THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO

NARRATIVE

Edited by David Herman

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The Cambridge Companion to Narrative provides a unique and valuable overview of current approaches to narrative study. An international team of experts explores ideas of storytelling and methods of narrative analysis as they have emerged across diverse traditions of inquiry and in connection with a variety of media, from film and television, to storytelling in the "real-life" contexts of face-to-face interaction, to literary fiction. Each chapter presents a survey of scholarly approaches to topics such as character, dialogue, genre, or language, shows how those approaches can be brought to bear on a relatively well-known illustrative example, and indicates directions for further research. Featuring a chapter reviewing definitions of narrative, a glossary of key terms, and a comprehensive index, this is an essential resource both for students and for specialists in the many fields concerned with narrative, including language and literature, composition and rhetoric, creative writing, jurisprudence, communication and media studies, and the social sciences.

DAVID HERMAN is Professor of English at Ohio State University. He is the author, editor, or co-editor of a number of books on narrative, including *Universal Grammar and Narrative Form* (1995), *Narratologies* (1999), *Story Logic* (2002), *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences* (2003), and the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* (2005, co-edited with Manfred Jahn and Marie-Laure Ryan).

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I owe all the contributors a debt of gratitude for their dedication and patience, and especially for their shared commitment to making this *Companion* a resource for narrative scholars at all levels. The volume aims to be a helpful tool for experts in the field no less than for readers using the book to explore approaches to narrative inquiry for the first time. If the book has met that goal, then this is due to the contributors' deep knowledge of narrative – a knowledge that has enabled them to write about complex ideas in an accessible manner but without in any way "dumbing down" the concepts in question. I should also note how gratifying it has been to work with an international team of experts in the field. With contributors from Belgium, Canada, Finland, Germany, the U.K., and the U.S., the volume itself demonstrates how scholarly interest in narrative cuts across national borders as well as academic disciplines.

Work on this volume began while I was in Raleigh, North Carolina, and was completed in Plain City, Ohio. I am grateful to faculty and students both at North Carolina State University and at Ohio State University for

their support and collegiality during this time of transition. My particular thanks go to Barbara Baines, Aman Garcha, Jared Gardner, Esther Gottlieb, Teemu Ikonen, Steve Kern, Kim Kovarik, Valerie Lee, Leila May, Brian McHale, Betty Menaghan, Debra Moddelmog, Don Palmer, Jim Phelan, Laura Severin, Raeanne Woodman, Mary Helen Thuente, Walt Wolfram, and Chris Zacher. I am grateful, too, to have had the opportunity to exchange ideas with many colleagues at workshops and conferences held in recent months. Especially helpful were conversations during meetings at the University of California-Santa Barbara, the University of Louisville, MIT, the Interdisciplinary Centre for Narratology at the University of Hamburg, the University of Helsinki, the University of Connecticut-Storrs, and Georgetown University.

Most of all I thank the family members – in Denver, Colorado; Knoxville, Tennessee; Sanibel Island, Florida; and Johannesburg, South Africa – who have been so supportive, in so many ways, during the time I worked on this volume. My most special thanks go, as always, to Susan Moss, lovely owner of The Golden Beet, and to Tinker, farm cat extraordinaire.

I
Preliminaries

1

DAVID HERMAN

Introduction

In this introduction I seek to provide context for the chapters that follow by addressing questions that many readers of this volume are likely to have – particularly readers coming to the field of narrative studies for the first time. These questions include: Why a *Companion to Narrative*? What is narrative (what are its identifying traits and key functions)? What are some of the major trends in recent scholarship on narrative? What are the distinctive features of this book, and some strategies for using it? My attempt to address the second of these questions (what is narrative?) is meant to be read in tandem with chapter 2, where Marie-Laure Ryan reviews recent suggestions about what constitutes a narrative and proposes her own definition.[1] Conversely, this introduction should afford a sense of the broader research tradition from which attempts to define narrative have emerged.

The working definition that I myself will be using in this introduction, and that I spell out in greater detail below, runs as follows. Rather than focusing on general, abstract situations or trends, stories are accounts of what happened to particular people[2] – and of what it was like for them to experience what happened – in particular circumstances and with specific consequences. Narrative, in other words, is a basic human strategy for coming to terms with time, process, and change – a strategy that contrasts with, but is in no way inferior to, "scientific" modes of explanation that characterize phenomena as instances of general covering laws. Science explains how in general water freezes when (all other things being equal) its temperature reaches zero degrees centigrade; but it takes a story to convey what it was like to lose one's footing on slippery ice one late afternoon in December 2004, under a steel-grey sky.

