

THEORY AND INTERPRETATION OF NARRATIVE

James Phelan, Peter J. Rabinowitz, and Robyn Warhol, Series Editors



Narrative Theory

Core Concepts and Critical Debates

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P R E F A C E

If we were to compile a list of Frequently Asked Questions about narrative theory, we would put the following two at or near the top: “what is narrative theory?” and “how do different approaches to narrative relate to each other?” *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts and Critical Debates* addresses both questions and, more significantly, also demonstrates the extent to which the questions themselves are intertwined: how one defines narrative theory shapes one’s understanding of how the different approaches are related, and vice versa. At the same time, the structure of the book reflects our assumption that promoting dialogue among practitioners in the field is the best way to address both of these interlinked questions.

Thus, in Part One, we address the first question by taking turns exploring core concepts of narrative theory—authors, narrators, and narration; plot, time, and progression; space, setting, and perspective; character; reception and the reader; and issues of value—from four distinct theoretical perspectives. Jim Phelan and Peter Rabinowitz demonstrate a rhetorical approach to narrative theory; Robyn Warhol, a feminist approach; David Herman, an approach emphasizing the interconnections between narrative and mind; and Brian Richardson, an antimimetic approach focused on a tradition of storytelling that violates conventions of realism and conversational storytelling and that thus calls for the development of an “unnatural” narratology. In addition, Part One demonstrates the interpretive consequences of our four perspectives by focusing on the analysis of four particular narratives: Phelan and Rabinowitz work with Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn*, Warhol explores Jane Austen’s *Persuasion*, Herman examines Ian McEwan’s *On Chesil Beach*,

and Richardson investigates Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. Then, in Part Two, we address the second question—"how do different approaches to narrative relate to each other?"—by taking turns discussing one another's contributions to Part One. In effect, we revise this second question by making it much more pointed: "how does my/our preferred approach relate to the other three approaches?" In staging this dialogue, Part Two not only highlights some key debates in contemporary narrative theory but also provides a navigational aid for readers seeking to orient themselves within the general landscape of narrative studies.

Of course, there are many other *Approaches to This and That* books on the market, and, in fact, some of us have had a hand in producing such books. *Narrative Theory* is fundamentally different for two reasons. First, our contributions are the latest chapter in conversations that the five of us have been having for years. Although the sections in Part One were written independently of one another, we each worked with a strong sense of (and respect for) what the others would be saying, and with a commitment to framing our arguments in terms of this continuing discussion. What we have, then, is four separate voices working not in absolute independence but rather in counterpoint. Second, for all our disagreements (some of them contentious), we all consider ourselves to be contributing to a shared project: developing ways of understanding what stories are and how people engage with them. Consequently, as will become especially clear in Part Two, it is not surprising that issues on which we disagree are flanked by other issues where our positions converge, overlap, or intertwine in complicated ways. To put this second point another way, the "navigational aid" that we offer here aims not to steer our readers in particular directions but rather to give them the means to pick their own routes through major debates within the field—routes that may well differ from any of ours.

We have written *Narrative Theory* for teachers, graduate students, and advanced undergraduates as well as for specialists in narrative theory. Given its combination of theory and interpretation, its range of approaches and illustrative narratives, and its unusual feature of having the co-authors responding directly to one another's contributions, we hope that the book could be the basis for courses (or a substantial part of courses) in narrative fiction, narrative theory, or literary theory. At the same time, we believe that specialists can benefit from the book's compact presentation—and demonstration—of four approaches to narrative, as well as our conversation in Part Two about the possibilities and limitations of those approaches. Indeed, as we explain below, we view the book as (literally) an invitation for readers at

all levels to engage in a broader discussion about core concepts and critical debates in narrative theory.

Our organization in Part One allows readers to choose different paths through that section depending on their own backgrounds and interests. Because we take turns addressing key concepts, readers concerned with comparing approaches can readily consider similarities and differences between, say, rhetorical and feminist conceptions of plot, just as they can juxtapose the treatment of character or space in an approach that foregrounds issues of narrative and mind against their treatment in an approach that concentrates on experimental, antimimetic narratives. And because we arrange the approaches in the same sequence (rhetorical, feminist, mind-oriented, antimimetic) within each chapter, readers who want to trace a single perspective through several different concepts will easily be able to do so.

