

Facets of narrative perspective in Ioana Pârvulescu's novel *Viaţa începe vineri*

Lidia BRATU (IACOB)¹

Studies on narrative perspective, published over time by linguists who have enunciated various theories of narrative typology – even if the terminology is quite eclectic – represent the foundation for a pertinent linguistic analysis of literary narrative text. Based on theoretical notions about narrative perspective and analyzing texts from Ioana Pârvulescu's novel Viaţa începe vineri [Life Begins on Friday], this paper aims to demonstrate that the technique of narrative perspective, which multiplies and becomes ambiguous, is an essential means of lending authenticity to the narrative, thus contributing to the construction of a complex narrative text.

Keywords: *facets of narrative perspective, narrative instances, focalization, Ioana Pârvulescu*

1. Narrative perspective – Theoretical considerations

Numerous studies have been written about narrative perspective and its importance in the construction of literary narrative text, with theories of narrative typology being enunciated by linguists and narrative text theorists such as Pouillon (1946), Stanzel (1955), Jakobson (1963), Benveniste (1966), T. Todorov (1968), Gérard Genette (1972 and 1994), Jaap Lintvelt (1994), and Alain Rabatel (1998).

Many other linguists in the modern era have drawn inspiration from and enriched the ideas about the concepts of *focalization, perspective, or point of view* based on the theories enunciated and outlined by these scholars. Defined as the way in which events are narrated, a concept referring to the „relationship between

¹ University of Bucharest, Romania, lidia.bratu@stud.mec.upb.ro

the narrator and the recounted facts” (Mancaş 2023, 203), *narrative perspective* has been equated over time in linguistic studies with the terms *point of view*, *vision*, or *focalization*.

Termed *vision* by Pouillon and Todorov, perspective is called *focalization* by Genette, who makes the following classification: *internal focalization*, *external focalization*, and *zero focalization*. In his work, *Încercare de tipologie narativă. Punctul de vedere. Teorie și analiză* [An Attempt at Narrative Typology. Point of View. Theory and Analysis] (Romanian edition, 1994), Jaap Lintvelt takes up and analyzes the theories of Pouillon, Todorov, and Genette on narrative perspective and presents a typology of narrative discourse, designating narrative instances and emphasizing the differences between *heterodiegetic narrative* and *homodiegetic narrative*.

Describing a narrative typology based on the differentiation between the narrator and the actor of a narration, identifying narrative perspectives, and analyzing the perceptive-psychic, temporal, spatial, and verbal planes, Jaap Lintvelt establishes the types of narrative: *heterodiegetic narrative* (authorial, actorial, and neutral narrative types) and *homodiegetic narrative* (authorial and actorial narrative types). The authorial narrative type corresponds to the narrator's narrative plane, the actorial narrative type corresponds to the actor's (i.e., the character's) narrative plane, and the neutral narrative type corresponds to the narrative plane of a camera, or zero focalization, as G. Genette called it.

Building on the theories of Pouillon, Todorov, G. Genette, and Jaap Lintvelt, numerous contemporary linguists and theorists such as Alain Rabatel and Raphaël Baroni develop the notions of *point of view*, *perspective*, and *focalization*.

Alain Rabatel (1998) analyzed and studied narrative perspective, which he calls *point of view*. In his work, *La construction textuelle du point de vue*, he presents and analyzes the elements that delimit the narrator's point of view and the character's point of view, simultaneously identifying the implicit or explicit marking of the two frameworks: the primary framework, that of the narrator, and the secondary framework, that of the character.

Later, another researcher, Raphaël Baroni (2021), emphasizes that these three terms (*perspective*, *focalization*, and *point of view*) should not be considered synonyms, thus contradicting Genette. He discusses *focalization* and *point of view* as component elements of narrative perspective, stating that focalization can be *simple*, *variable*, or *multiple* (depending on the focus) or *restricted*, *equivalent*, and *extended* (depending on the quantity of information), and classifying the point of view as *internal* and *external*. From his perspective, *focalization* is related to the

quantity of information transmitted, while the *point of view* directs the information.

Following Raphaël Baroni (2021), who classifies perspective as a hypernym of the terms focalization and point of view, we believe that, indeed, *perspective* can be considered an element that encompasses the other two terms, *focalization* and *point of view*, with these two hyponyms contributing to the constitution of subjective narrative perspective. However, we disagree with the classification of point of view into internal and external point of view, based on the fact that *point of view* implicitly presupposes the existence of subjective elements; therefore, it should only be internal, not external.

Thus, starting from the theoretical conceptions expressed over time by linguists about *narrative perspective*, we can discuss the construction, with the help of linguistic elements as marks of subjectivity in narrative discourse, of a perspective with *internal focalization* and a perspective with *external focalization*, shaped by the presence of a *point of view*. At the same time, a classification (proposed by Baroni) of perspective can be made into: *simple perspective* (of a single narrator on a recounted event), *variable perspective* (of a single narrator on several narrated events or characters), and *multiple perspective* (the perspectives of several narrators on the same events or characters).