Yet just as it is possible to construct a narrative about the development of science, to tell a story about who made what discoveries and under what circumstances, it is possible to use the tools of science – definition, analysis, classification, comparison, etc. – to work toward a principled account of what makes a text, discourse, film, or other artifact a narrative. Such an

account should help clarify what distinguishes a narrative from an exchange of greetings, a recipe for salad dressing, or a railway timetable. Collectively, the chapters in this book demonstrate how far theorists of narrative, sometimes working in quite different disciplinary traditions, have come in developing a common framework for narrative study. An overarching goal of the book is to enable (and encourage) readers to build on the contributors' work, so that others can participate in the process of narrative inquiry and help create further productive synergies among the many fields concerned with stories.

Why a *Companion to Narrative*?

In keeping with the overall purpose of the Cambridge Companion series, this book seeks to provide an accessible introduction to key ideas about narrative and an overview of major approaches to narrative inquiry. Further, like other Companions, the volume offers a variety of viewpoints on the field rather than an outline or summarization by a single commentator. By registering multiple perspectives on the study of stories, the book not only furnishes a synoptic account of this area of investigation but also constitutes in its own right a unique contribution to the scholarship on narrative. Hence, although it is like other Cambridge Companions targeted at student readers who need a reliable, comprehensive guide – a point of entrance into a complex field of study, as well as a basis for further research – the volume also aims to be a helpful tool for more advanced scholars needing a convenient, affordable, and up-to-date treatment of foundational terms, concepts, and approaches.

Thus far, I have focused on the objectives and design principles of this Companion. But what is the impetus for its publication, the reason for its appearance at *this* moment? The past several decades have in fact witnessed an explosion of interest in narrative, with this multifaceted object of inquiry becoming a central concern in a wide range of disciplines and research contexts. In his contribution to a volume titled *The Travelling Concept of Narrative*, Matti Hyvärinen traces the extent of this diffusion or spread of narrative across disciplinary boundaries, suggesting that "the concept of narrative has become such a contested concept over the last thirty years in response to what is often called the 'narrative turn' in social sciences . . . The concept has successfully travelled to psychology, education, social sciences, political thought and policy analysis, health research, law, theology and cognitive science."[3] The "narrative turn," to use the term that Hyvärinen adopts from Martin Kreiswirth,[4] has also shaped humanistic fields in recent decades, thanks in part to the development of structuralist theories of narrative in France in the mid to late 1960s.

Thus, around the same time that William Labov and Joshua Waletzky developed their model for the analysis of personal experience narratives told in face-to-face interaction, thereby establishing a key precedent for scholars of narrative working in the fields mentioned by Hyvärinen, the literary scholar Tzvetan Todorov coined the term "la narratologie" (= "narratology") to designate what he and other structuralist theorists of story (e.g., Roland Barthes, Claude Bremond, Gérard Genette, and A. J. Greimas) conceived of as a science of narrative modeled after the "pilot-science" of Ferdinand de Saussure's structural linguistics.[5] As I discuss in greater detail below, the structuralists drew not only on Saussure's ideas but also on the work of Russian Formalist literary theorists, who studied prose narratives of all sorts, from Tolstoi's historically panoramic novels to tightly plotted detective novels to (Russian) fairy tales. This broad investigative focus helped initiate the narrative turn, uncoupling theories of *narrative* from theories of the *novel*, and shifting scholarly attention from a particular genre of literary writing to all discourse (or, in an even wider interpretation, all semiotic activities) that can be construed as narratively organized. That same shift helps explain why the present volume is titled *A Companion to Narrative* rather than *A Companion to the Novel* – even though Part II of the volume provides a "starter-kit" of terms, concepts, and methods for studying narrative fiction in particular, a major form of storytelling highly developed in the world's literatures.

