on the defensive to preserve his honor. After witnessing the actions imbued with Mr. Tam's words, he re-examined himself by standing in front of the altar, in front of the Party



badge, and swore to re-admit himself to the Party.

### 2.3.2. Inside view point-Main point of view

In the narrative text, the narrative point of view is the starting point of the artistic structure. When narrating or describing the writer is forced to choose a reasonable point of view for the work. That is the starting point for building artistic structure in narrative work. The narrative is closely linked with the point of view. A narrator can create many points of view, the richness of the narrator creates a richness of points of view. The narration is divided into three forms: first person, second person, and third person. In literature, narration is mainly used in the first and third person.

According to narration theory, the narrator brings an inside point of view while the author is a character who is directly present in the story. From the inner narrative point of view, the narrator easily narrates the objective developments of the circumstances and events, and penetrates into the character's soul world to express emotions and moods. With this format, the narrator through his or her own point of view will take on the role of telling the story from beginning to end and deciding on the structure of the work as well as having the full right to describe the character according to his or her senses. Thus, the narrator stands within the range of the event being told, participating in the activity when the event occurs. Genette proposes an equation describing the inner point of view: the narrator's point of view is equal to the character's point of view (that is, the narrator's internal point of view coincides with the character's point of view). The narrator stands at the character's point of view to observe and narrate events in a certain space. Choosing the inner point of view, the writer both subjectivizes the world and retains the objectivity of the narrator. The narrator in this case only looks from one side, one point. That is, the narrator does not know it all, and equally dialogues with readers to express thoughts and concerns before events in life. The inner point of view helps the writer to deepen the character's inner self with more clear memories, memories, and emotional expressions.

The inner point of view is that the character talks about his own thoughts, is the observation that the character feels his own inner self, narrates through the eyes of a specific mood, thereby helping to deeply re-render character's inner life. The inner point of view is expressed in the form of self-observation and self-confessions of my character or in the form of a narrator who relies on the character's feelings and soul to express his feelings.

The inside point of view allows narration through the lens of a specific mood, recreating the inner life of the character deeply. Coordinating and moving the external and internal viewpoints will help the writer open many doors to explore life from many different angles. Accordingly, the writer has the conditions to dig into the unconscious as well as vividly describe the subtle mood changes of the pages written about Lo, "To everyone, Lo sage and trusting, because they are all leaders, are all superiors, fathers and uncles, Lo is an orphan again, Lo has to rely on them, trusts everyone, Lo has no precaution at all... Lo works so hard that everyone beloved person. It was that love and care that made Lo foolish. Lo did not expect that in the blanket covering Lo's orphaned body, there was the calculation of the wolf-wisdom, who had the highest power in the camp, Mr. Pham Ho <sup>[2]</sup>. The gullible innocence of a girl has become something that can be appropriated by the powerful. This shows sympathy for the short-necked people, who are easily taken advantage of in the

writer's rural society. Writing about the life of Mr. Do, Mr. Nghiep is also full of worries and pity. Nghiep came back from prison when he heard the news of his mother's death, he ran to his mother's grave, "his hands kept holding on to earth mushrooms, his mouth cried out to heaven. With a hoarse voice, he broke off some dried twigs and gathered them instead of a stick of incense to stick on his mother's grave and so on he bowed." <sup>[2]</sup> Karma was sent to prison because of the conspiracy of the old The village chairman, this was known to the whole village, but it was unfair that when he returned to do honest business, he received an answer from the cooperative he was a member of. The offender, who still has to be monitored, is not qualified to be a cooperative member, hearing this sentence "he got goosebumps, he just knelt down to Uncle Hai Thin and ran away" <sup>[2]</sup>. Mr. Nghiep's life continued to be suppressed and oppressed by his father and son, Pham Tong's brothers until he had to pretend to be crazy and live with ghosts in Day Beach.

### 3. Conclude

1. The novel written on rural topics by Trinh Thanh Phong is in the general inspiration circuit of post-renovation literature. Therefore, the reality of rural life is viewed in a new direction. With meticulous observations and thorough analysis, the writer creates a colorful rural picture. The existence of the old, of the subsidized bureaucracy, of the people who follow that mechanism, paints dark patches of reality. At times, those dark patches overwhelm the light colors, pushing the fate of many farmers into disrepair. But in the end, the right thoughts that know how to develop their potential from the honest and gentle people won. They won the support of the people, causing self-interested people to receive proper lessons

2. Reading these three novels, by being skillful and flexible in using the narrator, interweaving the narration, and using the internal and external points of view combined with the interweaving narrative, we realize Trinh Thanh Phong has put his character in many relationships and different dimensions of dialogue situations. In those stories, the interweaving narrator plays the role of leading the story. Most of the writers in the renovation period allowed the characters to dialogue and express their attitudes, moods, and thoughts. It is this constant movement of the point of view that makes the first narrator's language natural and contributes to the characterization of the character. In novels written about the countryside after 1986, readers also find a deep, contemplative tone when the narrator contemplates human life. In particular, novels written on rural themes, despite depicting the reality of poverty, and suffocation because of routines, and conflicts, still cannot forget the lines and pages of love and gentle words when describing nature. The village is full of simplicity and closeness. In Land of many people, many ghosts, Ghost Village, and River of Sugarcane, three authors have logically and flexibly combined many voices in many different contexts and situations into the same work. Readers do not feel bored and bored of the narration but are always fascinated by the constant change in tone and use of language by the narrator. Modern novel thinking allows storytellers to use language from all walks of life. This ability to synthesize many linguistic styles is a characteristic expression of the novel genre.

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