

# A Study of Modality and Point of View in Some Selected Short Stories

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## Abstract

This study explores how point of view and modality systems are presented in fiction. It applies the Simpson's Model (1993) of Point of View to analyzing three different short stories. The short stories chosen for analysis are Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher", Ernest Hemingway's "The Last Good Country", and Gustave Flaubert's "A Simple Heart". The study displays how modality systems are very important and helpful to show the position of the narrator to the fictional world and to the minds of the characters in it. The researcher addresses the following issues: the narrative mode of the story, the dominant type of modal shading, the position of the narrator, whether inside or outside the story.

**Keywords:** modality; Narrator; Point of View; Simpson; Epistemic; Deontic; Boulomaic

## دراسة الصيغية ووجهة النظر في بعض القصص القصيرة المختارة

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## مستخلص

تستكشف هذه الدراسة كيفية تمثيل وجهة النظر وأنظمة الصيغية في الادب القصصي. يطبق الباحث إنموذج وجهة النظر لسمبسون (١٩٩٣) لتحليل ثلاث قصص قصيرة مختلفة. القصص المختارة للتحليل هي: "انهيار منزل آشور" للكاتب ادغار الآن بو و " آخر بلد جيد" للكاتب أرنتس همغواي و "قلب بسيط" للكاتب غوستاف فلوبيرت. تظهر الدراسة أهمية وفائدة أنظمة الصيغية في معرفة موقع الراوي من العالم الخيالي وعقول الشخصيات فيه. يتناول الباحث القضايا التالية: الوضع السردى للقصة، النوع المهيمن من التظليل المشروط، موقع الراوي فيما إذا كان داخل او خارج القصة.

تبدأ الدراسة بتعريف وجهة النظر من خلال عرض المنظورات المختلفة للرواة في القصة ومن بعد ذلك تعرف الصيغية بأنواعها الأربع. يتم بعد ذلك توضيح إنموذج سمبسون مع تظليلاته المختلفة، الإيجابية والسلبية والحيادية، قبل تطبيقه لتحليل القصص القصيرة الثلاث. تنتهي الدراسة بملاحظات ختامية توصل اليها الباحث خلال تحليله للقصص الثلاث ذاكرة الوضع السردى لكل قصة والتظليل الشرطي الذي يعتمد عليه الكاتب وكيف يمكن ان يسهم كل ذلك في فهم القصة وأسلوب الكاتب وتوصيف الشخصيات.

The study begins with defining Point of View showing the different perspectives of the narrators in fiction, and then it defines modality with the four different kinds of modality. The Simpson's Model of Point of View, with its different shadings, Positive, Negative, and Neutral, has been explained before applying it to analyze the three short stories. The study ends with concluding remarks the researcher arrives at during the analysis of the short stories stating the narrative mode of each story, the modal shading adopted by the writer and how could all these contribute to better understand the story, the style of the writer and the characterizations of characters.

## **1. Introduction**

Point of view is the vantage point, angle, or the perspective from which a story is related. For example, in the case of a first- person narrative, the events are both seen and told by the same entity, the I- narrator. While in the case of the third person narration, the story teller and the viewer are separate entities (Neary, 2014: 176). Actually, there are certain advantages and disadvantages in this case. First person narration helps the author to penetrate into the mind of his protagonist in a 'stream of consciousness manner' or otherwise. But neither the hero, the author, and the reader will be able to read the thoughts and feelings of the other characters. Usually, the third person narration is, both the omniscient and the limited omniscient, widespread and preferable by many novelists (Childs and Fowler, 2006: 182).

Following the work of Uspensky and Fowler (see Uspensky 1973; Fowler 1986 for further information about point of view), Paul Simpson (1993) has proposed a comprehensive model of point of view. Simpson points out that the Uspensky-Fowler framework of narrative point of view needs reworking. He applies the framework to some extracts and finds that this framework was inadequate to identify the different points of view and this almost leads to contradictions (Simpson, 1993:48-9).

A better way to identify the types of point of view in a narrative text is through modality since modality helps to show clearly the position of the narrator to the fictional world and to the minds of the characters in it. McIntyre (2006:29) indicates that modality is a pivotal concept to Simpson's model of point of view that he explains as referring to the attitude or opinion of the speaker about the proposition expressed by a sentence. Further he (Ibid: 30) adds that " Simpson's (1993) model of point of view, with its emphasis on the various types of modality within texts, provides a more precise method of distinguishing between types of narrators than is possible with Fowler's (1996) framework."