Taking their cue from the Formalists, and noting that stories can be presented in a wide variety of textual formats, media, and genres, structuralists such as Barthes argued explicitly for a cross-disciplinary approach to the analysis of narrative – an approach in which stories can be viewed as supporting many cognitive and communicative activities, from spontaneous conversations and courtroom testimony to visual art, dance, and mythic and literary traditions.[6] Only after the heyday of structuralism, however, did their call for an interdisciplinary approach to narrative begin to be answered. Although more needs to be done to promote genuine dialogue and exchange among story analysts working in different fields, it is undeniable that the past decade in particular has seen an exponential growth of cross-disciplinary research and teaching activity centering on narrative.[7] International in scope, this activity has also spawned book series and journals in which scholarship on narrative figures importantly.[8] Other manifestations of the way narrative cuts across disciplinary boundaries include initiatives such as the Centre for Interdisciplinary Narratology at the University of Hamburg (www.icn.uni-hamburg.de); the Centre for Narrative Research at the University of East London (www.uel.ac.uk/cnr/); Columbia University's Program in Narrative Medicine (www.narrativemedicine.org/), which aims "to fortify medicine

with ways of knowing about singular persons available through a study of humanities, especially literary studies and creative writing"; and Project Narrative at Ohio State University (http://projectnarrative.osu.edu), which brings together folklorists, scholars of language and literature, theorists of storytelling in film, digital media, and comics and graphic novels, and researchers in other fields concerned with narrative. By the same token, over the past decade alone many conferences and symposia have been dedicated to exploring the potential of narrative to bridge disciplines, in ways that may in turn throw new light on narrative itself.[9] The present volume, with contributions by authors in fields that include literature, linguistics, computer science, and film and television studies, can be seen as an outgrowth of this same trend toward interdisciplinarity in narrative research. Collectively, the chapters reveal complex relationships between literary fiction and other kinds of storytelling, and between the analytic frameworks that have grown up around these different modes of narrative practice.

I turn now from the factors contributing to this volume's publication and cross-disciplinary profile to its focal concern: namely, narrative itself.

What is narrative (what are its identifying traits and key functions)?

Consider the following two texts, both of them concerned with human emotions. The first is an excerpt from an encyclopedia article on the topic; the second is a transcription of part of a tape-recorded interview with Mary, a 41-year-old African American female from Texana, North Carolina, who in the transcribed excerpt refers to the fear that she and her childhood friend experienced as a result of being pursued menacingly by a large, glowing, orange ball that Mary characterizes earlier in the interview as "[a] UFO or the devil."[10]

Text 1:
An emotion is a psychological state or process that functions in the management of goals. It is typically elicited by evaluating an event as relevant to a goal; it is positive when the goal is advanced, negative when the goal is impeded. The core of an emotion is readiness to act in a certain way . . . ; it is an urgency, or prioritization, of some goals and plans rather than others; also they prioritize certain kinds of social interaction, prompting, for instance, cooperation, or conflict.[11]

Text 2:
(1) But then . . for some reason I feel some heat or somethin other
(2) and I look back
(3) me and Renee did at the same time
(4) and it's right behind us.

(5) We like . . we were scared and . .
(6) "Aaahhh!" you know
(7) at the same time.
(8) So we take off runnin as fast as we can.
(9) And we still lookin back
(10) and every time we look back it's with us.
(11) It's just a-bouncin behind us
(12) it's NOT touchin the ground.
(13) It's bouncin in the air.
(14) It's like this . . behind us
(15) as we run.
(16) We run all the way to her grandmother's
(17) and we open the door
(18) and we just fall out in the floor,
(19) and we're cryin and we screamin
(20) and we just can't BREATHE.
(21) We that scared.[12]

Text 1 exemplifies what Jerome Bruner calls "paradigmatic" or logico-deductive reasoning.[13] The author uses definitions to establish categories in terms of which (a) emotions can be distinguished from other kinds of phenomena (goals, events, evaluations, etc.), and (b) different kinds of emotions can be distinguished from one another. The author also identifies a core feature (readiness to act) that can be assumed to cut across all types of emotion, and to be constitutive of emotion in a way that other features, more peripheral, do not. In turn, the text links this core feature to a process of prioritization that grounds emotion in contexts of social interaction.

