

In penal colony discussion on narration

[Experience](#), [Human Nature](#)



The narration of the story is in third person through the explorer. The explorer's thoughts and emotions are known by the narrator but the other characters' minds cannot be read. Even though the narration is done through the explorer, there are many instances where we do not know what the explorer is thinking, therefore this can be classified as limited omniscient, moreover, the narrator in the story does not show any emotional attachment to the events around him or comment on the legality of what is taking place rather he simply describes the proceedings in a very monotonous way.

For example, when the explorer finds out that the condemned man will be put to death by a machine without any chance of defending himself or having his innocence or guilt proven, the narrator shows no reaction to this unjust act. He continues to understate situations which would normally cause some type of reaction. Perhaps this is done intentionally so as to not influence the reader and let the reader formulate their own thoughts.

But, by being a passive bystander as the events unfold, one does feel a sense of helplessness and even some guilt as this line shows: " The explorer wanted to intervene and possibly bring the whole thing to a standstill; this was no torture such as the officer wished to achieve, this was outright murder. " (p. 73). This event, where the officer dies, is called a " murder" as the original purpose of the machine, to execute over twelve hours is not realized. The explorer is impressed by the officer's devotion to the machine but the lack of action makes the narrator untrustworthy.