## **2. Modality**

One of the many functions of linguistic communication is to create and maintain social harmony between human beings. For this to happen, speakers and writers have at their disposal an inventory of linguistic expressions through which they can





convey complex emotional states and feelings to each other. Many of these features of discourse can be labeled under the heading of modality. Modality is a term used to denote those aspects of language which express a speaker or writer's attitude to a specific subject (Gavins, 2007:91). Crystal (2008: 308) defines modality as a term used in "grammatical and semantic analysis to refer to contrasts in mood signalled by the verb and associated categories. In English, modal contrasts are primarily expressed by a subclass of auxiliary verbs, e.g. *may, will, can.*" Moreover, modality can also be expressed lexically through the use of modal auxiliaries such as *want, can, etc.* and sentence adverbials like *hopefully, maybe, etc.* (Bussmann, 1996: 754).

With regard to the modality function of language, modality is identified as being concerned with both the speaker's attitudes and the current contexts being described. Simpson (1993:43) states that "*Modality* refers broadly to a speaker's attitude towards, or opinion about, the truth of a proposition expressed by a sentence. It also extends to their attitude towards the situation or event described by a sentence." He identifies and describes four modal systems of English; the *deontic* system, the *boulomaic* system, and the *epistemic* system with its subsystem of *perception* modality.

### **2.1. Deontic Modality**

Deontic modality is defined by Simpson (1993:43-44) as the modal system of duty which is concerned with a speaker's attitude to the degree of obligation attached to the performance of particular actions. It includes modal auxiliaries such as *in (You 'may', 'should', and 'must' leave).* These modal auxiliaries express degrees of *permission, obligation and requirement* respectively. Deontic modality may also be triggered by using a combination of certain adjectives and participles such as *'BE... TO' and 'BE... THAT'* as in *(you are permitted to leave) and (it is necessary that you leave).* The action, which is modalized in these examples, forms an unfulfilled future situation. As Palmer (2001:86) points out "deontic modality refers to events that are not actualized, events that have not taken place but are merely potential."

### **2.2. Boulomaic Modality**

This kind of modality is closely related to deontic modality. It expresses the desires, wants, and wishes of the speaker. Boulomaic modality can be constructed by using modal lexical verbs such as *'want', 'hope', 'wish', and 'desire'* to express a degree of boulomaic commitment to a particular proposition. Modal adverbs, such as *'hopefully', 'regrettably', and adjectival and participial constructions 'BE . . . THAT' or 'BE . . . TO' structure: for example, 'it is regrettable that she died so young', 'it was good to see you well', can also be used to trigger a boulomaic modal world (Gavins, 2007:94).*



### **2.3. Epistemic Modality**

Epistemic modality is also possible to create modal worlds in the minds of the participants in any discourse. Defined by Simpson (1993:44) as the kind of modality which is “concerned with the speaker’s confidence or lack of confidence in the truth of a proposition expressed”, epistemic modality is very important concerning the analysis of point of view in fiction. According to Palmer (1990:50) and (2001:84), epistemic modality is very easy to identify among the other kinds of modality. Marked by ‘may’ (possibility) and ‘must’ (necessity), speakers, as they interact, make judgments not assertion. It is concerned with the speaker's attitude and considered as the modal of propositions rather than of actions, states and events.

Following Simpson's (1993:44-46) classification, Gavins (2007:110) demonstrates that epistemic modals can be triggered by modal auxiliaries such as (may, must, could, might, should), modal lexical verbs such as (think, suppose, believe), modal adverbs such as (arguably, maybe, perhaps, possibly, probably, certainly, supposedly, allegedly) and certain syntactic structures such as in the familiar ‘BE...TO’ and ‘BE...THAT’ constructions (You are sure to be..., It is certain that..., It is doubtful that...).

### **2.4. Perception Modality**

Simpson (1993:46) treats perception modality as a subcategory of epistemic modality. It could be easily distinguished from the other form of epistemic modality depending on the degree of commitment to the truth of a proposition which is established through special reference to human perception, usually visual perception.