We should also note that although we have each developed analyses that are meant to reflect current practices within different traditions in the domain of narrative theory, we have written our contributions with a view to articulating our own take on the issues. Thus rather than acting as spokespersons for an entire group or school, where appropriate we have made it a point to note ways in which our own positions differ from the positions of others developing the same general approach—with those very differences indicating productive areas of debate within as well as across approaches. Finally, we recognize that the four approaches discussed here do not cover the entire field and that there are many theorists doing valuable work that does not fit comfortably under any one of the four rubrics we use to describe our work. But we happily acknowledge this limitation because it underscores the diversity and vitality of contemporary narrative theory. In that spirit, we view Part Two as only the starting point for a broader dialogue about the core concepts, methods, and goals of narrative theory, and we invite all our readers to contribute to the blog that The Ohio State University Press has generously created for purposes of further discussion. The web address is https://ohiostatepress.org/Narrative_Theory_Debates. Your participation, we are confident, will add greatly to the further development of our individual and collective thinking even as it expands the frontiers of our field.

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PART ONE

Perspectives

Rhetorical, Feminist, Mind-Oriented, Antimimetic

1

Introduction

The Approaches

Narrative as Rhetoric

James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz

As rhetorical narrative theorists, we look at narrative primarily as a rhetorical act rather than as an object. That is, we see it as a purposive communication of a certain kind from one person (or group of persons) to one or more others. More specifically, our default starting point is the following skeletal definition: *Narrative is somebody telling somebody else, on some occasion, and for some purposes, that something happened to someone or something.* Every part of this definition after “is” deserves further commentary—and we will provide such commentary in the following chapters. Before we do so, however, we’d like to start out by identifying six main principles that underlie our approach.

1. Narrative is often treated as a representation of a linked sequence of events, but we subsume that traditional viewpoint under a broader conception of narrative as itself an event—more specifically, *a multidimensional purposive communication from a teller to an audience.* The focus on narrative as *purposive* means that we are interested in the ways in which the elements of any narrative (e.g., character, setting, plot structure) are shaped in the service of larger ends. The focus on narrative as *multileveled communication* means that we are interested not simply in the meaning of narrative but also in the experience of it. Thus, we are as concerned with narrative’s affective, ethical, and aesthetic effects—and with their interactions—as we are with its thematic meanings.

Of course, the underlying rhetorical situation varies in different kinds of narrative. For instance, in fictional narratives such as *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the occasion/teller/audience situation is at least doubled: shortly after the events (before he lights out for the Indian Territory), Huck tells his story to his audience for his own purposes, while at a much later historical moment, Twain communicates both Huck's story and Huck's telling of it to *his* audience for *his* own purposes. (As actual readers, we read it on yet another occasion—and attending to the differences that these different occasions make is one way in which we bring history into rhetorical analysis.) To put these points another way, a fictional narrative is a single text combining multiple tracks of rhetorical communication. As this way of describing the communication implies, the rhetorical approach is ultimately most concerned with the author's telling to his or her audience. We will come back to these tracks of communication and the roles of various audiences in them in chapter 6.

In nonfictional narrative, the extent to which the rhetorical situation is doubled will depend on the extent to which the author signals her difference from or similarity to the "I" who tells the story and the extent to which the author posits an internal audience different from his or her readers. Sometimes authors of nonfiction speak directly in their own voices (as, for example, Joan Didion does in *The Year of Magical Thinking*), but at other times authors of nonfiction distance themselves from their narrators (as, for example, Frank McCourt does in *Angela's Ashes*). Sometimes an author of a nonfictional narrative will address a specific audience who is clearly distinct from the author's larger audience (think, for example, of an elegiac narrative addressed to a deceased subject, such as Marilyn Hacker's poetic tribute "Elegy for a Soldier, June Jordan, 1936–2002").

We characterize our definition as "default" rather than "definitive" for two reasons.

- (a) We believe it captures essential characteristics of most of those works that are widely considered to be narratives in our culture, even as we recognize that individual narratives may not conform exactly to every element of the definition. Thus, for example, we say "something happened," because the telling of events typically occurs after their occurrence. But we also recognize that the telling can sometimes be simultaneous with the events (as in J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*) or before the events (as in narratives written in the future tense, such as Lee K. Abbott's "As Fate Would Have It"—which also shifts from the default of the indicative mood to the subjunctive).

Characterizing the definition as “default” helps us recognize both that there will be deviations *and* that such deviations tend to be significant.

- (b) We do not believe that there is a single, best definition of narrative. Rather, any definition, because it implies a particular orientation, brings with it a particular set of emphases and serves a particular set of interests. That is, any definition highlights certain characteristics of individual narratives while obscuring or even effacing others. Our default definition reflects our special interest both in the multidimensional purposes of narrative acts and in the relationships among authors, narrator(s), and audiences.