By contrast, text 2 exemplifies what Bruner characterizes as "narrative" reasoning. In this text, too, emotion figures importantly. But rather than defining and sub-categorizing emotions, and explicitly associating them with aspects of social interaction, Mary draws tacitly on emotion terms and categories to highlight the salience of the narrated events for both Renee and herself at the time of their occurrence – and their continuing emotional impact in the present, for that matter. Mary uses terms like *scared* (lines 5 and 21), reports behaviors conventionally associated with extreme fear (screaming, running, feeling unable to breathe), and makes skillful use of the evaluative device that Labov called "expressive phonology,"[14] which can include changes in pitch, loudness, and rhythm, as well as the emphatic lengthening of vowels or whole words (see lines 12 and 20). More than just reflecting or encapsulating pre-existing emotions, the text *constructs* Mary (and Renee) as an accountably frightened experiencer of the events reported. Mary's story provides an account of what happened by creating a nexus

or link between the experiencing self and the world experienced; it builds causal-chronological connections among what Mary saw that night, her and Renee's emotional responses to the apparition, and the verbal and nonverbal actions associated with those responses. Text 1 abstracts from any particular emotional experience to outline general properties of emotions, and to suggest a taxonomy or classification based on those properties. By contrast, text 2 uses specific emotional attributions to underscore the impact of this unexpected or non-canonical (and thus highly tellable) sequence of events, which happened on this one occasion, in this specific locale, and in this particular way, on the consciousness of the younger, experiencing-I to whose thoughts and feelings the story told by the older, narrating-I provides access.[15]

Hence, besides using principles of reasoning to develop definitions, classifications, and generalizations of the sort presented in text 1, people use other principles, grounded in the production and interpretation of stories, to make sense of the impact of experienced events on themselves and others, as in text 2. But what are these other principles? Or, to put the question differently, assuming that (as Bruner puts it) "we organize our experience and memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative – stories, excuses, myths, reasons for doing and not doing, and so on,"[16] what are the design principles of narrative itself? What explains people's ability to distinguish storytelling from other kinds of communicative practices and narratives from other kinds of semiotic artifacts?

To capture what distinguishes text 2 from text 1, it is important to keep in mind the ideas about categorization developed by cognitive scientists such as George Lakoff and Eleanor Rosch – ideas that Ryan also alludes to in her own proposal for a definition of narrative in the next chapter.[17] This work suggests that at least some of the categories in terms of which we make sense of the world are gradient in nature; that is, they operate in a "more-or-less" rather than an "either–or" fashion. In such cases, central or prototypical instances of a given category will be good examples of it, whereas more peripheral instances will display less goodness-of-fit. Thus, a category like "bird" can be characterized as subject to what Lakoff calls *membership gradience*: although robins are more prototypical members or central instances of the category than emus are, emus still belong in the category, albeit farther away from the center of the category space. Meanwhile, when one category shades into another, *category gradience* can be said to obtain. Think of the categories "tall person" and "person of average height": where exactly do you draw the line? Narrative can be described as a kind of text (a text-type category) to which both membership gradience and category gradience apply. A given text can be a more or less central instance of the category, and less central

instances will be closer to neighboring text-type categories (descriptions, lists, arguments, etc.) than will prototypical instances.[18]

Thus, whereas prototypical instances of the category "narrative" share relatively few features with those of "description," more peripheral cases are less clearly separable from that text-type, allowing for hybrid forms that Harold F. Mosher called "descriptized narrations" and "narrativized descriptions."[19] Consider the nursery rhyme "This Little Piggy Went to Market":

Text 3:
This little piggy went to market.
This little piggy stayed home.
This little piggy had roast beef.
This little piggy had none.
This little piggy cried "Wee! Wee! Wee!" all the way home.

Recited while one pulls each toe of the child's foot, this nursery rhyme constitutes a playful way to focus attention on and "describe" all five toes by means of a quasi-narrative that groups them together into a constellation of characters, who move along non-intersecting trajectories in a somewhat nebulous space–time environment. The quasi-story is merely a vehicle for the description – that is, the enumeration – of the toes. Conversely, when elaborate descriptions of cultural practices in second-century Carthage encumber but do not completely submerge the plot in Gustave Flaubert's 1862 novel *Salammbô*, the result is descriptized narration. The novel contains many passages where, thanks to provision of elaborate historical details, the forward movement of story time slows without coming to a complete halt – that is, where Flaubert's narrative approaches but does not cross the (porous) boundary separating it from ethnographic description.