The use of perception modality is an indicator that human beings are able to understand the abstract concepts of knowledge in terms of their physical bodily experiences, thereby forming a remote modal world in their minds (Gavins, 2007:115). Gavins (2003:132) provides some instances of this type of modality found in such adjectival structures as (it is apparent that, it is clear that, and it is obvious that). It can also be formed by using adverbs such as (apparently, clearly, and obviously).

### **3. The Simpson's Model of Point of View**

In his development of Fowler's framework, Simpson (1993: 50-1) states that a distinction should be made between 'category A' narratives and 'category B' narratives. Category A narratives are those which are narrated in the first person by a participating character in the story. Category B narratives are, however, more complicated. They all possess a third person narrative whose narrators are not participating in the story. Category B can further be subdivided according to whether the events are related outside or inside the consciousness of a particular character. If the events are narrated from outside the mind of any character, then it is said to be category B in *Narratorial Mode*. When the third person narrator



moves into the mind of a character, then this character is said to be the Reflector of the narrative and this category is called category B in *Reflector Mode*.

According to Simpson(2004: 126-27), category A narratives and category B narratives can further yield three different shadings, positive, negative, and neutral depending on the kind of modality identified in the narrative. Nevertheless, it is 'possible for a literary text to shift from one pattern to another, even while a particular pattern dominates overall.' Positive shading is the kind of narrative in which deontic and boulomaic systems of modality are prominent and the narrator's desire (boulomaic modality), duty/ obligation (deontic modality), and opinion are foregrounded. This kind is also rich in evaluative adjectives and adverbs, generic sentences, and in *verba sentiendi* (words that denote feelings, thoughts and perceptions). Negative shading is the kind of narrative in which the epistemic modal system is foregrounded and words of estrangement are rich. However, the narrator (or character) is often bewildered and depends upon external signals and appearances to sustain a description. The uncertainty of the narrator/character about the events and other characters is often expressed through human perception structures (as if, it seems, it appeared to be, etc.). Neutral shading is the kind of narrative which is characterized by a complete absence of narratorial modality where the narrator withholds subjective evaluation and tells the story through categorical assertions (something is or is not) alone.

#### **4. Application of The Simpson's Model**

In this section, the Simpson's Model will be applied to analyze three different short stories. It will show the narrative mode of each story, the dominant type of modal shading, and the position of the narrator, whether inside or outside the story.

##### **4.1. Modality and Point of View in Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher"**

*"The Fall of the House of Usher"* (1839) is a short story written by the famous American writer Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849). The story begins with an unnamed narrator having been summoned by his boyhood friend, Roderick Usher, to visit him in his house. The letter says that Usher suffers from an acute bodily illness and that he is in hope that his only personal friend comes to cheer and comfort him.

Much to the narrator's surprise as he reaches the house, he notices a deep crack extending from the roof of the building making its way to be lost in the sullen water of the lake. Upon entering the house, the narrator finds his friend in a deplorable state and seems older than his usual age. Though he is his boyhood friend, the narrator does not know that Roderick has a twin sister, Madeline, who also suffers from unidentified illness. Roderick and Madeline are the only remaining members of the Usher family.

The narrator stays a couple of days in the mansion and one night Roderick comes to tell his friend that his sister has died. Roderick insists that his sister be entombed for two weeks in the family tomb located in the house before being permanently

buried. The narrator helps his friend in this process. One stormy night, the two have heard a cracking sound and a shriek. Roderick becomes increasingly hysterical, and eventually exclaims that these sounds are being made by his sister, who was in fact alive when she was entombed.

Meanwhile, the door of the room is blown wide open to reveal Madeline standing there. Suddenly, she falls heavily on her brother who immediately dies of horror. The narrator then escapes the house and as he is running he turns back to see that the House of Usher splits in two and the fragments sink into the lake.

The narrative mode of the story is a first person where the whole story is narrated by a participating character. The dominant type of modal shading is negative for the epistemic modality and perception modality are in evidence in this story. The table below shows epistemic and perception modality in numbers as they are used in Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher."