2. In interpreting narrative, rhetorical narratologists adopt an a posteriori instead of an a priori stance. Rather than declaring what narratives invariably do or how they invariably do it, we seek to understand and assess the variety of things narratives have done and the variety of ways they have done it. In practical terms, this principle means that rhetorical narrative theory does not preselect for analysis particular issues such as gender or cognition or particular kinds of narratives such as those deploying antimimetic elements of story or of discourse—though of course we recognize that some narratives give special prominence to those issues or elements. More generally, rhetorical narrative theory maintains its interest in how narratives seek to achieve their multidimensional purposes even as it strives to be sufficiently flexible to respond to the diversity of narrative acts.

3. In explaining the effects of narrative, rhetorical narrative theory identifies a feedback loop among authorial agency, textual phenomena (including intertextual relations), and reader response. In other words, our approach assumes that texts are designed by authors (consciously or not) to affect readers in particular ways; that those authorial designs are conveyed through the occasions, words, techniques, structures, forms, and dialogic relations of texts as well as the genres and conventions readers use to understand them; and that since reader responses are ideally a consequence of those designs, they can also serve as an initial guide to (although, since misreadings are possible, not as a guarantee of) the workings of the text. At the same time, reader responses, including affective and ethical ones, can be a test of the efficacy of those designs. Thus, for example, we would expect any adequate analysis of the Phelps farm episodes of *Huckleberry Finn*—the episodes in which Tom Sawyer orchestrates an unnecessarily elaborate plan by which he and Huck free Jim—to account for the tedium most readers experience as they slog through the seemingly interminable section and the disappointment they feel in Huck’s ethical decline in his relationship with Jim. For that

reason, we find many thematic defenses of Twain's design to be unpersuasive: they neglect the evidence of readerly response or regard it as less significant than the thematic meanings they find in the design. We will return to this issue in more detail in chapter 7.

4. We regard the progression of a narrative—its synthesis of textual and readerly dynamics—as the key means by which an author achieves his or her purposes, and we therefore look to a study of progression for key insights into understanding how a narrative works. Since we are interested in why the narrative text is the way it is and not some other way, we are interested in understanding the principles of its construction. Coming to understand the principles that underlie its progression from a particular starting point to a particular ending point provides an excellent way to understand a narrative's design and its purposes.

Textual dynamics are the internal processes by which narratives move from beginning through middle to ending, and readerly dynamics are the corresponding cognitive, affective, ethical, and aesthetic responses of the audience to those textual dynamics. The bridge between textual dynamics and readerly dynamics is formed by narrative judgments of three kinds: interpretive, ethical, and aesthetic. These judgments constitute a bridge because they are encoded in the narrative yet made by readers, and, once made, their various interactions lead to readers' multilayered responses. (For more on these responses see point number 6.)

5. With regard to fictional narrative, the approach identifies three key audiences involved in the rhetorical exchanges, though it is just as accurate to say that it focuses on the actual audience (the flesh-and-blood readers, both as individuals and as a group) and two primary positions that the actual audience typically adopts. First, readers typically join (or try to join) the authorial audience, the hypothetical group for whom the author writes—the group that shares the knowledge, values, prejudices, fears, and experiences that the author expected in his or her readers and that ground his or her rhetorical choices. Second, the actual audience *pretends* to join the narrative audience, the audience that receives the narrator's text—an audience that exists in the narrator's world, that regards the characters and events as real rather than invented, and that accepts the basic facts of the storyworld regardless of whether they conform to those of the actual world. The narrative audience does not necessarily accept the narrator's portrayal as accurate, any more than the reader of a nonfictional text necessarily accepts everything represented as true; but the narrative audience does, as its default position, accept the world presented in the text as a “real” one. With some narratives (e.g., epistolary novels), it may also be useful to distinguish between the narrative

audience and the narratee, the intratextual audience specifically addressed by the narrator. The terms are sometimes used almost as synonyms, but the differences are often significant. The narrative audience is a role that the actual reader takes on while reading; the narratee, in contrast, is a character position in the text, one that the narrative audience in a sense observes. Thus, when we begin Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, we do not pretend to be Mrs. Saville, to whom Captain Walton is addressing his letters; rather, we pretend to be a narrative audience that views her as a real person and that, in a sense, reads over her shoulder.