But what accounts for where along the continuum stretching between narrative and description (among other text-type categories) a given artifact falls? What are the design principles that, when fully actualized, result in central examples of the category narrative? I suggest that core or prototypical instances of narrative represent or simulate

(i) a structured time-course of particularized events which introduces
(ii) disruption or disequilibrium into storytellers' and interpreters' mental model of the world evoked by the narrative (whether that world is presented as actual, imagined, dreamed, etc.), conveying
(iii) what it's like to live through that disruption, that is, the "qualia" (or felt, subjective awareness) of real or imagined consciousnesses undergoing the disruptive experience.[20]

Taking each of these features in turn:

(i) Whereas stories prototypically focus on particular situations and events, scientific explanations by their nature concern themselves with ways in which, in general, the world tends to be. Further, if particularity sets narrative apart from general explanations, narrative's temporal profile helps distinguish the prototypical narrative from many examples of description. Whereas I can in principle describe the objects on my desk in any order (left to right, back to front, smallest to largest, etc.), narrative traces paths taken by particularized individuals faced with decision points at one or more temporal junctures in a storyworld; those paths lead to consequences that take shape against a larger backdrop in which other possible paths might have been pursued, but were not.[21]

Contrast text 2 with text 3 in this connection: transpose any elements of the sequence that Mary recounts and you would have a different story, whereas in text 3 the order in which the little piggies' actions are recounted is a function of the need to rhyme end words and establish logical contrasts, not of any corresponding sequence of actions in a little-piggy storyworld. Meanwhile, insofar as text 1 outlines features of emotion in general, it does not focus on any individualized actors, nor any specific sequence of events.

(ii) But particularized temporal sequences, though necessary for narrative, are still not a sufficient condition. Building on the work of Vladimir Propp, who characterized disruptive events (e.g., acts of villainy) as the motor of narrative, Todorov specified a further test for when an event-sequence will count as a story.[22] Todorov argued that narratives prototypically follow a trajectory leading from an initial state of equilibrium, through a phase of disequilibrium, to an endpoint at which equilibrium is restored (on a different footing) because of intermediary events – though not every narrative will trace the entirety of this path.[23] Todorov thereby sought to capture the intuition that stories characteristically involve some sort of conflict, or the thwarting of characters' intended actions by unplanned events, which may or may not be the effect of other characters' intended actions.

To be categorized as a narrative, an event-sequence must therefore involve some kind of noteworthy (hence "tellable") disruption of an initial state of equilibrium by an unanticipated and often untoward event or chain of events. At issue is what Bruner characterized as a dialectic of "canonicity and breach": "to be worth telling, a tale must be about how an implicit canonical script has been breached, violated, or deviated from in a manner to do violence to . . . [its] 'legitimacy.' "[24] Judged by this

criterion, text 3 again would not qualify as a prototypical instance of the category "narrative," even though the contrasts drawn in the first four lines may suggest a rudimentary kind of narrativity, involving a disparity between plenty and dearth, hunger and satisfaction. But Mary's story centers on a strongly (and strangely) disruptive event: the apparition of a supernatural big ball chasing Mary and her friend through the woods in the dark of night. The difference explains why, although text 3 may qualify as a case of narrativized description, Mary's story is a prototypical instance of the category "narrative." For its part, because text 1 does not set up a concrete, particularized situation, there is no background against which a tellably disruptive event might be set off.

(iii) Again, however, whereas disruptive events may constitute a necessary condition for narrative, they do not suffice to make a text, discourse, or other artifact a story. For narrative to obtain, there must not only be a temporal sequence into which events are slotted in a particular way, and not only a dynamic of canonicity and breach, but also a foregrounding of human experientiality, to use Monika Fludernik's term.[25] Narrative prototypically roots itself in the lived, felt experience of human or human-like agents interacting in an ongoing way with their cohorts and surrounding environment. To put the same point another way, unless a text or a discourse encodes the pressure of events on an experiencing human or at least human-like consciousness, it will not be a central instance of the narrative text type.

As an analysis or explanation, text 1 is void of experientiality of this sort. And note the contrast between texts 2 and 3 on this score. Whereas Mary uses emotion discourse to highlight what it was like to experience the frightening events she reports, the closest we get to experientiality in text 3 is the fifth little piggy's cry of "Wee! Wee! Wee!" all the way home.

At this point, readers may wish to turn to the next chapter, where Ryan develops her own proposal for defining narrative and offers a more extensive overview of previous definitions by other narrative scholars. Or, before moving on to chapter 2, readers can continue with my next two sections, where I provide a sketch of recent trends in narrative research and offer a few suggestions about how to take advantage of the distinctive features of this volume.