2. Facets of Narrative Perspective in the Novel *Viața începe vineri* [*Life Begins on Friday*]

When observing the construction of the narrative in Ioana Pârvulescu's novel *Viața începe vineri* [*Life Begins on Friday*], we notice that different narrative perspectives overlap, multiply, and become ambiguous. The subjective, first-person narrative perspective alternates with an objective, third-person perspective. The aim of this technique is to create an authentic description of 19th-century Bucharest society, while also introducing an element of suspense through a character presumed to be from the future.

In the novel, *Viața începe vineri* [*Life Begins on Friday*], the first-person perspectives of the characters Iulia and Dan Kretzu intertwine and sometimes overlap with that of the extradiegetic narrator. The purpose of constructing the perspectives of the character-narrators is to lend authenticity to the narrative and to bring into focus the description of 19th-century society. Emphasis is placed on building perspectives with internal focalization, on the experiences and perceptions

of the character-narrators, through the predominant use of markers of subjectivity. Depending on the position of the focalizing element, three types of perspective are identified in the text of this novel, considering Lintvelt's classification (Lintvelt 1994)² :

1. *The perspective of the extradiegetic narrator*, which contributes to the construction of the authorial narrative, in the third person, with external focalization, identifying the point of view within the narrator's plane.
2. *The perspective of the character-narrators*, witnesses to the recounted events, who construct an intradiegetic authorial narrative, in the first person, with external and internal focalization, identifying markers of subjectivity that delineate a point of view.
3. *The perspective of the actor characters*, participants in the recounted events, who construct an actorial narrative, with external and internal focalization, identifying points of view, and thus subjectivity.

From the point of view of depth, the narrative perspectives in the novel are both internal and external; the recounted events are conveyed to the reader both according to the narrator's inner experiences and according to what they observe from the outside. Thus, two types of perspective are noted: *internal perspective* or "vision with", conveyed through the experiences and perceptions of the character-narrators, and *external perspective* or "vision from outside", directed according to what is observed externally.

The narrative instances are in constant connection, providing coherence and authenticity to the text: the *extradiegetic narrator* (speaker and enunciator, third-person narration), the *character-narrators* (Iulia Margulis, Dan Kretzu, first-person narration), the *actor characters* (direct discourse, voices identified in the extradiegetic narrator's discourse), and the *fictional reader*. The alternation of the extradiegetic narrator's plane with the secondary planes of the character-narrators Iulia Margulis and Dan Kretzu, and the shift from third-person to first-person narration, implies the multiplication of narrative perspectives. To maintain

² In his work, *Încercare de tipologie narativă. Punctul de vedere. Teorie și analiză*, (An Attempt at Narrative Typology. The Point of View. Theory and Analysis), Jaap Lintvelt classifies narration into heterodiegetic and homodiegetic. He also discusses authorial, actorial, and neutral narrative types, establishing three types of perspective: the perspective of the extradiegetic narrator (authorial type, heterodiegetic narration), the perspective of the character-narrator (authorial type, homodiegetic narration), and the perspective of the character-actor (actorial type, heterodiegetic and homodiegetic narration).

connection with the reader, by stimulating curiosity, narrative pauses are used, transitioning from one setting to another, from one perspective to another, with different events (co-occurrences) presented simultaneously.

The described and observed space, focalized by all identified narrative instances, is 19th-century Bucharest, seen both through the eyes of its inhabitants and through the foreign eyes of the character Dan Kretzu, for whom the 19th-century city is a completely new, bizarre world.

The recounted events take place over two weeks, with each chapter of the novel covering the events of a single day. Daily events are presented from multiple perspectives, on several narrative planes that are in a relationship of co-occurrence and intertwine.

The reader's transition from the real world to the fictional, diegetic universe is achieved by appealing to the authorial narrative type within the heterodiegetic narrative, thus through the voice of the extradiegetic narrator who is situated on the same temporal plane as the reader. By using the external perception of the extradiegetic narrator in the *Foreword* and *Epilogue*, the transition from the reader's real world to the fictional world and vice versa is made.

Regarding the extradiegetic narrator's perspective on the narrative events, it is projected from the future towards the past. The opening pages jump from the reader's and narrator's present into the fictional past, with the narrator situating themselves in an era contemporary to the reader („*Visau la noi*") from which they direct their gaze towards a past century, as noted in the *Foreword*. „*Cu câțiva ani înainte de 1900 zilele erau încăpătoare și oamenii visau la lumea noastră. Visau la noi.*" If the novel's first sentence places the action shortly before the beginning of the 20th century, the sentence in the epilogue brings the narrator's perspective back to the present of the narrative discourse through the use of the temporal deictic, the adverb "astăzi" (today): „*Astăzi strada Fântânei poartă numele de Berthelot și duce la Radiodifuziunea română.*"

Analyzing Chapter 1 of the novel *Viața începe vineri* [*Life Begins on Friday*], we observe the alternation of narrative planes: that of the extradiegetic narrator and those of the character-narrators Iulia and Dan Kretzu. The narrative is constructed from multiple reports and perspectives, which at some point become ambiguous. The narrative text is built through distinct narrative frames, creating a narrative tension from perspectives that do not seem to be related to each other, but which at some point meet, by resuming an idea, a phrase, or by referring to a character who is described by another narrative voice.

