


**Further Reading**


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**Glossary**

Terms set in small caps have their own glossary entries.

**Actant** A. J. Greimas’s term (“Actants”; *Structural Semantics*) for a general role fulfilled by a particularized actor of Character, or even a setting. One such role is Opponent, exemplified by Satan in Paradise Lost or the sea in Stephen Crane’s “The Open Boat.”

**Agency** At the level of the story, agency concerns Characters’ ability to bring about deliberately initiated events, or actions, within a Storyworld. At the level of Narration, agency affects who gets to tell what kind of story in what contexts.

**Anachrony** Gérard Genette’s term for nonchronological Narration, where events are told in an order other than that in which they can be presumed to have occurred in the Storyworld.¹

**Analepsis** Flashback. In Gérard Genette’s account, analepsis occurs when events that occur in the order ABC are told in the order BAC, BAC, or CBA.

**Answerability** Mikhail Bakhtin’s term (*Art*) for the ethical imperative to listen and respond to the communication of another, including a narrative text.

**Audience** In the narrative-communication model developed by structuralist narratologists and refined by rhetorical theorists of narrative, the audience can be defined as real or imagined addressees of (multilayered) acts of Narration. This model distinguishes among actual authors, implied authors, and narrators on the production side of the storytelling process. On the reception (or interpretation) side, it distinguishes among the corresponding roles of actual readers, (types of) implied readers, and narrataries (the audience implicitly or explicitly addressed by the narrator in the text). In the multilayered process of narrative communication, an implied author might use a narrator’s communication to a narratee as a means by which to communicate something else to the implied reader—as happens in unreliable Narration.

**Author** The biographical individual who produces a text or a discourse. See also implied author; narration; narrator.

**Autodiegetic Narration** Gérard Genette’s term for first-person, or homodiegetic, narration, in which the Narrator is also the main character in the Storyworld.
Biocularity  The double seeing required by texts such as graphic novels whose meanings arise from the interaction of verbal and visual signs. (See Hirsch's contribution to this volume.)

Carnivalesque  Mikhail Bakhtin’s term for the subversive, anti-authorized elements of literature, including events (anarchic behavior of all kinds) and how they’re told—for example, by means of parody or satire or with the use of socially unacceptable language (Rabelais).

Character  The entity who acts or is acted upon in narrative. E. M. Forster distinguishes between round characters who are capable of surprising the audience and flat characters who are not. In the rhetorical account pioneered by James Phelan in *Reading People, Reading Plots*, characters can be analyzed into three components: mimetic (like a person); thematic (representative of a larger group or set of ideas); and synthetic (a construct that performs a role in the larger construction of the narrative). See also ACTANTS; CODES FOR READING.

Chronicle  A record of events in chronological sequence without an employment. See also STORY.

Chronotope  Mikhail Bakhtin defined the chronotope as “a formally constitutive category of literature . . . [in which] spatial and temporal indicators are fused” into a gestalt representational structure that is originally associated with a particular genre (e.g., novels of the road) but that is subsequently taken up in later texts in ways that lead to generic intermixing and the copresence of phenomena hailing from different phases of “the historico-literary process” (“Forms” 84–85).

Closure  The sense of an ending and the textual elements that convey or reinforce that sense.

Codes for Reading  In *S/Z*, Roland Barthes identified five codes (or systems for signification) from which narrative texts are woven and by means of which readers can in turn navigate those texts. The proaletic code governs the interconnection of actions within an unfolding PLOT. The hermeneutic code, which also relates to plot structure, bears on questions or enigmas that function as a source of suspense and that are answered or resolved (or are not) over the course of the text. The referential code links the text to surrounding scientific, cultural, and other bodies of knowledge, allowing readers to draw on their understanding of storytelling genres, received truths about the natural world, and other repertoires to make sense of a narrative. The semic code, which concerns how semantic features are categorized as information relevant for understanding persons, governs the process by which readers identify and interpret CHARACTERS and their attributes. Finally, the symbolic code enables readers to make sense of stories in terms of underlying thematic contrasts or oppositions (good versus evil, naive versus sophisticated, etc.). See also SEME.

Cognitive Narratology  A strand within POSTCLASSICAL NARRATOLGY that focuses on mind-relevant dimensions of storytelling practices, wherever—and by whatever means—those practices occur. See also CONSCIOUSNESS REPRESENTATION; DEICTIC SHIFT; EXPERIENTIALITY; NARRATIVE WORLDMAKING; SPEECH AND THOUGHT REPRESENTATION.

Consciousness Representation  The representation of characters’ (or narrators’) minds in narrative discourse. Topics of study in this area include the structural possibilities for representing conscious experience—that is, the system of available mind-revealing techniques; the evolution or emergence of such techniques over time; and the interconnections among these techniques and broader conceptions of mind circulating in the culture or in more-specialized discourses. See also EXPERIENTIALITY; SPEECH AND THOUGHT REPRESENTATION.

Consonant Narration  Dorrit Cohn’s term for a mode of NARRATION in which a narrator’s presentation of events in the storyworld merges with a character’s vantage point on those events. In the case of first-person, or *HOMODEGETIC*, narration, Cohn refers to consonant self-narration. In the case of third-person, or *HETERODEGETIC*, narration, consonant narration is the equivalent of what Franz K. Stanzel calls the figural NARRATIVE SITUATION. In either case, it corresponds to what Gérard Genette terms internal focalization. See also DISSONANT NARRATION.

Conversational Storytelling  See FACE-TO-FACE STORYTELLING.