What are some of the major trends in recent scholarship on narrative?

One way to map out recent developments in narrative inquiry is to draw a distinction between "classical" and "postclassical" approaches to the study

of narrative. I use the term *classical approaches* to refer to the tradition of research that, rooted in Russian Formalist literary theory, was extended by structuralist narratologists starting in the mid 1960s, and refined and systematized up through the early 1980s by scholars such as Mieke Bal, Seymour Chatman, Wallace Martin, Gerald Prince, and others. I also include under the rubric of classical approaches work in the Anglo-American tradition of scholarship on fictional narrative; some of these scholars were influenced by and in turn influenced the Formalist–structuralist tradition.[26] *Postclassical approaches*, meanwhile, encompass frameworks for narrative research that build on this classical tradition but supplement it with concepts and methods that were unavailable to story analysts such as Barthes, Genette, Greimas, and Todorov during the heyday of structuralism. In developing postclassical approaches, which does not just expose the limits but also exploits the possibilities of older models, theorists of narrative have drawn on a range of fields, from gender theory and philosophical ethics, to (socio)linguistics, philosophy of language, and cognitive science, to comparative media studies and critical theory. Because of the limited scope of this introduction, the current section focuses mainly on the classical narrative scholarship that has afforded foundations for such postclassical approaches, which are in any case represented by individual contributions to this *Companion* and reflected in the design of the volume as a whole, as I discuss below.

One further comment before my brief survey of contributions to what I am calling the classical tradition of narrative inquiry. Although Labov and Waletzky developed their model for the analysis of narratives told in contexts of face-to-face communication just as structuralist narratologists were proposing their key ideas, and although the Labovian model has been extraordinarily influential in social-scientific research for some four decades, initially there was little interaction between sociolinguistic research on storytelling and other traditions of narrative scholarship. But now there is interest in building an integrative theory that can accommodate both the study of written, literary narratives and the analysis of everyday storytelling.[27] At the same time, among researchers concerned with face-to-face narrative communication, there has been a shift analogous to the one I have characterized as a transition from classical to postclassical approaches. Precipitating this shift is the recognition that the Labovian model captures one important sub-type of natural-language narratives – namely, stories elicited during interviews – but does not necessarily apply equally well to other storytelling situations, such as informal conversations between peers, he-said-she-said gossip, or conversations among family members at the dinner table.[28]

From Russian Formalism to structuralist narratology

The Russian Formalists authored a number of pathbreaking studies that have served as foundations for later research on narrative. For example, in distinguishing between "bound" (or plot-relevant) and "free" (or non-plot-relevant) motifs, Boris Tomashevskii provided the basis for Barthes's distinction between "nuclei" and "catalyzers" in his "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives."[29] Renamed *kernels* and *satellites* by Seymour Chatman[30], these terms refer to core and peripheral elements of story-content, respectively. Delete or add to the kernel events of a story and you no longer have the same story; delete or add to the satellites and you have the same story told in a different way. Related to Tomashevskii's work on free versus bound motifs, Viktor Shklovskii's early work on plot as a structuring device[31] established one of the grounding assumptions of structuralist narratology: namely, the *fabula–sjuzhet* or story–discourse distinction, that is, the distinction between the what and the how, or what is being told versus the manner in which it is told.

Another important Formalist precedent for modern narrative theory was furnished by Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*, whose first English translation appeared in 1958.[32] Propp distinguished between variable and invariant components of the corpus of Russian folktales that he studied; more specifically, he drew a contrast between changing dramatis personæ and the unvarying plot functions performed by them (act of villainy, punishment of the villain, etc.). In all, Propp abstracted thirty-one functions, or character actions defined in terms of their significance for the plot, from his corpus of tales; he also specified rules for their distribution in a given tale. Harking back to Aristotle's subordination of character to plot, Propp's approach constituted the basis for structuralist theories of characters as "actants," or general roles fulfilled by specific characters. Thus, extrapolating from what Propp had termed "spheres of action," Greimas sought to create a typology of actantial roles to which the (indefinitely many) particularized actors in narratives could be reduced. Greimas initially identified a total of six actants to which he thought all particularized narrative actors could be reduced: Subject, Object, Sender, Receiver, Helper, and Opponent. Commenting on this model, Greimas remarked "[i]ts simplicity lies in the fact that it is entirely centred on the object of desire aimed at by the subject and situated, as object of communication, between the sender and the receiver – the desire of the subject being, in its part, modulated in projections from the helper and opponent."[33]