2.1. Extradiegetic Narrator's Perspective versus Character's Perspective

The third-person narration of the extradiegetic narrator, whose discourse includes the perspectives of characters like Nicu, police officer Costache, Procopiu, Pavel, Marwan, and Epiharia, and the first-person narrations of Iulia and Dan Kretzu, intertwine and complement each other, resembling puzzle pieces that compose the story and bring into focus the events of Friday, December 19th. The narrator's plane is characterized by third-person narration; the narrator's perspective, far from being objective or omniscient, is also, like the characters' perspectives, marked by elements of subjectivity.

The narrator's plan is characterized by third-person narration. The narrator's perspective, far from being objective or omniscient, is also marked by subjective elements, similar to the characters' perspectives. There's a continuity and synergy between the narrative planes, achieved by reintroducing ideas or phrases. The extradiegetic narrator's voice is rarely neutral, constructing a "camera-like" vision, as identified by Jaap Lintvelt within the neutral narrative type (Lintvelt 1994, 53), often being marked by a specific point of view.

The extradiegetic narrator presents events with an involvement of their own feelings and perceptions. However, the narrator frequently adopts the characters' voices, recounting events through their perceptions, identifying with them within the heterodiegetic narrative. The authorial narrative type often alternates with the actorial narrative type to maintain the narrative's suspense.

The narrator's voice possesses none of the narrative omniscience of Balzac, for example. The extradiegetic narrator doesn't know more than their characters do, projecting a point of view on the recounted facts, which they present based on what can be observed externally. This is where the text's authenticity stems from.

The creation of narrative pauses, by opening another frame or another perspective, is a technique the author uses to directly engage the reader in the text's construction. The narrative unfolds progressively, in the eyes of the reader, who is constantly compelled to make connections between the "narrative windows", as Henry James called narrative perspectives, by drawing on memory and revisiting previously recounted events.

The narrator doesn't know everything about their characters; they are not a demiurge of the narrative. Instead, they identify with a subjective point of view, with a limited perspective on the narrated events. The narrator's plane is built gradually and intertwines with that of the characters. The extradiegetic narrator's voice often takes on the voice of the narrative's characters, as in the following example, where the narrator identifies with the voice of the character Nicu. While

the first phrase in the excerpt can be attributed to the extradiegetic narrator through the use of a neutral tone and the punctual simple perfect tense, the explanation for why the character changes his cap is subsequently presented. Here, the reader identifies the perspective of the character Nicu, through the use of elements with a strong subjective character: the use of the imperfect tense and adverbial deictic expression *încoace și-ncolo*, *cine știe pe unde*, and modalizers *fără îndoială*, *oricum*, *cu acreală*, the evaluative adjective (*bătrânul nuc*):

După ce scăpă de ultimul comision, fugi de acasă să-și schimbe chipiul roșu de serviciu cu șapca de timp liber: dacă rămânea cu chipiul, oamenii îl opreau pe stradă și-l trimiteau *încoace și-ncolo*. De undeva dinspre *bătrânul nuc* al vecinilor, un corb croncăni de câteva ori *cu acreală*. Fiindcă nu era nimeni acasă – cine știe pe unde umbla mamă-sa – putu să se îndrepte spre strada Teilor, loc din care trebuia, *fără îndoială*, să înceapă cercetarea. Era mai rău decât să cauți un ac în carul cu fân, dar, *oricum*, n-avea altceva mai bun de făcut: intrase în vacanța de Crăciun.

(Pârvulescu 2022, 19)

The external perspective of the narrator identifies with the perspective of their character through the use of verbs of seeing, with events presented through the eyes of the character Nicu: *ridică ochii, văzu, (o trăsură a poliției de culoarea vișinelor), își înfipse ochii, dădu cu ochii, îi fusese dat să vadă*. There is a progression of the gaze upon the surrounding space, outlined by static and active visual perception verbs that simultaneously mark the character's emotional state, transforming it from contemplation (of the snow, which he compares to milk) into astonishment (at the sight of a stranger's footwear, whom the reader later learns is Dan Kretzu).

The character focalized by the extradiegetic narrator, in turn, becomes a focalizer, with the narrator merely being an enunciator, carrying the character's voice: „Tocmai atunci dădu cu ochii de cea mai neobișnuită pereche de încălțări din câte îi fusese dat să vadă în cei 8 ani lungi (și grei) (.....) Erau niște bidigăanii nemaivăzute, de nici nu știi cum să le zici”.