Cultural Narrative  A story that circulates widely within a given culture whose author is not an individual but a larger collective entity constituting a significant subgroup within that culture.

Cultural Poetics  The study of the distinctive literary practices of a given culture, the forces that influence those practices, and the relations among them.

Cyberpunk  A school or period style of science fiction, flourishing from the eighties through the present, characterized thematically by a focus on the impact of digital technologies and virtual reality on human identity and associated with such writers as William Gibson, Bruce Sterling, Neal Stephenson, and Pat Cadigan.

Cybertext (Ergodic Literature)  Coined by Espen Aarseth for texts requiring nontrivial effort on the reader’s or user’s part to produce not only the storyworld but also the text itself (or one version of it). Examples include texts designed in and for digital environments, such as HYPERTEXT
fictions, as well as some print-based texts, including some postmodern narratives.

Defamiliarization  Associated with Russian formalism and later, in a slightly different form, with Prague school structuralism, the idea that the ultimate function of literary art is to refresh reality for us and "make it strange," and that it does so by violating literature's own conventions (or deviating from its norms). Also called estrangement or estranglement (translating the Russian neologism estranenie).

Deictic Shift  Elaborated in the 1995 volume *Deixis in Narrative* (Duchan, Bruder, and Hewitt), deictic-shift theory holds that in order to comprehend a narrative, interpreters must take up a cognitive stance in the world evoked by a narrative, or storyworld. In other words, readers, viewers, or listeners must shift from the world of the here and now to a different orienting frame of reference in order to be able to parse deictic expressions such as "I, at that time," and "over there"—and build up on the basis of such cues a global mental representation of the world in which characters exist and interact. See also narrative worldmaking.

Dialogism  Mikhail Bakhtin's term for a text's exploitation of the dialogic or multivoiced nature of language (*Dialogic Imagination*), as in the case of an ironic statement or, even more richly, in the "polyphony" of novelistic discourse.

Diegesis / Diegetic Level  Originating from Genettean narratology as well as structuralist film theory, the term *diegesis* designates the primary or matrix narrative that serves as a point of reference for determining the relation among narrative levels (and the location of narrators on different levels) as well as for identifying the degree to which narrators participate in the events they recount. A narrative embedded within the primary level, for example, Nelly Dean's story in *Wuthering Heights*, told to Lockwood, another character at the primary diegetic level, is a hypodiegetic narrative, and its narrator is intradiegetic. By the same logic, Isabella Linton's letter to Nelly contains a hypo-hypodiegetic narrative, and Isabella is an intradiegetic narrator. Since Lockwood, Nelly, and Isabella are all characters who participate in the action being narrated, they are also hypodiegetic narrators. By contrast, the level occupied by any retrospective narrator of the events at the primary level is extradiegetic. Thus, a retrospective narrator who tells of events that he participated in, such as the elder Pip in Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*, is extradiegetic-homodiegetic. A retrospective narrator who recounts events he or she did not participate in, such as the narrator of Hemingway's "Hills like White Elephants," is extradiegetic-heterodiegetic. Prospective telling can likewise be extra-, intra-, or hypodiegetic and can involve homo- and heterodiegetic tellers. For example, a character

narrator who uses the future tense to predict what will happen to others is intradiegetic-heterodiegetic; if that narrator predicts her or his own fate, she or he is intradiegetic-homodiegetic. In the case of simultaneous narration, instances of first-person, or homodiegetic, telling (Robbe-Grillet's *La jalousie*, Beckett's *The Unnamable*, Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*) would seem to collapse this system of levels, since the narrators would be, at least in principle, both the producers and the product of their acts of telling. See also metalepsis; narration.

Direct Discourse  See speech and thought representation

Discourse  In narratology, the "discourse" level of narrative (in French, *discours*) corresponds to what the Russian formalist theorists called the *sujet*; it contrasts with the "story* (*histoire*) level. In this usage, discourse refers to the disposition of the semiotic cues used by interpreters to reconstruct a storyworld.

Dissonant Narration  Dorrit Cohn's term for a mode of narration in which a narrator's presentation of events in the storyworld differs from a character's vantage point on those events. In the case of first-person, or homodiegetic, narration, Cohn refers to dissonant self-narration. In the case of third-person or heterodiegetic narration, dissonant narration is the equivalent of what Franz K. Stanzel calls the authorial narrative situation and what Gérard Genette calls zero focalization. See also consonant narration.

Distancing Narrator  Robyn Warhol's term for a teller whose direct addresses to a narratee emphasizing the distance between them and, in that way, encourage the actual reader also to remain distant from the narratee. See also engaging narrator; narrator.

Dominant  Roman Jakobson's term for the focusing component of a given literary work—the component in the light of which all of its other components are subordinated, coordinated, and integrated. For instance, according to Brian McHale, modernist novels are dominated by epistemological issues, while postmodern narratives have an ontological dominant.

Duration  Gérard Genette's term for the ratio between how long situations and events take to unfold in the storyworld and how much text is devoted to their narration. Variations in this ratio correspond to different narrative speeds; in order of increasing speed, these are pause, stretch, scene, summary, and ellipsis.

Ekphrasis  The representation in a literary work of a visual composition.

Ellipsis  Gérard Genette's term for the omission of storyworld events during the process of narration; in ellipsis, narrative speed reaches infinity. See also duration; gaps.
Emplotment  Hayden White’s term for the process by which situations and events are linked together to produce a plot.