**Table 1. Types of Modality in Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher."**

Modality Elements	Epistemic	Perception	Total
Modal Adverbs	12	7	19
Modal Auxiliaries	48	---	48
Modal Lexical Verbs	23	44	67
Total	83	51	134

Passage 1

*Shaking off from my spirit what **must have been** (Epistemic—modal auxiliary) a dream, I **scanned** (Perception—modal lexical verb) more narrowly the real aspect of the building. Its principal feature **seemed** (Perception—modal lexical verb) to be that of an excessive antiquity. The discoloration of ages had been great. Minute fungi overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled web-work from the eaves. Yet all this was apart from any extraordinary dilapidation. No portion of the masonry had fallen; and there **appeared** (Perception—modal lexical verb) to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts, and the crumbling condition of the individual stones. In this there was much that **reminded** (Epistemic—modal lexical verb) me of the specious totality of old wood-work which has rotted for long years in some neglected vault, with no disturbance from the breath of the external air. Beyond this indication of extensive decay, however, the fabric gave little token of instability. **Perhaps** (Epistemic—modal adverb) the eye of a scrutinizing observer **might have** (Epistemic—modal auxiliary) discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn. P.6*

The excerpt above displays clearly the kinds of epistemic and perception modality which highlight the bewilderment and uncertainty of the narrator as he reaches the house of Usher. The description of the house relies entirely on the narrator's interpretation of external signals (I **scanned** more narrowly the real aspect of the building...its principal feature **seemed**.... There **appeared** to be...). The narrator's





alienation is established through his use of words of estrangement such (**seemed, appeared, perhaps**). Through what he sees, the narrator endeavors to make sense of the world around him (what **must have been a dream... might have discovered...**). These two epistemic modal auxiliaries are supplemented by perception visual sense, 'I **scanned...**' and 'the **eye** of a scrutinizing observer' respectively.

As stated earlier, epistemic modality is very important concerning the analysis of point of view in fiction. The mind of the narrator might be greatly affected by two things, the house of Usher itself and later by the strange inhabitants of the house, Roderick Usher and his sister Madeline.

Passage 2

*It was this deficiency, I **considered** (Epistemic—modal lexical verb) , while running over in thought the perfect keeping of the character of the premises with the accredited character of the people, and while **speculating** (Epistemic—modal lexical verb) upon the possible influence which the one, in the long lapse of centuries, **might have exercised**(Epistemic—modal auxiliary) upon the other—it was this deficiency, **perhaps** (Epistemic—modal adverb), of collateral issue, and the consequent undeviating transmission, from sire to son, of the patrimony with the name, which had, at length, so identified the two as to merge the original title of the estate in the quaint and equivocal appellation of the “House of Usher”—an appellation which **seemed** (Perception—modal lexical verb) to include, in the minds of the peasantry who used it, both the family and the family mansion. P.5*

The use of epistemic and perception modality in the aforementioned excerpt suggests clearly the personal interpretation of the narrator concerning the house of Usher both as a building and as a family name. There is almost an interconnectedness between the mind of the narrator and the physical world around him, between the internal psychological state of the narrator and the external physical appearance of the house. It is within the confines of the consciousness of the narrator that in his description of the house of Usher a careful reader can draw similarities. This picture will later be completed when the narrator describes the collapse of the house of Usher.

The uncertainty of the narrator is also felt all along the story as the modal lexical verb 'KNOW' is repeatedly used by the narrator with negative polarity. The use of negation with the verb 'know' limits the narrator's knowledge of the things around him:

*I **know** not how it was... p.3  
yet I really **knew** little of my friend. P.4  
I **know** not how... p.6  
I shuddered **knowing** not why... p.12  
I **know** not why... p.19  
I **knew** not whence. P.19  
yet I **knew** that he was not asleep... p.23*



As mentioned earlier epistemic modality is concerned with the speaker's confidence or lack of confidence in the truth of a proposition expressed. Hence, the constant use of epistemic and perception modality shows the narrator's perplexity and confusion. At varying degrees in the story, the narrator tries to make sense of the world around him through both the visual and hearing perception. The epistemic modal adverb '**perhaps**' and the perception modal adverb '**apparently**' are repeated 8 and 5 times respectively. The '**as if**' comparator, which frequently supplements the perception system, also appears 9 times in this story. This use of comparator 'as if' also contributes to the total mode of the story, that is, of the uncertainty, alienation, and lack of confidence of the narrator towards characters and the world around him.

Narrators of Poe's stories are mostly described as being unreliable and this is clearly shown in the linguistic expressions they use. They are either mentally ill, killers, liars, etc. Sometimes what they say is contradicted with what they do. Uncertainty, contradiction, hesitation, and alienation are always present in their speech. The narrator of this story is no exception. He shows all the main characteristics of the unreliable narrators of Poe's short stories, a stylistic device which is highly preferable by Edgar Allan Poe.