Thus, the reader identifies the voice of the character Nicu in the narrator's discourse through expressions such as: „8 ani lungi (și grei)..... niște bidigăanii nemaivăzute” or the phrase „de nici nu știi cum să le zici”, which emphasize the child Nicu's astonishment and suffering.

In a short fragment from the novel, we can observe a constant shift between the authorial narrative type and the actorial narrative type, a rotation of the

narrative perspective on the described space and events, resulting in its ambiguization. Describing Bucharest and one of the characters participating in the diegetic events (Nicu), the narrator's perspective is subjective, easily noticeable through the use of evaluative and appreciative elements („*aveau o zi bună, destul de animată*”) and locative deictics (*ici-colo*) or temporal deictics (*mereu*):

Bucureștenii *aveau o zi bună*. Ninsese, până la sfârșitul anului mai erau 12 zile, până la sfârșitul zilei 12 ore. ... Turțurii *păreau* dați cu ulei și începeau *ici-colo* să picure în capul trecătorilor. Străzile erau *destul de animate*, cum sunt *mereu* în zilele dinaintea Crăciunului. Cu ochii pe sus, ca să nu-l ude, Nicu se pomeni întins în zăpadă, supărat ca atunci când se trezea cu fața la cearșaf.

(Pârvulescu 2022, 13)

The narrator's perspective is interspersed with that of the character he describes, the child Nicu, which can be easily observed only when the address is direct, using the second person:

–Vasăzică mata iar ai căzut,! A spus cu glas tare băiatul, scuturându-și *chipiul roșu de comisionar*. Ți-am zis de-atâtea ori să te uiți pe unde calci, *bombăni cu vocea lui mică, dar cu un ton de bătrân prost dispus*. De anul trecut, de când mergea la școală, tonul acesta de învățător i se lipise de limbă și nu mai scăpa de el.

(Pârvulescu 2022, 13-14)

If we continue to follow the narrator's discourse, we observe an ambiguization of narrative voices, making it difficult to distinguish the narrator's voice from that of the character Nicu.

The transition from the narrator's perspective to the character's is very subtle, occurring within the same sentence: the phrase „*spre marele lui necaz*” and the sentence „*S-ar fi mulțumit și cu o soră, la o adică*” are clues that delineate the character's voice. Furthermore, the utterances „*Nicu se străduia*”, „*Nu era ușor*” and the evaluatives „*splendid*” and „*numai bun de spadă*” identify the character Nicu's perspective, with the narrator merely enunciating the message:

Obiceiul de a vorbi cu el însuși îl deprinsese însă de când se știa, pentru că, *spre marele lui necaz*, n-avea frați cum au alți copii. *S-ar fi mulțumit și cu o soră, la o adică*. Își scutură zăpada de pe surtuc, privi cu ciudă spre ghețușul pe care alunecase și ajunsese, tropăind, lângă ceasul cu dorobanț, plasat peste

ușa ziarului L' Independance Roumaine. La ora 12 fix, carillonul începea să cânte. *Nicu se străduia* să prindă întâlnirea cu dorobanțul. *Nu era ușor*, pentru că se orienta numai după soare și umbră. De data asta, atenția băiatului se îndreaptă spre altceva. Pe jos, chiar în fața lui, era *un țurture splendid*, de vreo doi coți lungime, *numai bun de spadă*.

(Pârvulescu 2022, 14)

The narrator continues to adopt the character Nicu's perspective to describe the surrounding space, resorting to the use of tactile perception elements (*răceala gheții, îl culese, îl mângâie, îl ridică*) and verbs showing a progression of movement in the simple perfect tense:

Îl culese pe loc, *îi mângâie* suprafața ușor vălurită *fără să-i pese de răceala gheții*, îl duse cu ambele mâini la șold, apoi *îl ridică*, tot cu două mâini, și făcu, *răcnind*, o mișcare de spadă spre un dușman nevăzut.

(Pârvulescu 2022, 14)

The character focalized by the extradiegetic narrator, in turn, becomes the focalizer, with the narrator merely being an enunciator, carrying the character's voice:

Tocmai atunci dădu cu ochii de *cea mai neobișnuită pereche de încălțări* din câte îi fusese dat să vadă în cei 8 ani lungi (*și grei*) (.....) *Erau niște bidigăanii nemaivăzute, de nici nu știi cum să le zici*".

In the following sentences, the perspective shifts back, being taken over by the extradiegetic narrator. The marking of the narrator's perspective (on the character Costache) with elements of subjectivity can be observed, proving that the narrator does not possess all the information, and their perspective is limited: *din nenorocire, pesemne, nimeri prost, cosea repede-repede aerul cu picioarele lui scurte* are marks of the subjectivity of the perspective, indicating the narrator's point of view.