Engaging Narrator  Robyn Warhol’s term for a teller whose direct addresses to a narratee close the distance between them and, in that way, also encourage the actual reader to close that distance. See also DISTANCING NARRATOR; NARRATOR.

Equilibrium/Disequilibrium  In Tzvetan Todorov’s account of narrative structure, the prototypical story follows a trajectory leading from an initial state of equilibrium, through a phase of disequilibrium, to an end point at which equilibrium is restored (on a different footing) because of intermediary events—though not every narrative traces the entirety of this path. See also NARRATIVE PROGRESSION; NARRATOLOGY; PLOT; STRUCTURALISM.

Ethnic-Identified Fictions  Fictional narratives interpreted as originating from or giving a plausible representation of the experiences of a particular ethnic group. (See Aclama’s chapter in this volume.)

Ethnography  The study of cultural practices of all sorts, nonverbal as well as verbal. Ethnographic approaches to narrative focus on how storytelling both reflects understandings of cultural situations and also helps create such understandings by employing events in mutually intelligible ways and by affording a mode of communication in which cultural practices can be “worked out” at a microinteractional level. See also CULTURAL NARRATIVE; FACE-TO-FACE STORYTELLING.

Event  A change of state, creating a more or less salient and lasting alteration in the storyworld. Events can be subdivided into temporally extended processes, deliberately initiated actions, and happenings not brought about intentionally by any agent.

Experientiality  Monika Fludernik’s term for the dimension of narrative, by means of which it conveys what philosophers of mind refer to as qualia, or the sense of “what it is like” for an embodied human being or human-like consciousness to experience the situations and EVENTS recounted in the story.

Exposition  A presentation, sometimes given in the form of backstory, of the circumstances (such as time and place) and EVENTS that form a context or background for understanding the main action in a narrative.

Extradiagnostic Narrator  See diegesis / diegetic level.

Fabula  See story.

Face/Facing  Emmanuel Levinas’s terms to designate the ethical responsibility of one individual toward another. As one faces the other, one must recognize and respond to that otherness.

Face-to-Face Storytelling  The range of narrative practices conducted in contexts of face-to-face interaction, including not just stories elicited during interviews but also informal conversations between peers, he-said, she-said gossip, and conversations among family members at the dinner table. See also ETHNOGRAPHY.

Feminist Narratology  A strand of POSTCLASSICAL NARRATOLOGY that explores how issues of gender bear on the production, transmission, and interpretation of stories.

Fiction  Negatively, fiction can be defined as a type of discourse or communicative practice for which questions of truth-value do not apply in the way that they do for factual discourse. Positively, fiction is a type of discourse, or communicative practice, that suspends questions of truth-value to explore possible events, characters, scenarios, and worlds.

Fictional Recentering  The process by which authors and readers move from their actual world to a storyworld assumed to be imaginary. See also DECITIC SHIFT.

Filter  Seymour Chatman’s term (Coming) for the perspectival bias, or vantage point, of a character in the storyworld as opposed to the attitudes of a narrator reporting events from a position outside that world. See also FOCALIZATION; SLANT.

Flat versus Round Character  See character.

Focalization  Gérard Genette’s term for modes of perspective taking in narrative discourse. In internal focalization, the viewpoint is restricted to a particular observer, or reflector, whereas in zero focalization the viewpoint is not anchored in a localized position and in external focalization the viewpoint is “objective,” always perceiving a character from the outside. Further, internal focalization can be fixed, variable, or multiple. In Ernest Hemingway’s “Hills like White Elephants,” the focalization is variable, shifting between the vantage points of Jig and the male character.

Formalism  An approach to literary works that emphasizes the synthesis of their parts into a larger whole. Also the tendency in some varieties of literary research and theory to focus more on the way works organize their materials (or content) than on the materials that are so organized—or, for that matter, on the contexts in which those works are produced and interpreted. Often associated with RUSSIAN FORMALISM, STRUCTURALISM, Anglo-American New Criticism, and the Chicago school of neo-Aristotelianism.

Formula Fiction  See genre fiction.

Free Indirect Discourse  See speech and thought representation.
Frequency  Gérard Genette’s term for the ratio between the number of times something is told and the number of times it can be assumed to have occurred in the storyworld. In singulative narration, there is a one-to-one match between how many times an event occurred and how many times it is told; in iterative narration, something that happened more than once is told once; and in repetitive narration, the number of times something is told exceeds the frequency with which it occurred in the storyworld.

Function  An act of a character defined in terms of its significance for the overall course of the narrative’s action—for example, “hero acquires magical agent.” Vladimir Propp identified thirty-one such functions in a typical fairy tale, occurring in a fixed sequence (though not every function occurs in every tale). See also codes for reading Actant.

Gaps  Lacunae or omissions in what is told or in the process of telling. Omissions in the telling constitute ellipsis; those in the told underscore the radical incompleteness of fictional worlds (in Heart of Darkness, how many siblings did Marlow have, and exactly how old and how large is The Nellie, the ship on which Marlow tells the story of his encounter with Kurtz in the Congo?).

Gaze  In film theory, the term for the perspective provided by the way the camera frames a shot. Laura Mulvey argues that in Hollywood film the dominant gaze is coded as masculine and that women are typically the object of the male gaze rather than the ones doing the gazing. The term has migrated from film theory to narrative theory more generally and refers to who is doing the looking and the degree of power implied by that looking. See also focalization.

Gender/Sex  Sex is biology’s way of distinguishing between male and female through different reproductive organs, different degrees and kinds of hormones, and other such anatomical and physiological matters. Gender is culture’s way of labeling certain behaviors as masculine or feminine.

