

LÖSUNGEN: Narrative Techniques and Perspectives in “The Child”

1. 1 / D
2 / A
3 / B
4 / C

2. The third-person-limited narrator can simply describe and state the incidents of the short story from outside (as he does in passage D) but he can also assume Karen’s perspective (see passage A). The use of free indirect style presents Karen’s state of mind more directly and thus allows the reader to feel Karen’s emotions more intensively (as in passage B). The Black man’s abrupt direct speech interrupts Karen’s thoughts and thus puts her, as well as the reader, back into ‘reality’ (passage C).

The overall effect of this narrative arrangement is that it keeps the tension in a story which – at the surface – is just about a girl taking the subway. The change of narrative perspectives and techniques enables Lester to unfold Karen’s story and dreams while she is taking the subway. On top of that, this arrangement allows Lester to emphasize Karen’s as well as the drunk man’s black identity, which becomes also obvious in their use of language. He includes Black English¹ in the passages when he is making use of free indirect speech and abrupt direct speech. As a contrast, Standard English is used whenever the story is told by the third-person-limited narrator.

¹ These aspects are typical of *Black English*: use of infinitive instead of correct verb form (“you think I be working two jobs”, l.24), double negation (“ain’t nothing he can do”, l.27) as well as informal expressions like ‘ain’t’ for ‘isn’t’ (“ain’t nothing he can do”, l.27).