An ambiguization of perspective occurs, as the paragraph continues with the description of Costache Boerescu, and even the voice of this character is identified within the narrator's discourse. The narrator resorts to inserting the discourse of the actor-character: through the use of evaluative elements (*„căpățânosul ăla de Filipescu”, „dracul de copil*), verbs that underline the character's state of uneasiness (*numai de duel nu-i ardea”, „ajunsese să nu-i mai suporte pe gazetari”*), or verbs with a strong stylistic charge, emphasizing his dissatisfaction (*„când făcea lucruri*

bune, nu-l băgau în seamă, săreau la el și-l ponegreau, persecutau”), the reader concludes that the thoughts belong to the character, thus outlining a point of view:

Din nenorocire, țurturele, obișnuit pesemne cu mai multă liniște la marginea de acoperiș pe care crescuse, nimeri prost: un ins cu uniformă militară și baston cu cioc de argint, un domn de statură mijlocie care tocmai ieșea pe ușa clădirii cu ceas. Era mâna dreaptă a Prefectului de Poliție, Șeful siguranței publice, Costache Boerescu, aflat mereu în viteză: cosea repede-repede aerul cu picioarele lui scurte. În perioada asta era de câte două-trei ori pe zi la ziarul franțuzilor. Asta de când cu uciderea în duel a domnului Lahovary, directorul gazetei, de către „căpățânosul ăla de Filipescu”, directorul Epocii. Așa că numai de duel nu-i ardea domnului polițist, iritat cum era de ancheta care bătea pasul pe loc și de vocile din presă care-l persecutau tot mai tare. Ajunseseră să nu-i mai suporte pe gazetari: când făcea lucruri bune, nu-l băgau în seamă, dar îndată ce nu rezolva destul de rapid vreo chestiune, săreau la el și-l ponegreau folosind chiar vorbele lui, însă ciuntite și întoarse pe dos.

(Pârvulescu 2022,14)

Although the narrator's plane should be characterized by objectivity³, in this novel, it is not devoid of the presence of markers of subjectivity, even when the extradiegetic narrator's voice does not seem to take over the characters' voices. The frequent use of qualifying adjectives with an evaluative role („*amintire penibilă*”, „*unicat absolut*”, „*un nas cam lung, cam căzut spre bărbie*”, „*mustață falnică*”), of diminutives and ironic comparisons („*pălăriuță....ce-i stătea ca o creastă*”), and of appreciative modalizers, which underline a subjective point of view through their repetition, such as the emphatic adverb („*închizând foarte apăsător ușa. Dar foarte apăsător*”), all converge towards the construction of the narrator's perspective, outlining their attitude towards the focalized events:

Era o *amintire penibilă*. Marwan le aduseseră un clișeu pe sticlă cu o imagine de la procesul doctorului Bastaki, *unicat absolut*, tipograful îl scăpase pe jos și sticla se crăpase în două. A fost nevoie să-l cheme de acasă pe unul dintre cei trei desenatori, specialist în portrete-de *altfel* rivalul lui Marwan- să-l scoale de la un supeu cu invitați și să-l aducă la redacție. Desenatorul apropiase cele două părți de sticlă și reconstruise imaginea: sala de judecată, pe domnișoara

³ Alain Rabatel (1998) differentiates between the *narrator's plane* and the *character's plane*, specifying that, unlike the former which is characterized by a certain objectivity, the character's plane is clearly outlined by the presence of subjective elements.

Elena Gorjan în prim-plan, cu *o pălărie* cu pană **ce-i stătea ca o creastă** pe vârful capului, cu *un nas* care, din grabă, îi ieșise *cam lung și cam căzut* spre bărbie, și puse de la el, îndărătul ei, un obraz de paznic cu *mustață falnică*....pe domnișoara Gorjan o desenase și înainte, *figura ei de mironosiță* mai apăruse în ziar. Marwan s-a supărat și a plecat închizând *foarte apăsător* ușa. Dar *foarte apăsător*. Așa că acum cei doi redactori nu știau cum să-l mai cocoloșească.

(Pârvulescu 2022, 26)

Remaining within the narrator's perspective, we observe the novel's cyclic nature, which is established by the repetition of the phrase „Ninsese, până la sfârșitul anului mai erau 12 zile, până la sfârșitul zilei 12 ore.” This phrase is mentioned at both the beginning and end of the novel. The key difference lies in the fact that the past events unfold on a “good day” („*Bucureștenii aveau o zi bună*”), while the future events (the narrator's present) occur on a “bad day” („*Bucureștenii aveau o zi rea*”).

Thus, a superimposition of diegetic time with narrative time occurs, a temporal overlap of two distinct eras, all while maintaining the same spatial setting: Bucharest. This gaze of the narrator towards the past and the return to the narrative present, through the superimposition of perspectives, creates suspense, appealing to the reader's memory and to intertextual elements.