#### **4.2. Modality and Point of View in Hemingway's "The Last Good Country"**

"*The Last Good Country*" is a short story, written by Ernest Hemingway (1899-1960), which appears in a volume (1972) entitled 'The Nick Adams stories'. Nick Adams is a fictional character whom Hemingway writes about featuring his life from boyhood to parenthood.

Young Nick Adams, who seems in trouble with the law, is hiding somewhere in the forest. His little sister, Littless, joins to tell him that two game wardens are after him and that they are waiting in their house for him to show up. Nick leads Littless deep into the far reaches of the woods. He show his sister his old place where he has been camping in the past.

Nick decides to come back and sneak into his house to take some supplies before he runs away. Littless offers help by going home and bring the supplies herself. Littless begs Nick to take her with him. She tells him that she will leave a note for their mother saying that she will go with her brother and that Nick will take good care of her. Nick agrees. Afterwards, the journey in the woods begins and the story closes with open ending like many of Hemingway's short stories leaving the readers with speculations of what happens next.

The narrative mode of the story is a third person in Reflector mode where the narrator tells the story from the perspective of one participating character who is situated inside the story. The story is positively shaded in which deontic and boulomaic systems of modality are foregrounded and the narrator's desires, wishes, and opinions are used more frequently. The story is also rich in evaluative

adjectives and adverbs, and in *verba sentiendi* (words denoting feelings, thoughts and perceptions). Table 2 displays the kinds of deontic and boulomaic modality, evaluative adjectives, and evaluative adverbs in numbers used in Hemingway's "The Last Good Country."

**Table 2. Modality and evaluative adjectives and adverbs in Hemingway's "The Last Good Country"**

Modality Elements	Deontic	Boulomaic	Evaluative Adjectives	Evaluative Adverbs	Total
Modal Adverbs	-----	2	-----	-----	2
Modal Auxiliaries	34	-----	-----	-----	34
Modal Lexical Verbs	-----	83	-----	-----	83
Modal Adjectives	-----		120	-----	120
Modal Adverbs	-----	-----	-----	56	56
Total	34	85	120	56	295

Passage 1

"NICKIE," HIS SISTER SAID TO HIM. "**LI**Sten to me, Nickie."

"I don't **want** to **hear** it."

He was **watching** the bottom of the spring where the sand rose in small spurts with the bubbling water. There was a tin cup on a forked stick that was stuck in the gravel by the spring and Nick Adams **looked** at it and at the water rising and then flowing clear in its gravel bed beside the road. He could **see** both ways on the road and he **looked up** the hill and then down to the dock and the lake, the wooded point across the bay and the open lake beyond where there were white caps running. P.407

In the above excerpt, Nick serves as a deictic center in the narrative and the spatial perspective derives from his viewing position. Nick's visual perspective is represented by the use of *verba sentiendi* (**watching, looked at, see, and looked up**). As the excerpt above unfolds, this gives him a good viewing position for the coming intruders to his direction. He was watching as his sister has come to warn him of the two game wardens who are after him.

Deontic modal auxiliaries, both in positive and negative polarity, are used to express the degree of duty ranging from permission, through commitment, to requirement. Nick is held responsible for the safety of his little sister during their journey in the forest. He is obliged to take good care of his sister. Both Little and Nick express this sense of security:

Passage 2

I can leave a note for our mother and say I went with you and **you'll take good care** of me p.409 ... **you'd take good care** of me p.409... "Wait till I climb over and **I'll help** you," Nick said p.414... **We'll take good care** of each other and have fun p.415... **I must take good care** of her and keep her happy and get her back safely p.432 ... "**I ought to** get you home." P.439



The use of modal auxiliaries indicates Nick's commitment and obligation to keep his sister safe all along the journey and get her back safe home. Actually, Nick's self-assurance and confidence in taking control of the situations are felt all along the story through the use of these modal auxiliaries that express duty.