Genre Fiction  Mass-market entertainment fiction, more overtly dependent on shared conceptions than so-called “literary” or “serious” fiction, and catering more openly to the expectations of readers familiar with these conventions. It includes genres and subgenres such as detective, mystery, and crime fiction; thrillers; science fiction and fantasy; horror; romance; Westerns; popular historical fiction; erotica; and so on. Also called formula fiction.

Hegemony  Term coined by Antonio Gramsci to refer to the dominance of a particular view or group over other views or groups, often through a process of manufactured consent. In hegemonic power structures, those in a subordinate role are induced to participate in their own domination. In turn, narrative can be used either to shore up or to subvert hegemony. See also ideology, political unconscious.

Heterodiegetic Narrator  Gérard Genette’s term for a narrator who has not participated in the circumstances and events about which he or she tells a story. See also diegesis / diegetic level.

Heteroglossia  Mikhail Bakhtin’s term (“Discourse”) for the interplay of different sociolects within a society. He valued the novel as the genre that reflected—even required—such heteroglossia. Also see dialogism.

Homodiegetic Narrator  Gérard Genette’s term for a narrator who has participated (more or less centrally) in the circumstances and events about which he or she tells a story. At the limit, homodiegetic narration shades off into autodiegetic narration. See also diegesis / diegetic level.

Hypodiegetic Narrative  See diegesis / diegetic level.

Hypertext  An assemblage of texts connected by links that afford multiple navigational pathways.

Icon  See semiotics.

Ideology  In Marxist accounts, ideology is the process by which a particular, historically contingent state of affairs is constructed as natural, immutable, simply built into the structure of things. From this perspective, narrative can serve ideological as well as counterideological functions, depending on whether a given story shores up or undercuts dominant accounts of the way the world is. See also hegemony, political unconscious.

Immersivity versus Interactivity  These two terms refer to two dimensions of narrative experience, which are sometimes characterized as contrasting or dichotomous but which can also be complementary and mutually reinforcing. Immersivity denotes the process by which interpreters get caught up in storyworlds, living out complex blends of emotional and intellectual response as they engage with characters involved in unfolding situations and events. Interactivity refers to recipients’ ability to shape the telling of a story. For example, in face-to-face storytelling, a listener can request that a narrator customize her or his account, and in hypertext fiction a recipient can influence the telling by clicking on one link rather than another.

Implied Author  A term coined by Wayne C. Booth to refer to the “second self” who writes the text and who reveals his or her traits and values through the construction of that text. More recently, James Phelan (Living) defines the implied author as a streamlined version of the actual author, a real or purported subset of the actual author’s traits, beliefs, values, and abilities. The implied author is responsible for the choices that create the text as “these words in this order” and that imbue the text with his or her values.
Implied Reader  The intended addressee or audience of the implied author; another term for what rhetorical theorists of narrative, following Peter J. Rabinowitz's coinage ("Truth", Before Reading), call the authorial audience. The implied reader of Ernest Hemingway's "Hills like White Elephants" will know, for example, that Madrid is a city in Spain—though an actual reader unschooled in geography may not know these details.

Index  See semiotics.

Indirect Discourse  See speech and thought representation.

Intentional, Symptomatic, and Adaptive Reading  H. Porter Abbott's way of distinguishing between three kinds of interpretation (Cambridge Introduction). Intentional interpretation seeks to understand the text as it was designed by its author. Symptomatic reading seeks to identify problematic communications in the text that escape the author's control. Adaptive reading leaves intention behind entirely and uses the text in the service of the reader's own interests.

Interactive Fiction  A digitally produced narrative that involves textual exchange between a user or interactor and a computer program. The computer generates a text that situates examples and events in the simulated world, while input from the user (commands to a character or avatar) influences the unfolding of those events.

Intradiagnostic Narrator  See diegesis / diegetic level.

Kernel  Seymour Chatman's term for an event that cannot be deleted from the paraphrase of a narrative without altering the story itself (Story). Roland Barthes called such events nuclei ("Introduction"). See also satellite.

Langue/Parole  Ferdinand de Saussure distinguished between the system of language (langue) and the individual communicative acts made possible and intelligible by that system (parole). The structuralist narratologists drew on this distinction, focusing on the system supporting narrative production and interpretation rather than on individual narratives.

Marriage Plot  One kind of master plot in which the events are organized around the quest of the female protagonist to find a suitable man to marry.

Master Narrative  See hegemony.

Master Plot  A general pattern of events shared by many individual narratives, such as the marriage plot. The master plots of a culture reveal a lot about that culture's common concerns and the way it prefers to address them.

Metaepisodic  The confusion or entanglement of narrative levels, as when characters situated in a story within a story (or hypodiegetic narrative) migrate into the diegesis or main narrative level. In Flann O'Brien's At Swim-Two-Birds, for example, the protagonist writes a novel whose characters then jump up one narrative level and attack the novelist who created them.

Minimal Departure, Principle of  Marie-Laure Ryan's idea that, unless cued to do otherwise, readers can assume that the storyworld evoked by a narrative obeys the same physical laws and contains the same kinds of entities, situations, and events as those found in the actual world. Genres such as science fiction regularly suspend this principle by prompting readers to alter their default assumptions about the structure and inhabitants of more or less exotic storyworlds. See also Novum.

Mirror Neuron System  The part of the nervous system activated both when a creature (human or animal) acts and when it observes another creature acting. Cognitive narratology is interested in the mirror neuron system for what it may suggest about such matters as how we can understand and empathize with characters portrayed in narratives.