One final (for now) note on audiences that also applies to our other analytic concepts. Our approach is profoundly pragmatic, in the everyday rather than philosophical sense, and when studying particular texts, we're apt to glide over distinctions that don't bear significant interpretive weight. Thus, for instance, although *Huckleberry Finn* begins with a direct address to "you," the narratee is not characterized, and the distinction between narrative audience and narratee does not have a sufficient payoff for us to use it in our analysis of Twain's rhetorical communications.

6. Audiences develop interests and responses of three broad kinds, each related to a particular component of the narrative: mimetic, thematic, and synthetic. Responses to the mimetic component involve readers' interests in the characters as possible people and in the narrative world as like our own, that is, hypothetically or conceptually possible and still compatible with the laws and limitations that govern the extratextual world. These responses to the mimetic component include our evolving judgments and emotions, our desires, hopes, expectations, satisfactions, and disappointments. Responses to the thematic component involve readers' interests in the ideational function of the characters and in the cultural, ideological, philosophical, or ethical issues being addressed by the narrative. Responses to the synthetic component involve an audience's interest in and attention to the characters and to the larger narrative as artificial constructs, interests that link up with our aesthetic judgments. The relationship among an audience's relative interests in these different components will vary from narrative to narrative depending on the nature of its genre and progression. Some narratives (including most so-called realistic fiction) are dominated by mimetic interests; some (including allegories and political polemics such as *Animal Farm*) stress the thematic; others (including the *nouveau roman* and much postmodern metafiction) put priority on the synthetic. But the interests of many narratives are more evenly distributed among two or three of the components (Dostoevsky's novels, for instance, promote both the mimetic and the thematic). Furthermore, developments in the course of a narrative can

generate new relations among those interests. Indeed, many narratives derive their special power from shifting our attention from one kind of component to another: Nabokov's *Bend Sinister*, for instance, has the effect that it does in part because, in the closing pages, the mimetic is drowned out by the synthetic. In *Huckleberry Finn*, our main interest is in the mimetic and thematic components, with the synthetic remaining in the background.

In the chapters that follow we will elaborate on these six principles and demonstrate their consequences for interpreting—and evaluating—the novel that Ernest Hemingway claimed was the fountainhead of all American literature.

A Feminist Approach to Narrative

Robyn Warhol

Like feminist theory itself, feminist narrative theory has consistently increased in its scope of interest. What began as a “feminist narratology” that focused on the impact of culturally constructed gender upon the form and reception of narrative texts has broadened to feminist narratologies that include race, sexuality, nationality, class, and ethnicity as well as gender in their analysis of texts. As I use the term now, in the wake of the third-wave critique of white-liberal feminism and in opposition to the postfeminist assumptions that prevail in the U.S. mainstream, “feminism” denotes the conviction that dominant culture and society are organized to the disadvantage of *everyone* who does not fit a white, masculine, middle- or upper-class, Euro-American, not-yet-disabled, heterosexual norm. Feminist analysis today must take what Kimberlé Crenshaw named an “intersectional” approach because white privilege, class privilege, heteronormativity, and other positions of relative power complicate hierarchies of gender. As a feminist, I recognize that the “patriarchy” we understand to underwrite male dominance relies on the collusion of women and other marginalized groups even though it serves only a small minority of the people in the world: if everyone who is disadvantaged by it were to end the collusion and positively revolt, patriarchy would not stand a chance. As it is, however, patriarchal arrangements still govern Western culture and institutions, including (and for our purposes especially) the institution of literary theory and criticism.

As the original feminist narratologists pointed out, classical narratology developed in a pointedly masculinist academic culture, based on theories developed by men who grounded their models in the study of male-written texts. The idea behind feminist narratology was that examination of non-mainstream texts could yield generalizable observations about narrative that might be invisible in the mainstream canon. That idea was based on the feminist assumption that texts are always linked to the material circumstances of the history that produces and receives them, an assumption that contradicted the formalist stance of classical narratology and that through the intervention of such influential figures as Gerald Prince has come to be accepted within the broader practice of narrative theory, especially as it is applied to ethnically marked or postcolonial texts.¹ Because the term “narratology” still connotes for many a theoretical approach cut off from questions of history and context, some critics—myself among them—have begun using “feminist narrative theory” or “queer and feminist narrative theories” to name the field.