Nick and Littleless always want to be together. This strong desire is felt all through, and it indeed strengthens the relationship between Nick and his sister. Boulomaic modality is triggered through modal lexical verbs (**want, wish, hope, need**) to show this desire. These verbs are used to convey the inner wishes of both Nick and Littleless to keep company and stay together. For instance, Littleless has wanted for long to cut her hair and be like a boy just like her brother, "If there's two of us they'd look harder. A boy and a girl show up." "I'd go like a boy," she said. "I always **wanted** to be a boy anyway. They couldn't tell anything about me if my hair was cut." P.408. The use of the modal lexical verb '**wanted**' preceded by the adverb '**always**', which means very frequently, indicates the inner wish of Littleless to be with Nick all the time. Littleless's innocence and naivety make her wish to marry her brother and this is expressed by a strong desire. She loves her brother Nick too much to the extent that she wishes to marry him "I'm going to get married to you anyway. I **want** to be your common-law wife. I read about it in the paper." P.434

The wish of being together is expressed differently all along the story which highlights the extent to which Littleless is very close to her brother Nick. Below are some examples:

*"When you don't **want** me I'll go straight home. P.408*

*"Littleless **wants** to go with me." P.411*

*He put his arm around his sister. "You sure you **want** to go?" p.413*

*"No. I don't **want** you to get scratched." P.414*

*"Please don't say that, Nickie. I'll go back or I'll stay just as you **want**. P.415*

*"I **want** to be useful and a good partner." P.415*

*"You don't **need** to be," Nick told her. P.427*

*"Gee, I **hope** I won't start to be a girl while we're on the trip." P.431*

*"I don't **need** it, Nickie, if we're short." P.432*

*He **wished** he could draw her face and he watched the way her long lashes lay on her cheeks. P.433*

*"I'd like to go to Mr. John's store and get everything we **need**." P.435*

*"I **hope** we'll get smart," his sister said. "Tell him to go away, Nickie." P.437*

*"They'd make good bait but we don't **need** bait now," he said. "Our trout are all in the stream and we'll take them when we **need** them." P.437*

Besides, this kind of narrative is rich in evaluative adjectives and adverbs. Hemingway's "The Last Good Country" is packed with evaluative adjectives and adverbs which are sometimes directly asserted and at other times supplemented with verba sentiendi which render the description of the narrative more palpable.





Evaluative adjectives that received a higher rank are (**good 66, bad 23, awful 9, wonderful 9, lovely 6, quiet 4, and careful 3**). On the other hand, evaluative adverbs that express attitude and judgment are also used more frequently like (**really 19, pretty 13, awfully 6, carefully 6, morally 6, quietly 3, and gently 3**).

As the title of the story indicates, "The Last **Good** Country", it is not surprising to find that the evaluative adjective '**good**' receives the highest frequency. It is more often used with categorical assertion (it is good, you are good...) to indicate a clear-cut opinion, judgment, and attitude, and at other times, it is used with other evaluative adverbs to give the word more emphasis (it smells awfully good... the trout is pretty good).

Given that this is the first time Littless gets into the forest, she expresses her opinion of the beautiful wild nature. She is feeling good, wonderful, and awful about herself and the place. Littless is greatly fascinated by the beautiful scenes of the nature. While categorical assertions give external description, the use of verba sentiendi (feel, smell) gives personal judgment and reveals the mind of the character:

Passage 3

*I feel **wonderful**. Nickie, is it always this nice when you run away from home?" p.415... "It's **wonderful** walking. I thought behind our house was **wonderful**. But this is better. p.417 ... But it makes me feel **wonderful**. p.422 ... The trout was **wonderful** and the bacon, too. p. 432 ... "Doesn't that one smell **wonderful**? I'll go to the spring and wash and come and help." p. 434 ... Isn't it **wonderful** that it's good? p. 444*

Littless wishes to exercise a good impression on her brother Nick. Her mind is preoccupied with the idea of doing good to gain the approval of her brother. She fears that she is morally corrupted just because she tastes the whiskey:

Passage 4

*"Well, I guess I was ruined **morally** last night when I stole the whiskey. Do you think you can be ruined **morally** by just one thing like that?"  
"No. Anyway the bottle was open."  
"Yes. But I took the empty pint bottle and the quart bottle with the whiskey in it out to the kitchen and I poured the pint bottle full and some spilled on my hand and I licked it off and I thought that probably ruined me **morally**."  
"How'd it taste?"  
"Awfully strong and funny and a little sick-making."  
"That wouldn't ruin you **morally**."  
"Well, I'm glad because if I was ruined **morally** how could I exercise a good influence on you?"  
p.430 ... Then I thought if I was ruined **morally** I might as well be useful." P.431*

The evaluative adverb '**morally**' appears in her speech 5 times as she is trying to justify her fault to her brother, and then she resolves that though might be morally ruined, she could be useful.