Mood  Gérard Genette's term for the control of information in narrative discourse. Mood encompasses the ratio of knowledge between narrators and characters, as well as issues of vision of perspective (who sees or perceives) versus narration (who speaks)—in Genette's terms, focalization versus voice.

Narrate  Term used by Antoine Volodine to question the boundary between the real and the imaginary and between narrative viewed as representation and narrative seen as creation.

Narrative Monologue  See speech and thought representation.

Narrator  The audience of the narrator, like the emissary of the count in Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess." Insofar as the narrator is an audience role more or less explicitly inscribed in a narrative text, it is distinct from both the actual reader and the implied reader. See also unreliable narration.

Narration  The process by which a narrative is conveyed; depending on the semiotic medium used, this process can involve complex combinations of cues in different channels (visual, auditory, tactile, etc.), yielding multimodal versus monomodal narration. Also, some theorists of narrative make narration the third term in a tripartite model that includes the story level; the discourse or text level, on the basis of which the story can be reconstructed; and the narration as the communicative act that produces the discourse. Other relevant parameters include the modes of narration identified by Gérard Genette, including audiodiagnostic, extradiagnostic, heterodiagnostic, homodiagnostic, hypodiagnostic, and intradiagnostic narration, as well as Dorrit
Cohn's distinction between CONSONANT and DISSONANT narration. See also DEGESIS / DYGETIC LEVEL.

**Narrative** In informal usage, narrative is a synonym for story. Analysts developing various frameworks for narrative study, however, have proposed more technical definitions. Gerald Prince (Dictionary) defines narrative as "the representation . . . of one or more real or fictive events communicated by one, two, or several narrators to one, two, or several narrates" (59). James Phelan has developed a rhetorical definition of narrative as the act of someone telling someone else on a particular occasion for some purpose that something happened (Narrative). For his part David Herman characterizes narrative as a mode of representation that must be interpreted in the light of a specific discourse context or occasion for telling; that focuses on a structured course of particularized events; that concerns itself with some kind of disruption or disequilibrium in a storyworld; and that conveys what it is like to live through this storyworld in flux.

**Narrative Progression** The movement of a narrative from beginning to end and the principles governing that movement. James Phelan's Rhetorical Theory describes these principles as governing the synthesis of textual dynamics and readerly dynamics (see esp. Experiencing Fiction). Textual dynamics refer to the introduction, complication, and resolution (often only partial) of a set of unstable relationships among characters or between tellers and audiences, and readerly dynamics refer to the trajectory of the authorial audience's response to those textual dynamics.

**Narrative Situations** The Austrian narrative theorist Franz Karl Stanzel, developing a nomenclature that has been especially influential in German language traditions of narrative inquiry, distinguished among three main narrative situations: first-person, third-person, or authorial; and figural, which combines a third-person narrative voice with a REFLExTOR figure, or particularized center of consciousness. See also CONSONANT NARRATION and DISSONANT NARRATION.

**Narrative Universals** Dimensions of narrative structure or content that can be found across the world's narrative traditions, as well as across different storytelling media. Though the scope and nature of narrative universals remain a matter of debate, a candidate for inclusion in the category is the representation of events in a structured course of time (whereby earlier situations are transformed into later ones by intervening actions or events). See also NARRATIVE; TRANSMEDIAL NARRATOGY.

**Narrative Worldmaking** As characterized in David Herman's contribution to this volume, the process by which (1) storytellers use the SEMiotic cues available in a given narrative medium to design blueprints for creating and updating storyworlds and (2) interpreters draw on such medium-specific cues to build models of the worlds evoked through these narrative designs. (See also Elias's essay in this volume.)

**Narrativity** That which makes a story a story; a property that a text or discourse will have in greater proportion the more readily it lends itself to being NARRATIVIZED or interpreted in narrative terms—in other words, the more prototypically narrative it is. What constitutes an expected or prototypical form of narrative practice can vary, however, depending on the communicative circumstances involved. See also TELLABILITY.

**Narrativize** To present a set of situations and events in narrative terms—in other words, to produce a representation that possesses at least some degree of NARRATIVITY. Alternatively, to make sense of a text or discourse by interpreting it as a story—a process sometimes purposely impeded by postmodern or avant-garde literary texts.

**Narratology** Originally, an approach to narrative inquiry developed during the heyday of STRUCTURALISM in France. Instead of working to develop interpretations of individual narratives, narratologists focused on how to describe narrative viewed as a semiotic system—that is, as a system by virtue of which people are able to produce and understand stories. In recent years the term has widened its meaning, and it is now often used as a synonym for narrative theory more generally. See also LANGUE/PAROLE.

**Narrator** The agent who produces a narrative. Some story analysts distinguish among AUTODIEGETIC, extradiegetic, HETERODIEGETIC, HOMODIEGETIC, and intradiegetic narrators. See also AUTHOR; DEGESIS / DYGETIC LEVEL; NARRATION.

**Novum** Darko Suvin's term for the key novelty (technological innovation, utopian or dystopian social order, alien being or place, etc.) that distinguishes a science fiction world from the world of contemporary reference. See also NARRATIVE WORLDMAKING; REALIZED METAPHOR; STORYWORLD.

**Oedipal Narrative** A MASTER PLOT in our culture based on Sophocles's Oedipus the King as interpreted by Sigmund Freud. While Freud used the term Oedipus complex to refer to the unconscious desire of a son to murder his father and to sleep with his mother, the master plot tells of a male subject's desire for a female and violent attitudes toward a rival and the eventual working out of those emotions (or not) in a socially acceptable way or not.