My assigned task in this book is not to provide a detailed history or overview of the many ways in which feminist narrative theory has come to be in use today, but rather to demonstrate my own reading practice by bringing feminist theory together with narrative theory as I look closely at a favorite text of mine, Jane Austen's posthumously published *Persuasion* (1818). One of the great advantages of narrative theoretical criticism for feminism is its self-consciousness about methodology, its insistence on being clear about what questions we bring to bear upon texts and about how we will go about answering them. Ironically, apolitical narratology's self-consciousness combines well with feminist criticism's explicitly political agenda. Foundational narrative theorists (e.g., Gérard Genette) did not pretend to be making objective or even empirical pronouncements in their descriptions of how texts are put together, and Genette's work especially reflects his awareness that another critic might find different patterns in Proust.² It is a small step from admitting that one's observations are affected by one's subjective position to identifying that position's affiliation with a specific set of convictions, like feminism. In this sense feminist criticism and narrative theory form a suitable match.

Of the varieties of theoretical orientation represented in this volume, feminist narrative theory has most in common with the rhetorical and antimimetic approaches and least in common with cognitive narratology. Rhetorical narrative theory, like feminist narrative theory, considers the narrative text not just to represent but actually to constitute a transaction between an author and a reader. For rhetorical narrative theorists like James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz, however, considerations of gender, sexuality, race, or class are only incidental to the fact that a genuine communication occurs when a person picks up a narrative text and reads it. Feminist narrative theory takes that communication as a given but tries always to frame its analysis with as much socio-historical context as can be known for the author and readers in question. Antimimetic narrative theory can also overlap in productive ways with the feminist approach, in that many modern and postmodern experimental narratives, from Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* (1931) to Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body* (1994) to Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* (2006), are thematically linked to gender and sexuality, and the very act of writing outside generic realist boundaries has been seen by many feminist novelists and theorists as itself a subversive gesture.³ An antimimetic critic like Brian Richardson will often attend to the sexed and gendered implications of the forms he analyzes, though the question of feminist politics is not central to his method. Of the contemporary approaches current in narrative theory, cognitive narratology of the kind that David Herman practices is the least

closely linked to feminist narrative theory, because the study of processes in the human brain necessarily privileges similarities among people over differences. The fact of difference—and more importantly, the fact that social inequities are still grounded in culturally produced differences—means that feminist narrative theorists are not yet willing to make the jump from the culturally constructed to the universal, which seems to resonate with the essentialism most poststructuralist feminists strive to undermine. Still, work such as Frederick Luis Aldama's in neuroscience and narrative joins up with feminist narrative theory through its interest in the affective and emotional impact of narrative texts, as well as its attention to the impact of cultural difference on the activity of reading.⁴ Nothing in any of the other contemporary versions of narrative theory prohibits attention to gender, sexuality, class, or other politically significant and historically grounded differences. What chiefly sets feminist narrative theory apart is its insistence⁵ on placing those issues at the center of the inquiry.

Looking over what I have written for this volume, I can draw some generalizations about what I do when I am practicing feminist narrative criticism. In the analysis of *Persuasion*, I tend to look primarily for ways in which Austen's novel deconstructs binary oppositions underlying mainstream assumptions about gender, sexuality, and class. That is, if the dominant culture of Austen's period promoted the ideology of separate spheres—assigning public life, professions, and power to men and relegating women to domesticity, marriage, and submission—I am interested in reading Austen's novels as responses to and critiques of that ideology. This goes far beyond the time-honored feminist practice of examining “images of women” in order to expose stereotyping and to praise authors' ability to move outside expected sex roles in creating their characters. Even the most stereotypical of Austen's characters embody contradictory traits that complicate her novels' representations of gender and sexuality. In the spirit of poststructuralism, the feminist narrative critic seeks to identify those contradictions and to resist reconciling or resolving them, always keeping in mind the complexity of narrative technologies for endowing a literary character with an interiority and a persona.

At the thematic level of analysis, I confess I am always alert to anything I can see as signs of feminism in Jane Austen's texts. This is attributable partly to my conviction—reinforced by biographical evidence—that Austen either read Mary Wollstonecraft or was exposed secondhand to her ideas about the rights of women, and partly to my sincere wish (shared, I believe, by many contemporary Austen fans) for my favorite author not to have been an instrument of patriarchal oppression, in her day or in ours. I do not look so

much for characters' expressions of feminist sentiment (though in *Persuasion* I find significant ones) as I do for narrative practices that pull against received notions of what is suitable to a female character's life or a female novelist's text. When in the early 1980s D. A. Miller revealed the resistance to conventionally neat marriage-plot closure in Austen's novels, he set a pattern for feminist narrative critics of her work. At the same time that it constitutes a critique of gender norms in society and in narrative, Austen's feminism can become manifest as a defense of the values her world and ours have tended to decry as excessively feminine. Granting ample narrative space, for example, to the minute and seemingly trivial details of women's conversations in domestic settings adds up to a literary form quite distinct from what Austen's male contemporaries like Sir Walter Scott were writing. For the feminist narratologist as for Miller, theme is always manifest in form. Deviations from formal norms make deviations from dominant ideology visible.