### 4.3. Modality and Point of View in Flaubert's "A Simple Heart"

"A Simple Heart" (1877) is a short story written by the French writer Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880). The story is about a servant girl named Felicite. After her only love Theodore marries a rich old woman to avoid recruitment in the army, Felicite leaves the farm where she works and heads for Pont L'Eveque, where she picks up work in a widow's house as a servant. She is very loyal, and shows affections to the two children, Paul and Virginia, of her mistress, Madame Aubain. She gives love to others and though many take advantage of her, yet she is unaffected.

Felicite spends her all life unmarried, no children, and no property, and is always dependent on her mistress to keep her. Though she is uneducated, she is religious and faithful. Much to her suffering, Felicite learns that her nephew, Victor, died of yellow fever. Soon after the death of Victor, Virginia also dies.

Years pass similar to each other. Madame Aubain gives a parrot to Felicite which is named Lulu. Felicite begins to lose hearing but could only hear the voice of her parrot. One cold evening in winter, she finds her pet dead in his cell. This is also followed by the death of Madame Aubain. Meanwhile, Felicite's health deteriorates and as she is dying, she thinks that she sees Lulu hovering above her head as the Holy Ghost.

The narrative mode of the story is a third person in narratorial mode where the whole story is narrated by a nonparticipating character who is situated outside the story. The dominant type of modal shading is neutral. What distinguishes this shading is the absence or the little use of modalities. The opening paragraph of the story is a best example of this type of point of view with neutral shading:

#### Passage 1

*For fifty years the ladies of Pont-l'Évêque envied Madame Aubain her servant Felicite. For a hundred francs a year she cooked, and cleaned, sewed, washed, ironed, could harness a horse, fatten up poultry, churn butter; and she remained loyal to her mistress who, all the same, was not an agreeable person. P.1*

In the excerpt above, the narrator is straightforward in his description of the servant Felicite. From a floating position, the narrator tells his story. In this passage, there is a complete absence of modalities which means that the narrator depends only on physical appearance in his recounting of the events. This direct representation of characters and description of events is mostly adopted all along the story.

In this kind of narrative, the narrator withholds subjective evaluation and tells the story through categorical assertion. The narrator does not penetrate into the minds of the characters and does not present qualified opinions and judgements on the



events and other characters. In his description of Felicite, the narrator concentrates only on her physical appearance with no attempt at psychological development:

Passage 2

*All through the year she carried a cotton handkerchief fixed at her back by a pin, a bonnet that hid her hair, grey stockings, a red skirt, and over her bodice an apron with a bib like a hospital nurse.*

*Her face was thin and her voice sharp. At twenty-five years of age you would have guessed her to be forty. After her fiftieth year she showed no traces of any age at all; and, always silent, upright in carriage, and measured in gesture, she seemed a woman made of wood, functioning automatically. P.2*

Furthermore, at the most emotional moments in the story and specifically when Victor, Felicite's beloved nephew, dies, it would be expected that the narrator would be involved in showing the state of mind of the character he is speaking about. Rather, the narrator uses the most impersonal style with no modalized language used:

Passage 3

*Much later, from Victor's captain himself, she learnt the circumstances of his death. He had been bled too much at the hospital for yellow fever. Four doctors were looking after him at once.*

*He died immediately, and the chief had said:*

*'Tut, tut, that's another one!' p.13*

The same thing happens when Virginia, Madame Aubain's daughter, dies. No emotional touches are felt in the description. Like any other observers, the narrator here only provides external description of Felicite and does not tell the readers what is going on in her mind:

Passage 4

*For two nights Felicite did not leave the dead girl. She repeated the same prayers, threw holy water on the sheets, came back and sat down, and looked at her. At the end of the first watch she noticed that the face had got yellow, the lips blue, the nose pinched, the eyes sunk. She kissed them several times, and would not have felt an immense astonishment if Virginia had reopened them: for souls like hers the supernatural is quite simple. She dressed her, wrapped her in her shroud, lifted her into her coffin, placed a wreath on her, spread out her hair. P.14*

It is noted that narratives of this kind correspond to journalistic style in that factuality and objectivity are present to characterize characters and to describe events.