**Omniscience** A quality attributed to some extradiegetic-HETERODIEGETIC narrators, referring not only to their total knowledge of the characters and storyworld but also to their capacity to locate themselves anywhere in that world. See also DEGESIS / DYGETIC LEVEL; FOCIALIZATION.

**Order** In Gérard Genette's model, a way of describing the relation between two temporal sequences: the sequence of events that can be assumed to have unfolded in the storyworld, and the unfolding of the discourse
used to recount that sequence. When these two sequences are aligned, the result is chronological narration. Anachrony results when the sequences are disaligned, yielding analepses (or flashbacks), prolepses (or flash-forwards), and sometimes complex combinations and embeddings of the two.

**Oulipo Group** Abbreviation for Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle (Workshop for Potential Literature), a Paris-based circle of literary experimentalists, flourishing from 1960 to the present, dedicated to producing literary works through the operation of preestablished procedures or constraints and associated with such figures as Raymond Queneau, Georges Perec, Italo Calvino, and Harry Mathews.

**Palimpsest** Literally, writing in layers, where the inscription on one layer covers but does not obliterate those on previous layers. Metaphorically, a term used to refer to meanings that arise from the relation between surface and subsurface levels of a text.

**Paralepsis** Gérard Genette’s term for a technique in which more information is provided about the storyworld than one would expect, given the dominant code of focalization used in the text. In a text that scrupulously limits itself to presenting events in the way in which they appear while unfolding, a paraleptic moment would be one in which there is a sudden revelation of details that could only have been learned about later in time.

**Paralipsis** Gérard Genette’s term for a technique in which less information is provided about the storyworld than one would expect, given the dominant code of focalization used in the text. In a text that freely draws on information gained in the future to evaluate the significance of present events, a paralipptic moment would be one in which details are withheld about an occurrence that subsequently prove fateful.

**Paratext** Term coined by Gérard Genette to refer to materials accompanying a text, such as a title, authorial attribution, date of publication, preface, epigram, afterword, and so forth (Paratext). These materials afford resources for interpretation, allowing readers to channel and delimit their inferential activities by situating texts within generic categories, historical epochs, authors’ oeuvres, sociopolitical controversies, and so on.

**Pause** Gérard Genette’s term for the slowest possible narrative speed; a type of duration in which the discourse of the narrator continues to unfold, even though the action has come to a standstill.

**Perspective/Point of View** As noted in Jesse Matz’s contribution to this volume, issues of perspective and point of view are now most often treated under the heading of focalization. Gérard Genette drew a distinction between focalization, which pertains to who sees or perceives, and narrative, which pertains to who speaks in a narrative. See also voice.

**Plot** H. Porter Abbott (“Story”) has distinguished between three senses of the term plot: a type of story (as in marriage plot); the combination and sequencing of events that make a story a story and not just an assemblage of events; and a sense similar to that of discourse, by which theorists emphasize how the plot rearranges and otherwise manipulates the events of the story. See also employment; narrative progression.

**Political Unconscious** Frederic Jameson’s term for how narratives are necessarily embedded in broader sociopolitical contexts, which exert, sometimes in surreptitious ways, a shaping pressure on narrative structure. The workings of the political unconscious in a given text can be recovered through a three-stage hermeneutical process based on three concentrically arranged interpretive horizons. In the first horizon, the text can be read in Lévi-Straussian terms as a symbolic act, in other words, an imaginary resolution of underlying social contradictions. In the second, wider horizon, the text functions as an ideologeme, or smallest intelligible unit of ideology; in this horizon, the text can be read as a symptom of the antagonism among class discourses. Finally, when interpreted within the third and widest horizon, the text reflects recessive, dominant, or emergent modes of production, in the Marxist sense of that term.

**Possible World** See narrative worldmaking; storyworld.

**Postclassical Narratology** Frameworks for narrative research (e.g., cognitive narratology, feminist narratology, and transcultural narratology) that build on the work of classical, structuralist narratologists but supplement that earlier work with concepts and methods that were unavailable to story analysts such as Roland Barthes, Gérard Genette, A. J. Greimas, and Tzvetan Todorov during the heyday of structuralism.

**Postmodern Narrative** Innovative narrative forms practiced in Europe and the Americas (and maybe farther afield) since about 1960, in the aftermath of modernism; characterized by a playful and gamelike (ludic) quality; by parody, pastiche, and the rewriting of earlier texts; by the conflation of serious literature with popular culture, including genre fiction; by self-reflection and metafiction; by critical reflection on the historical past and its representations; by neofantastic and other antirealistic forms; and by various strategies for pluralizing, problematizing, and destabilizing storyworlds. See also cybertext; oulipo group.

**Poststructuralism** A cover term for a variety of different positions that, building on but also reacting against structuralism, question the stability and certainty of knowledge. In the strand of poststructuralism most influenced by the work of Michel Foucault, knowledge is never disinterested or objective because of its inextricable connection with power. In the strand most influenced by the work of Jacques Derrida, the quest for secure
knowledge is bound up with a metaphysics of presence, which is in turn
premised on a quixotic attempt to overcome the inevitable instability of lan-
guage. In the strand most influenced by the work of Jacques Lacan, knowl-
dge is understood as unstable because the subjectivity of the knower is
grounded in signifying systems that are, again, irreducibly unstable. Gener-
ally speaking, poststructuralists regard classical NARRATOLOGY as a movement
that fails to recognize the instability of narrative and the structures that it
purports to depend on.