I have already begun to discuss how the structuralist narratologists built on Russian Formalist ideas to help consolidate what I am referring to as the

classical tradition of research on narrative. Founding narratology as a subdomain of structuralist inquiry, researchers like Barthes and Greimas followed Saussure's distinction between *la langue* (= language viewed as system) and *la parole* (= individual utterances produced and interpreted on that basis); they construed particular stories as individual narrative messages supported by a shared semiotic system. And just as Saussurean linguistics privileged *la langue* over *la parole*, focusing on the structural constituents and combinatory principles of the semiotic framework of language, the narratologists privileged the study of narrative in general over the interpretation of individual narratives.

Indeed, the use of (Saussurean) linguistics as a pilot-science shaped the object, methods, and overall aims of structuralist narratology as an investigative framework. Narratology's basic premise is that a common, more or less implicit, model of narrative explains people's ability to understand communicative performances and types of artifacts as stories. In turn, just as linguists have set themselves the goal of identifying the ingredients of linguistic competence, the goal of narratology is to develop an explicit characterization of the model underlying people's intuitive knowledge about stories, in effect providing an account of what constitutes humans' narrative competence. To be sure, the example of linguistics provided narratology with a productive vantage-point on stories, affording terms and categories that generated significant new research questions – as when Barthes used the concept of "levels of description" to develop a hierarchical model of narrative as clusters of "functions" that are subsumed under the level of characters' actions, which are in turn subsumed under the level of narration; or when Genette drew on the traditional grammatical concepts of tense, mood, and voice to explore types of temporal sequence, manipulations of viewpoint, and modes of narration.[34] Yet narratology was also limited by the linguistic models it treated as exemplary. Ironically, the narratologists embraced structuralist linguistics as their pilot-science just when its deficiencies were becoming apparent in the domain of linguistic theory itself. The limitations of the Saussurean paradigm were thrown into relief, on the one hand, by emergent formal models for analyzing language structure – for example, those proposed by Chomsky under the auspices of generative grammar. On the other hand, powerful tools were being developed in the wake of Ludwig Wittgenstein, J. L. Austin, H. P. Grice, John Searle, and other post-Saussurean language theorists interested in how contexts of language use bear on the production and interpretation of socially situated utterances. In general, the attempt by later narrative scholars to incorporate ideas about language and communication that postdate structuralist research has been a

major factor in the advent of postclassical models for research on stories and storytelling.[35]

Anglo-American contributions

I have yet to discuss how Anglo-American scholarship on narrative fiction has contributed to the classical tradition of research on stories. An important figure in this tradition is Percy Lubbock, who took his inspiration from Henry James's novelistic practice as well as his theory of fiction.[36] Lubbock made the issue of "point of view" the cornerstone of his account – to an extent not necessarily warranted by James's own approach.[37] In doing so, Lubbock appropriated James's ideas to produce a markedly prescriptive framework. He drew an invidious distinction between showing ("dramatizing" events) and telling ("describing" or "picturing" events), suggesting that description is inferior to dramatization, picturing to scene-making. As Lubbock put it, "other things being equal, the more dramatic way is better than the less. It is indirect, as a method; but it places the thing itself in view, instead of recalling and reflecting and picturing it."[38] But although he may have been guilty of transforming into hard-and-fast prescriptions ideas that James himself proposed much more tentatively in his own critical writings, Lubbock also drew attention to specific methods or procedures that are at the heart of the craft of fiction.

In response, maintaining a focus on issues of narrative technique, but seeking to restore the complexities evident in James's original statement of his theory (as well as in his novelistic practice), Wayne C. Booth inverted the terms of Lubbock's argument, thereby laying the groundwork for rhetorical approaches to narrative.[39] Instead of privileging showing over telling, Booth accorded telling pride of place – making it the general narratorial condition of which "showing" is a localized effect. Indeed, Booth's brilliant account revealed difficulties with the very premise of the telling-versus-showing debate. He characterized showing as an effect promoted by certain, deliberately structured, kinds of tellings, organized in such a way that a narrator's mediation (though inescapably present) remains more or less covert. Booth also suggested that an emphasis on showing over telling has costs as well as benefits, cataloguing important rhetorical effects that explicit narratorial commentary can be used to accomplish – for example, relating particulars to norms established elsewhere in the text, heightening the significance of events, or manipulating mood.