2.2. Character-Narrator perspective

Alongside the third-person heterodiegetic narration, first-person authorial and actorial homodiegetic narration is employed, constructing two subjective perspectives: that of Iulia Margulis and that of Dan Kretzu. The perspective of the diegetic character Iulia Margulis opens the novel; through Iulia, the reader enters the diegetic world. Modalizing markers (*îmi place, trebuie, cred, or fi avut*), evaluative elements (*încăpățânată*), and deictics (*îmi, eu, noi, ce*) build a perspective that, initially, is actorial, with the narrating self-identifying with the narrated self („*îmi place să citesc în trăsură*”) through the use of verbs in the present tense, indicative mood (*îmi place, eu sunt, mă ia la rost, zice*):

Îmi place să citesc în trăsură. Mama mă ia la rost, papa, care nu uită nici în familie că-i Domnul doctor Leon Margulis, medic primar cu cabinet în str. Sf. Ionică nr. 8, „în dosul Teatrului Național”, zice că-mi stric ochii și-o să nasc copii cu vederea slabă. Însă eu sunt încăpățânată și tot îmi iau cartea cu

mine. Pe vremea lor or fi avut mai mult timp de citit și de multe altele, dar noi, cei mai tineri, trebuie să ne chivernisim bine orele. *Abia așteptam* să văd ce mai face Becky din Vanity Fair. Deși, la drept vorbind, *cred* că eu semăn mai mult cu proasta de Amelia, și-o să iubesc toată viața *cine știe* ce ticălos.

(Pârvulescu 2022, 11)

After a shift in focalization to Papa (Dr. Margulis) and Mama, it returns to the narrator herself, the narration becoming authorial, with the character-narrator focusing on herself, in the past, as an actor-character: the use of adverbs *azi*, *mai întâi*, *apoi* marks the temporal distance between narrative time and story time, emphasizing the chronological nature of historical events and also having a causal character:

Azi n-am avut noroc cu cititul. *Mai întâi* pentru că-mi *înghețau* mâinile. *Apoi*, de cum ne-am suit în trăsură, mama și papa l-au tocat mărunț-mărunț, cum toacă bucătăreasa noastră pătrunjelul, pe necunoscutul cules de Petre din zăpadă, *azi dimineață*, aproape de pădurea Băneasa, în câmp, la lacuri.

(Pârvulescu 2022, 11)

The second homodiegetic perspective identified in Ioana Pârvulescu's novel *Viața începe vineri* [*Life Begins on Friday*] is that of Dan Crețu (Kretzu). The first-person authorial homodiegetic narration outlines a subjective perspective with both external focalization and internal focalization, as the character-narrator expresses his thoughts and feelings. The authorial narrative perspective alternates with the actorial narrative perspective, with the narrating self sometimes overlapping with the narrated self, the narrator identifying with the actor-character:

Brusc, o imagine *mi-a izbit retina ca un ciocan*: o clădire pe care o știam *cumva*, Teatrul Național din București, de pe Calea Victoriei. În piața din fața clădirii stăteau aliniate mici birje acoperite de coviltir, iar vizitii bine înfodoliți așteptau și vorbeau între ei. Copaci plini de zăpadă marcau semicercul pieței. Eram, *așadar*, pe Calea Victoriei. Mă întorsesem *oarecum* acasă și casa părinților mei ar fi trebuit să fie la câțiva pași.

(Pârvulescu 2022, 39)

In the fragment where Dan Crețu recounts the moment he realizes he is still in Bucharest, a city that looks completely different, the space he describes is presented to the reader through a perspective with external focalization, the

narrator entering the skin of the actor-character who relives the moment he is recounting. The actorial narration, however, alternates with the authorial one, and we notice this from the use of the adverbs *brusc*, *oarecum*, *cumva*, *așadar* elements of modalization through which the narrator expresses the degree of certainty related to what he is recounting.

The character-narrator identifies with the actor-character, addressing an imaginary narratee, whom he places in the world of the future, from which he has departed. The first-person narration, with the use of the personal deictic element (*vocea mea*/"my voice") and the epistemic modalizer (*poate*) outlines the subjective perspective. The deictics *aici*, *acum*, *chiar în clipa asta*, *chiar acum*, *aici*, *în biserică* used in conjunction with verbs in the present tense, bring the reader into the narrator's present, into the present of the narrative discourse, marking the temporal overlap and proving that the one recounting the facts is an actor in the diegetic action:

Înainte de a-mi pune orice întrebare, încercați să vă obișnuiți cu *vocea mea*, o voce de om despărțit de o lume pe care ajunsese s-o cunoască destul de bine, și căzut într-una necunoscută și de neînțeles. *Poate că* trăim, fără s-o știm, *chiar în clipa asta* nesfârșită, în mai multe lumi deodată... *Poate că* vocea care vă vorbește *acum* și care se zbate printre vocile de aici ca un pește în plasa pescarului...vorbește *chiar acum* cu ființe pe care n-aveți cum să le vedeți... *Cândva*, sunt sigur, *o să vin cumva* la voi și *o să mă auziți* iar. Nu știu de ce mă aflu aici, în biserică, în fața unei icoane... Sunt singur: *eu cel care fac și eu cel care mă judec*. Eu sunt *cel care vorbește și eu cel care tace și ascultă*.