## 5. Conclusions

This study has primarily been concerned with analyzing three different short stories; Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher", Hemingway's "The Last Good



Country", and Flaubert's "A Simple Heart". It reveals that the Simpson's Model of Point of View and Modality is very useful in detecting the style of the writers and in how the minds of the characters work. The viewing position of the narrator to the events and the other characters, with its different shadings and the modality systems used, can help very much in shaping characters. Table 3. summarizes the narrative mode in the three short stories, the dominant type of modal shading, and the modality systems used.

**Table 3. Point of View, Shading, and Modality in the three stories**

Story		Point of View	Shading	Modality
1	Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher"	First Person Narration 'I'	Negative	Epistemic and Perception
2	Hemingway's "The Last Good Country"	Third Person Narration in Reflector Mode	Positive	Deontic and Boulomaic
3	Flaubert's "A Simple Heart"	Third Person Narration in Narratorial Mode	Neutral	(Categorical assertions) Absence or little use of modalities

In Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher", epistemic and perception modality receive the higher rank than the other types. The repeated use of epistemic and perception modalities highlights the uncertainty and bewilderment of the narrator. The narrator lives in a world of doubt to the characters and to the world around him and this is proved by the words of estrangements the narrator uses.

Epistemic modality is identified by Simpson (1993:44) as being concerned with the speaker's confidence or lack of confidence. The study proves the narrator's lack of confidence since it is negatively shaded. This is expressed by the frequent use of the kinds of epistemic modality that denote the narrator's lack of confidence. Moreover, Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" could be read differently. Either the author believes in gothic stories with their characteristics of horror atmosphere such as the resurrection of the dead, the locked rooms, the haunted mansions, etc. Or it is a story of a narrator who suffers from a mental illness and that all these events of horrors are mere figments of his own imagination. In either case, the type of narration, the first person narrator, enables the author to address the implied reader and the real reader directly, and in many instances involves the readers in the story. The preponderant use of epistemic modality with the use of words of estrangement helps to create curiosity and suspense in the readers, a technique that is preferable in gothic stories. It further highlights the uncertainty, doubt, and alienation of the narrator to the events and the characters around him.

In Hemingway's "The Last Good Country", deontic modality which shows the speaker's attitude to the degree of obligations, and boulomaic modality denoting the wishes and desires of the speakers, are foregrounded. The story is positively



shaded and the criteria for the recognition of such a kind of narrative would include evaluative adjectives and adverbs.

The narrator of the story, Nick Adam, uses deontic modality that indicates his obligation and duty to keep his sister, Littless, safe and secure. This use also highlights the strong relationship between the brother and his sister. The type of narration, the Reflector Mode, enables the reader to realize the feelings and thoughts of other characters through the perspective of Nick. The readers only know what Nick Adams thinks and feels, and know of the other characters' feelings and thoughts when the narrator inserts comments and sometimes from the narrator's inferences. Boulomaic modality is abundantly used in this story. With the use of verbs that indicate wants, wishes, hopes, Nick and his sister express their strong desire to be together "She [Littless] and Nick loved each other and they did not love the others. They always thought of everyone else in the family as the others. P.1. All along the story they behave this way, that is, excluding themselves from the others and building their own world. On the other hand, evaluative adjectives and adverbs are also used to serve this end. Most of the adjectives and adverbs used in their speech with one another carry positive meaning.

The study proves that the narrative mode of Flaubert's "A Simple Heart" is a third person in Narratorial Mode with neutral shading. This neutral shading is characterized by the absence or the little use of modality systems. Actually, few writers use this type of narration, that is why neutrally shaded stories are very rare. In this story, the narrator, from outside the fictional world, withholds subjective evaluations of the characters' feelings and describes the events by using categorical assertions. The narrator refuses any attempts to refer to the psychological developments of the characters' minds.

Flaubert is a master of realism. Ezra Pound (1960:74) defines 'Flaubertian realism' as "an attempt to set down things as they are, to find the word that corresponds to the thing, the statement that portrays, and presents, instead of making a comment, however brilliant, or an epigram." This, in fact, justifies the absence or the little use of modality in "A Simple Heart."

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