In the same spirit, I am also looking for positions the text takes on class, race, and the history of colonialism, as well as gender and sexuality. Many feminist critics, having learned from bell hooks to read "from margin to center," scrutinize details that nonfeminist criticism might find trivial or peripheral. In studying Austen, this means paying attention to what is *not* represented in the text as well as to what is. The anonymity of servants, the scarcity of working-class or impoverished characters, the implicit beliefs about income, privilege, and status in Austen's storyworld all *signify*, in the sense of the word that Austen herself employed. Edward Said famously showed how *Mansfield Park* (1814) both acknowledges and ignores the fact that Sir Thomas Bertram's Antiguan slaves enable the existence of the upper-class British lifestyle the novel posits as normal and desirable. Feminist theory suggests, however, that considerations of colonialism and race must also take gender, sexuality, and class into consideration, as Susan Fraiman has shown in her brilliant response to Said's argument—not a rebuttal, really, but a trenchant revision of his reading. Class, race, nation, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, dis/ability: feminist narrative theory tries to keep as many of those balls in the air as possible, accepting responsibility for critiquing narrative manifestations of all categories of oppression based on socially constructed identities.

Interdisciplinary feminist theory underlies the attitudes and practices I have been describing, just as it provides a gender-centered platform from which to view elements of narrative such as plot, perspective, voice, and space. Feminist epistemology, feminist geography, feminist historiography, and feminist ethnography are politically engaged modes for framing research in fields such as philosophy, history, and the social sciences which strive to

account for truth. Feminist literary and cultural criticism benefits from the insights of these theoretical approaches, though always keeping in the foreground the fact that texts are not reproductions of “reality” but rather are representations. What can be deduced from literary texts are attitudes toward gender oppression, not facts about how it occurs in the material world. But feminist narrative theorists also keep in mind the fact that literature has its own impact on the material world and that popular texts like the novels Jane Austen wrote can work to constitute real people’s gendered assumptions and behaviors as much as to reflect them. “Real” gender does not exist—gender is always and only a virtual construction (or, as Judith Butler calls it, a performance) built along a continuum between material practices and reading practices. The more we can understand about narrative’s role in the constitution of gender, the better positioned we are to change the oppressive ways that gender norms work in the world. As she can in so many other matters having to do with how to conduct ourselves, Jane Austen can help.

Exploring the Nexus of Narrative and Mind

David Herman

My contributions to this volume outline an approach that focuses on the nexus between narrative and mind, using Ian McEwan's 2007 novel *On Chesil Beach* as a case study. Research on the mind-narrative nexus, like feminist narratology, work on narrative across media, and other approaches to narrative inquiry can be described as a subdomain within "postclassical" narratology (Herman, "Introduction" to *Narratologies*). At issue are frameworks for narrative research that build on the ideas of classical, structuralist narratologists but supplement those ideas with work that was unavailable to story analysts such as Roland Barthes, Gérard Genette, Algirdas J. Greimas, and Tzvetan Todorov during the heyday of the structuralist revolution. In the case of scholarship bearing on narrative and mind, theorists have worked to enrich the original base of structuralist concepts with research on human intelligence either ignored by or inaccessible to the classical narratologists, in an effort to throw light on mental capacities and dispositions that provide grounds for—or, conversely, are grounded in—narrative experiences.

To explore these interfaces between stories and the mind, I use the idea of *narrative worldmaking* as a central heuristic framework, drawing on the pioneering insights of Nelson Goodman, Richard Gerrig, and other theorists. In my usage of the term, worldmaking encompasses the referential dimension of narrative, its capacity to evoke worlds in which interpreters can, with more or less ease or difficulty, take up imaginative residence.⁶ I argue that worldmaking is in fact the hallmark of narrative experiences, the root function of stories and storytelling that should therefore constitute the starting-point for narrative inquiry and the analytic tools developed in its service. Yet the structuralist narratologists, for their part, failed to investigate issues of narrative referentiality and world-modeling, not least because of the Saussurean language theory they used as their "pilot-science." Of key importance here is Saussure's bipartite analysis of the linguistic sign into the signifier and signified⁷ to the exclusion of the referent, as well as his related emphasis on code instead of message—that is, his foregrounding of the structural constituents and combinatory principles of the semiotic system of language over situated uses of that system. By contrast, in the years since structuralism, convergent research developments across multiple fields, including discourse analysis, philosophy, psychology, and narrative theory itself, have revealed the importance of studying how people deploy various sorts of symbol systems to refer to, and constitute, aspects of their experience. Building on this work, the approach I outline in this book assumes that a crucial outstanding