(Pârvulescu 2022, 31-32)

The character-narrator emphasizes the temporal distance between the present of the narration, which overlaps with the time of the story, and a future time in which the narratee (the reader) is situated. The projection towards a future world is indicated by the use of the adverb *cândva* and the future tense (*o să vin*, *o să mă auziți*). The narrator identifies himself with the actor-character, being both the one participating in the action and the one recounting it at the same time: „... Sunt singur: eu cel care fac și eu cel care mă judec. Eu sunt cel care vorbește și eu cel care tace și ascultă”.

Moreover, at one point, the character-narrator is speaking to himself, entering into a dialogue with the actor-character, the narrating self-entering into dialogue with the narrated self. On this occasion, the narrator meditates on life, then identifies with the character again, the surrounding space being described by

alternating the two types of focalization, external and internal. The perspective with external focalization is outlined by the use of verbs of visual perception („*am deschis ochii*”, „*am văzut*”, „*mi-am cufundat ochii*”), the character contemplating the landscape with wonder, while the perspective with internal focalization can be observed from the use of the verb *a strânge* („*Aerul mă strângea*”), whose stylistic value highlights the character's tactile perception, the sensation of cold:

Mereu e altfel decât credem, dragă Dan. Ai căzut din viață-n viață. Când am deschis ochii, am văzut mult cer albastru și mulți copaci îmbrăcați în chiciură. Sute de gămlii care zburau la câte-o adiere. Aerul mă strângea. Eram culcat pe spate. Mi-am cufundat ochii în cer cu o mirare de orășean.

(Pârvulescu 2022, 33)

The elements of visual perception („*am deschis ochii*”, „*văzusem*”) and auditory perception („*o vânzoleală*”, „*o rumoare veselă*”, „*tropote de cai*”, „*țipete de vizutiu*”, „*zurgălăi*”) that construct the character-narrator's external focalization are a starting point for outlining an internal focalization. What the character sees, observes, and hears leads to his inner transformation, gradually invading him with a feeling of joy and peace:

M-am simțit odihnit și bucuros..... Parcă trăiam iar, după ce murisem de viu. Parcă eram sub aripă. Un sentiment bun, de dragoste pentru tot ce vedeam m-a strâns de gât. Inima mi-a bătut dezordonat și am simțit durerea... Se petrecuse ceva fără știrea mea. N-am înțeles ce, dar mi-au dat lacrimile.

(Pârvulescu 2022, 38)

The world that the character Dan Crețu discovers is a living world, full of color, which makes him feel truly alive, a world that the reader themselves sees and feels through him.

*Variable polyscopic perspective*⁴ is a narrative technique the author employs from the very first chapter of the novel to maintain reader engagement and lend authenticity to the narration. Building on Lintvelt's idea, and considering that contemporary linguists (A. Rabatel; R. Baroni) view the terms “focalization” (Genette 1994) and “point of view” (Lintvelt 1994) as hyponyms of “narrative perspective”, we can discuss the use of a *variable perspective with polyscopic or*

⁴ Term used by Jaap Lintvelt in his analysis of narrative perspective (Lintvelt 1994, 82)

*multiple focalization*⁵ as the primary technique for constructing the literary text in Ioana Pârvulescu's novel.

The perspectives on the character Dan Crețu multiply and diversify; they are sometimes convergent, sometimes divergent, contributing to the most complex outline possible of the character's portrait.

The first chapter centers all perspectives on Dan Crețu, the strange character who came from another world. The use of multiple perspectives (variable polyscopical perspective) on the same character lends authenticity to the narration, maintaining the reader's attention. The character Dan Crețu (Kretzu) is focalized by other characters and by the extradiegetic narrator, each perspective completing the character's image. The reader learns about the character Dan Crețu from Iulia Margulis's accounts, in whose discourse the perspective of other characters (Doctor Margulis) is identified:

Papa l-a consultat pe străin la rugămintea lui Costache, prietenul nostru de la Poliție, și zice că nu-i vagabond, chiar dacă e îmbrăcat cu niște haine neînchipuit de ciudate. O fi clown, la circ. Altfel curat, nici un cusur „fiziologic”, în afară de faptul că, într-adevăr, vorbește uneori în dodii. Dar dacă-i nebun, e unul cultivat, „rotunjește frumos vorbele.

(Pârvulescu 2022, 12)

About Dan Crețu, the stranger found in the snow by the coachman, we further learn from the account of the character-narrator Iulia, presented, however, from her mother's perspective: („zice că-i scăpat de la balamuc, că sigur a înnebunit de prea multă învățătură”):

Apoi, de cum ne-am suit în trăsură, mama și papa l-au tocat mărunț-mărunț, cum toacă bucătăreasa noastră pătrunjelul, pe necunoscutul cules de Petre din zăpadă, azi dimineață, aproape de pădurea Băneasa, în câmp, la lacuri. A fost dus în arest la Prefectura de Poliție. Mama, care e la zi cu absolut totul, zice că-i scăpat de la balamuc, că sigur a înnebunit de prea multă învățătură”.