**Progression** See NARRATIVE PROGRESSION.

**Prolepsis** In Gérard Genette’s model, the equivalent of a flash-forward
in film. Prolepsis occurs when events that occur in the order ABC are told
in the order ACB, CAB, or BAC.

**Psycchnarration** See SPEECH AND THOUGHT REPRESENTATION.

**Public versus Private Voice** Susan Lanser’s distinction between nara-
tion addressed to a NARRATEE external to the storyworld (public) and narra-
tion addressed to a narratee internal to the storyworld (private). See also
VOICE.

**Punctum** Roland Barthes’s term for that element of a photograph that
touches the viewer emotionally, that element that has the power to “punc-
ture” the viewer (Cameras Lucida).

**Quoted Monologue** See SPEECH AND THOUGHT REPRESENTATION.

**Reader** See AUDIENCE.

**Realized Metaphor** A procedure, widespread in poetry but also typical
of science fiction and some POSTMODERN NARRATIVES, whereby a metaphorical
expression is converted into a literal reality in some STORYWORLD. For
instance, “His world exploded” would be understood as metaphorical in most
cultures but could be realized in a science fiction context where exploding
worlds are literally possible. See also NOVUM.

**Reflector** A term coined by the novelist Henry James to designate the
center of consciousness through whose perceptions events are FILTERED in a
narrative using third-person, or HETEROCHRONIC, narration. A paradigm case
would be Gregor Samsa in Franz Kafka’s Metamorphosis.

**Remediation** The interadaptation of sign systems, whereby an artifact or
representation originally produced in one medium is transposed into an-
other. Remediation is thus a more general process than, say, film adaptation,
since it encompasses everything from plastic action figures based on television
series or comic books to video games based on movies (or vice versa)
to transcriptions based on audiotaped or videorecorded communicative
interactions.

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**Rhetorical Theories of Narrative** Rhetorical theories emphasize nara-
tive as an act of communication from AUTHOR to AUDIENCE through means of
the narrative text, but different theorists emphasize different elements and
effects of that communication. Deconstructionists such as Paul de Man
focus on the rhetorical figures of the narrative text to reveal the divided
logic or unreadability of those figures and of the larger communication.
Wolfgang Iser emphasizes the inevitable gaps in the narrative text and the
activity of the IMPLIED READER in filling in those gaps (Act; IMPLIED READER).
Meir Sternberg also focuses on textual gaps, linking them to effects of sus-
pense, curiosity, and surprise. Mikhail Bakhtin examines the author’s orches-
tration of the dialogic interplay among different sociolects in the narrative
text (“Discourse”). Wayne C. Booth, Peter J. Rabinow, and James Phelan
emphasize narrative as an act designed by an author for an implied audi-
ence in the service of a particular purpose. Their approach regards the text
as a multilayered communication, and they are especially interested in the
cognitive, affective, and ethical dimensions of that communication. See also
DIALOGISM; NARRATIVE PROGRESSION; UNRELIABLE NARRATION.

**Russian Formalists** A group of literary scholars and theorists, based in
Saint Petersburg and Moscow in the years just before and after the 1917
revolution, until their suppression by the Bolshevik regime in the late twen-
ties, and including Viktor Shklovsky, Roman Jakobson, Boris Eikhenbaum,
Boris Tomashevsky, Yury Tynyanov, and (more tangentially) the folklorist
Vladimir Propp. They were responsible for breakthrough insights into literary
language, versification, literary history, and, not least, the poetics of
narrative prose.

**Satellite** Seymour Chatman’s term (Story) for an EVENT that can be deleted
from the paraphrase of a narrative without altering the story itself. Roland
Barthes (“Introduction”) called such events catalyzers. See also KERNEL.

**Scene** In Gérard Genette’s model, scenic presentation is a narrative
speed or mode of DURATION in which one can assume a direct equivalence
between how long it takes for things to happen in the storyworld and how
long it takes the narrator to recount those happenings.

**Seme** In semantics, a minimal unit of meaning—for example, the lexical
item bachelor (in one of its senses) might be analyzed into the semes “not
married” and “male.” In Roland Barthes’s S/Z, it is a connoted meaning, the
basic unit of what Barthes calls the semic code. See also CODES FOR READING;
SEMIOTICS; STRUCTURALISM.

**Semiotics** The study of signs and, thus, of the codes that regulate their
use and interpretation. Such CODES FOR READING, as Roland Barthes called
them (S/Z), link signifying expressions with what they are standardly taken
to signify, as when a loud, angry remark signifies a character’s aggressiveness
or a large estate signifies someone’s wealth. For Ferdinand de Saussure, language is only one of multiple sign systems, and hence linguistics is a subset of semiotics—or “semiology,” as Saussure called it. For C. S. Peirce, signs can be divided into three main types: icon, where there is a resemblance between signifier and signified (as when big eyeglasses are placed in front of an optometrist’s office); index, where there is a causal relation between signifier and signified (as when smoke signifies fire); and symbol, where there is a conventional relation between signifier and signified (as with verbal language). See also **SEMI.**

**Situation of Enunciation**  
All those features of the context in which a narrative discourse is produced that shape that discourse, including features of the spatial and temporal context, the medium or channel involved, and so on, and especially the relationships among the parts to the act of enunciation (differences of gender, race, class, or seniority, relative power or authority, etc.).