challenge for scholars of story is to come to terms with how narrative affords methods—indeed, serves as a primary resource—for world-modeling and world-creation.

A focus on narrative worldmaking studies how storytellers, using many different kinds of symbol systems (written or spoken language, static or moving images, word-image combinations, etc.), prompt interpreters to engage in the process of co-creating narrative worlds, or “storyworlds”—whether they are the imagined, autonomous worlds of fiction or the worlds about which nonfictional accounts make claims that are subject to falsification. As this last formulation suggests, although narrative provides the means for creating, transforming, and aggregating storyworlds across various settings and media,⁸ different kinds of narrative practices entail different protocols for worldmaking, with different consequences and effects. I argue that illuminating these protocols will require bringing scholarship on narrative into closer dialogue with developments in the sciences of mind. More than this, however, I suggest that moving issues of worldmaking to the forefront of narrative inquiry opens up new directions for basic research in the field, in part by underscoring the need to reframe the kinds of questions theorists ask about narrative itself.

In this respect, my emphasis on narrative worldmaking takes inspiration from Ludwig Wittgenstein’s later philosophy, or rather what has come to be called the *metaphilosophy* embedded in texts such as the *Philosophical Investigations*. According to this metaphilosophy, the role of philosophy is to dispel, through analysis of the way particular expressions are used in particular contexts, conceptual problems caused by overgeneralization of any specific usage—as when expressions involving numbers are conflated with expressions involving physical objects, such that numbers start to be treated as things (Horwich 165–67).⁹ Put another way, the later Wittgenstein’s central metaphilosophical insight is that the grammar with which a question is formulated, or the language in which a problem is cast, can close off other ways of surveying a given area of inquiry or mapping out a problem space being investigated. Similarly, in reorienting narrative theory around questions of worldmaking, and in turn situating storyworlds at the nexus of narrative and mind, I seek to recontextualize existing heuristic schemes for narrative study, or rather shift to an alternative vantage point from which those schemes’ underlying “grammar” can be surveyed anew.¹⁰ Hence my contributions have been designed to serve not just narratological purposes, by suggesting how a focus on worldmaking affords productive strategies for studying stories, but also metanarratological purposes, by using this same focus to reassess the terms in which questions about narrative have been formulated up to now.¹¹

For example, in the chapters that follow and also in my response to my coauthors' contributions in Part Two, I revisit the grammar of questions about narrative premised on the concept of mimesis. On the one hand, if mimesis is defined narrowly as imitation or reproduction, the very concept becomes untenable—since there can be no direct representation of the world, no bare encounter with reality, without mediating world-models.¹² On the other hand, if mimesis is defined as part of a family of strategies for deploying world-models, then the concept cannot do the work my coauthors try to get it to do—for example, when they set mimesis up as a standard or touchstone against which “antimimetic” stories, or the “synthetic” and “thematic” dimensions of narrative, can be measured. But changing the grammar of the question—asking not about mimesis or its absence but about how story designs can be arranged along a scale corresponding to more or less critical and reflexive methods of worldmaking—opens up new avenues for narrative inquiry. Along similar lines, my focus on issues of worldmaking leads me to reconsider (ways of asking) questions associated with the narrative communication diagram, a widely used heuristic scheme that has given rise to the constructs of the implied author and the implied reader, among others. Shaped by the anti-intentionalist arguments of the Anglo-American New Critics, these constructs are embedded in a grammar that can be surveyed from a different position when processes of worldmaking, which are grounded in defeasible or possibly wrong ascriptions of intentions to story creators, become the key focus. This new vantage point suggests how the communication diagram not only proliferates heuristic constructs but also reifies them—obscuring how the constructs at issue are ways of describing phases or aspects of the inferential activities that support worldmaking, not preconditions for understanding stories. Again, then, by keeping the focus on narrative's root function as a resource for world-modeling and world-creation, new ways of formulating questions about stories suggest themselves. I argue that these questions cannot be fully articulated, let alone addressed, in the terms afforded by previous nomenclatures and the grammar of inquiry with which they are bound up.¹³