(Pârvulescu 2022, 11)

⁵ The variable polyscopical perspective mentioned by Lintvelt (Lintvelt 1994, 82) is the equivalent of the term “multiple focalization” referenced by Baroni. In his article, Raphaël Baroni defines variable focalization as “narration that is alternately focalized on different characters.” (Baroni 2021)

2.3. Actor-Character perspective

The character's portrait is completed by perspectives of the narrative characters, Dan Crețu's image causing wonder and astonishment. From Doctor Margulis's replies, we learn that he is a journalist, the character expressing his astonishment regarding Dan Crețu's appearance:

- Câți ani are? A pus mama întrebarea ei favorită
- A declarat 43, păi asta ar însemna cu patru mai puțin ca mine, dar eu zic că minte, nu-i dau mai mult de 30-35. Zice că-i gazetar și că-i născut aici. Dan Kretzu. M-a mirat că se poartă ras complet, cum vezi doar la actorii care joacă rol de muiere. Hm!

(Pârvulescu 2022, 12) (actorial perspective - Doctor Margulis)

Referring to the stranger's footwear he meets on the street, Nicu expresses his astonishment, calling them „*bidigăanii nemaivăzute*”. The thoughts of the character Nicu are also rendered by the extradiegetic narrator who enters the consciousness of the actor-character, the character's internal discourse being narrativized: „*Erau niște bidigăanii nemaivăzute, de nici nu știi cum să le zici*” (character Nicu's perspective, narrator's voice).

The same line is found in the discourse of the character Nicu, who discusses with Jaques, his friend, thus emphasizing the character's inner state of wonder and surprise: „*Erau niște bidigăanii nemaivăzute, de nici nu știu cum să le zic, frate dragă, cum nici tu, nici io n-am mai văzut...*” (character Nicu's perspective, direct discourse).

Another narrative instance that brings a new perspective on the character Dan Crețu is the newspaper *Universul*: „*Arestatul găsit ieri leșinat și aproape înghețat în apropiere de moșia Băneasa (la lacuri) a declarat că se numește Dan I. Kretzu, e gazetar și nu e răufăcător...*” (the news is presented through the character Procopiu).

Epiharia, the woman in the church whom Dan Crețu meets, is another focalizer of the character. For her, Dan Crețu looks like an angel, although he is dressed like a beggar and whose voice is without hidden thought. The perspective is thus constructed through elements of visual and auditory perception. The simultaneous use of exclamation and the pre-positioning of adjectives mark the subjective perspective: („*iată*”, „*fără să-și facă cruce*”, „*slavă Domnului*”, „*pierdut arăta*”, „*frumos la chip*”), along with the use of deictics („*omul ăsta*”):

... *lată* că-l vedea și, în loc să se roage, ea se lăsa atrasă de vicleniile lumii și se uita la el, cum a ajuns în fața altarului... *Fără să-și facă cruce!... Pierdut arăta și omul ăsta, frumos* la chip ca un înger și îmbrăcat *ca un....ca un cerșetor* de la ușa bisericii. *Unde și-o fi lăsat căciula*, că-n mână n-o ține, și nici pe agățătoare, deasupra scaunelor, n-a pus-o. ... *Avea, slavă Domnului, voce fără gând ascuns, voce necăjită*, așa că femeia se simți iar la larg cu sufletul.

(Pârvulescu 2022, 41)

We can say that variable polyscopical perspective, that Lintvelt talks about, is an essential means of constructing a complex narrative text open to multiple reading possibilities. Through the transfer of perspective, a rupture, an ambiguization occurs, moving from one type of focalization to another, the narrator's point of view often being replaced by a character's perspective, the narrator adopting the character's voice and thoughts. Often, a diffuse, ambiguous perspective results; perspectives are sometimes convergent, divergent, or complementary; and there is frequent recourse to recollection, introspection, internal monologue, or confession.

3. Conclusions

In the novel *Viața începe vineri* [*Life Begins on Friday*], the interplay of narrative perspectives, their multiplication and overlap, helps shape the diegetic world by authentically portraying 19th-century Bucharest Romanian society. Like all of Ioana Pârvulescu's novels, this first one represents a valuable body of work that can be used to analyse how the technique of narrative perspective is employed in constructing a complex narrative text and authentic characters. The reader can observe that in the analysed novel, the use of perspective aims to reconstruct a past world, by describing 19th-century Romanian society, and to lend authenticity to the story. The techniques of ambiguisation and multiplication successfully keep the reader constantly connected with the text. The various facets of narrative perspective in this novel converge towards outlining an authentic, vibrant, suspenseful, and energetic diegetic world, of which the reader is an integral part, being actively involved in the creative act of narration.

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