**Sjuzet**  
See **DISCOURSE.**

**Slant**  
Seymour Chatman’s term (*Coming to Terms*) for the dispositions and attitudes of a narrator reporting events from a position outside the storyworld, as opposed to the perspectival bias or vantage point of a character in that narrated world. See also **FILTER; FOCALIZATION.**

**Speech and Thought Representation**  
The representation in narrative discourse of characters’ utterances and thoughts. In the speech-category approach critiqued by Alan Palmer in *Fictional Minds,* theorists assume a basic parallelism, or homology, between modes of speech representation and strategies for representing characters’ minds. Thus, indirect speech is mapped onto indirect thought, or what Dorrit Cohn terms psychonarration (cf. “Bob said that he was hungry and needed to eat” and “Feeling hungry, Bob realized that he needed to eat”); free indirect speech gets mapped onto free indirect thought, or Cohn’s narrated monologue (cf. “Bob was hungry; he was damn sure going to eat”); and direct speech gets mapped onto direct thought, or quoted monologue (“Bob said/thought, ‘I’m hungry, and I need to eat’”). Palmer and other **COGNITIVE NARRATOLOGISTS** have argued for the need to move beyond this speech-category approach and its focus on inner speech—to be able to capture other aspects of CONSCIOUSNESS REPRESENTATION in narrative contexts. See also **EXPERIENTIALITY.**

**Story**  
In informal usage, story is a synonym for narrative. In narratology, the “story” level of narrative (in French, *histoire*) corresponds to what Russian formalist theorists called the fabula; it contrasts with the **DISCOURSE** (**discurso**) level. In this sense, story refers to the chronological sequence of situations and events that can be reconstructed on the basis of cues provided in a narrative text.

**Storyworld**  
The world evoked by a narrative text of discourse; a global mental model of the situations and events being recounted. Reciprocally, narrative artifacts (texts, films, etc.) provide blueprints for the creation and modification of such mentally configured storyworlds. See also **DEICTIC SHIFT; NARRATIVE WORLDMAKING.**

**Stretch**  
Gérard Genette’s term for a narrative speed or mode of duration faster than **PAUSE** but slower than **SCENE,** in which both **NARRATION** and action progress but what is told transpires more rapidly than the telling.

**Structuralism**  
An approach to literary and cultural analysis, especially prominent in the sixties and seventies, that used linguistics as a “pilot-science” to study diverse forms of cultural expression as rule-governed signifying practices, or “languages,” in their own right. **NARRATOLOGY** was an outgrowth of this general approach. See also **LANGUE; PAROLE.**

**Summary**  
Gérard Genette’s term for a narrative speed or mode of duration faster than scene but slower than **ELLIPSIS;** summaries are more or less compressed accounts of **STORYWORLD** occurrences.

**Tellability**  
To be tellable, situations and events must in some way stand out against the backdrop formed by everyday expectations and norms, and thus be worth reporting. See also **NARRATIVITY.**

**Transmedial Narratology**  
A strand of postclassical narratology premised on the assumption that, although storytelling practices in different media share common features insofar as they are all instances of the narrative text type, those practices are nonetheless inflected by the constraints and affordances associated with a given medium. Unlike classical narratology, transmedial narratology disputes the notion that the story level of a narrative remains wholly invariant across shifts of medium. However, it also assumes that stories do have “gists” that can be **REMEDIATED** more or less fully and recognizably—depending in part on the semantic properties of the source and target media.

**Transmission**  
(1) The process by which narratives circulate in a culture or across cultures. (2) The process by which narrative communication flows from an actual **AUTHOR** to an actual **READER.** Different approaches to narrative describe this transmission in somewhat different ways, but the most widespread model is a symmetrical one with three agents on each side of the communicative act. On the sending side there is an actual **AUTHOR** who creates an implied version of himself or herself who in turn creates a **NARRATOR.** On the receiving side, there is the **AUDIENCE** addressed by the narrator (the **narratee**), the one addressed by the author (the **implied reader** or the **authorial audience**), and the actual reader. See also **IMPLIED AUTHOR.**
**Unnatural Narrative**

A narrative whose effects depend on its violation of the principles of mimesis, either in its elements of discourse (e.g., by employing nonhuman narrators) or in its elements of story (e.g., by depicting a storyworld in which the law of noncontradiction does not apply).

**Unreliable Narration**

A mode of narrative in which the teller of a story cannot be taken at his or her word, compelling the audience to "read between the lines"—in other words, to scan the text for clues about how the storyworld really is, as opposed to how the narrator says it is. There is much debate about whether unreliability is a consequence of an implied author's signals or a reader's inferences. James Phelan's rhetorical approach (Living; "Estranging") identifies three main kinds of unreliability—misreporting about facts and events, misinterpreting characters' behavior or events, and misvaluing characters' ethical qualities—and two main effects of it, estranging (in which the unreliability increases the distance between the narrator and the authorial audience) and bonding (in which the unreliability closes that distance).

**Vision**

See focalization; perspective / point of view.

**Visual Culture**

The various representations of a society that take a visual form and the processes by which they are produced, circulated, and interpreted.

**Visual Literacy**

The ability to encode and decode visual signs according to the norms of one's visual culture.

**Voice**

In classical narratology, the answer to the question, Who is speaking? In ideological criticism, the power to speak and to be heard (as in Gayatri Spivak's question, "Can the subaltern speak?"). In rhetorical theory, the synthesis of style, tone, and values. See also focalization; narration.

**Worldmaking**

See narrative worldmaking.

**Note**

1. References to Genette cite Narrative Discourse unless otherwise indicated.

**Works Cited**