Furthermore, Booth's wide-ranging discussion of narrative types (ranging from Boccaccio's *Decameron* to ancient Greek epics to novels and short

fictions by authors as diverse as Cervantes, Hemingway, and Céline) encouraged subsequent theorists in the Anglo-American tradition to explore various kinds of narratives, rather than focusing solely on the novel. This uncoupling of narrative theory from novel theory – a process that had been initiated independently by the Russian Formalists some forty years earlier – culminated in such wide-scope works as Robert Scholes's and Robert Kellogg's study, *The Nature of Narrative*.[40] Significantly, Scholes's and Kellogg's book was published in 1966. This same year saw the publication of a groundbreaking special issue of the French-language journal *Communications* on "Recherches sémiologiques: L'Analyse structurale du récit" (="Semiological Research: Structural Analysis of Narrative"), which effectively launched structuralist narratology as an approach that likewise applied to narrative in general, not just the novel.

Postclassical approaches: in lieu of a synopsis

I cannot synopsize here the full range of postclassical approaches to narrative inquiry that build on the foundational work just described as well as on other early scholarship on stories.[41] Instead, this *Companion* itself reflects the exciting new developments unfolding in narrative research today. On the one hand, the chapters in Part II of the book all focus on major aspects of narrative identified by earlier theorists: narration and plot; time and space; character; dialogue; focalization; and genre. But the contributors explore these features using ideas that emerged after the pioneering work of the Russian Formalists, structuralist narratologists, and Anglo-American theorists of fiction. On the other hand, Part III and Part IV identify new areas of research for narrative inquiry. The focus of Part III on particular narrative media reflects an emergent concern with how medium-specific properties of stories may require the adjustment and refinement of classical models.[42] Meanwhile, the chapters in Part IV, while continuing to build on classical models, suggest the relevance for narrative study of ideas from fields that did not extensively cross-pollinate with earlier research on stories – fields such as gender theory; philosophical ethics; post-Saussurean linguistics; cognitive science; Marxist critiques of ideology; and the study of postcolonial literatures and cultures.

What are the distinctive features of this book, and some strategies for using it?

As already indicated, this volume is intended to be a resource for readers at all levels, from beginning students to advanced researchers in the field. The

following design features are meant to enhance the book's appeal for the broadest possible readership:

- The volume is organized in a "modularized" fashion; that is, readers can focus on particular sections while omitting others, depending on their interests and needs. There are, however, important interconnections among chapters in different sections – for instance, the chapters on "Dialogue" and "Gender," or the chapters on "Time and Space," "Focalization," and "Cognition, Emotion, and Consciousness." Because of these cross-sectional links, even readers focusing on particular parts may benefit from working their way through the volume in its entirety.
- The volume features a glossary containing thumbnail definitions of key terms and concepts. This glossary should help orient readers unfamiliar with the technical nomenclatures that have grown up around the study of narrative, and it may also serve as a "refresher" for more experienced readers.
- Each chapter has been given a simple, keyword-like title. In tandem with four-part division of the volume, this navigational aid will allow readers to zoom in on questions and issues most relevant to them.
- The volume also contains a comprehensive index, which will likewise enable readers to pinpoint the topics and concepts of particular interest to them.

Given these features, the volume should be suitable for courses, at both the undergraduate and the graduate level, in a number of fields, including: literature (History and Theory of the Novel, Studies in Fiction, Critical Theory, Narrative Theory and Narratology, The Linguistics of Literature); comparative media studies (Narrative across Media); communication studies (Narrative Analysis); linguistics (Discourse Analysis: Narrative); medical humanities (Narrative Representations of Illness, Narrative Theory for Clinicians); psychology (Narrative Psychology, Cognitive Psychology and Art, Social Psychology); and philosophy (Aesthetics, Philosophy of Mind), among others.

But whether it is used inside or outside the classroom, by beginning students or narrative experts, in the context of the humanities, the social sciences, or other fields, my chief hope for this *Companion* is that it will help build even more interest in this rapidly developing area of inquiry. Indeed, this book is in essence an invitation. It invites all of its readers to join the growing and increasingly diverse community of scholars engaged in the study of narrative, which can be viewed not just as a means of artistic expression or a resource for communication but also as a fundamental human endowment.