By the same token, my emphasis on worldmaking as a framework for exploring the mind-narrative nexus has required that I tweak the template designed to provide readers with a basis for comparing and contrasting the four approaches covered in this volume. Unlike the other three approaches, my approach treats the creation of and (more or less sustained) imaginative relocation to narrative worlds not as a way of analyzing issues of space, setting, and perspective in particular, but rather as a core aspect of all narrative experiences—as an enabling condition for storytelling practices as such (see

also Herman, *Basic Elements* 105–36). In turn, narrative worldmaking is imbricated with—both supports and is supported by—basic mental abilities and dispositions that constitute focal concerns of research on the interconnection between narrative and mind. Hence in my approach, time, space, and character can be redescribed as key parameters for narrative worldbuilding. Through acts of narration, creators of stories produce blueprints for world construction. These blueprints, the complexity of whose design varies, prompt interpreters to construct worlds marked by a particular spatiotemporal profile, a patterned sequence of situations and events, and an inventory of inhabitants.¹⁴

Accordingly, extending scholarship that adapts ideas from psycholinguistics, discourse analysis, and related areas of inquiry to characterize processes of narrative understanding,¹⁵ I suggest that engaging with stories entails mapping discourse cues onto WHEN, WHAT, WHERE, WHO, HOW, and WHY dimensions of mentally configured worlds; the interplay among these dimensions accounts for the structure as well as the representational functions and overall impact of the worlds in question. I emphasize throughout how the making of storyworlds depends on the reader or interpreter, and I expand upon that claim in chapter 6 while using chapter 7 to explore the broader contexts and consequences of such worldmaking practices. Narratives do not merely evoke worlds but also intervene in a field of discourses, a range of representational strategies, a constellation of ways of seeing—and sometimes a set of competing narratives, as in a courtroom trial, a political campaign, or a family dispute (see Abbott, *Introduction* 175–92). Under its profile as a reception process, then, narrative worldmaking entails at least two different types of inferences: those bearing on what sort of world is being evoked by the act of telling, and those bearing on why (and with what consequences) that act is being performed at all.

I should also emphasize at the outset that although I explore issues of broad relevance for the study of narrative and mind, a mind-oriented approach to narrative inquiry can be pursued along lines different from the ones sketched here. For one thing, my example narrative is a (monomodal) print text, and different tools are needed to explore the mind-narrative nexus in storytelling practices that recruit from more than one semiotic channel (see Herman, “Directions”). Further, whereas my approach is synchronic rather than diachronic, focusing on acts of narrative worldmaking that it is currently within humans’ capacity to perform, evolutionary-psychological perspectives explore ways in which features and uses of narrative can be traced back to mental abilities that have evolved over time (Austin; Boyd; Easterlin; Tooby and Cosmides).¹⁶ What is more, in contrast with research-

ers (e.g., Hogan) who have appealed to the neurobiology of the brain to posit mapping relationships between aspects of narrative production or processing, on the one hand, and specific structures and processes in the brain, on the other hand, my approach remains situated at the person level—the level of the medium-sized, human-scale world of everyday experience (Baker, *Persons* and *Metaphysics*; see chapter 5 of this volume and also my response in Part Two). Since narratives and narrative scholarship both have much to say about this world of everyday experience, by focusing on the person level I seek to substantiate one of the basic assumptions of my approach: namely, that the study of narrative worldmaking can inform, and not just be informed by, understandings of the mind.

THE CASE STUDY

McEWAN'S *ON CHESIL BEACH*

I use *On Chesil Beach* to examine key aspects of stories and storytelling from a perspective that foregrounds issues of worldmaking; focusing on these issues will allow me to outline, in turn, strategies for investigating the mind-narrative nexus. I have chosen McEwan's novel¹⁷ for a number of reasons, including its powerful exploration of how interpersonal conflicts are rooted in larger familial and social contexts, and its reflexive investigation of the way stories provide scaffolding for making sense of one's own and others' actions (see Herman, "Storied"). I discuss these and other aspects of McEwan's text in the chapters that follow; however, according to the needs of the discussion, I alternately zoom in on and back out from the novel, which I sometimes use as the basis for theory building and sometimes as a means for testing the possibilities and limits of an approach oriented around issues of worldmaking—and for gaining a new vantage point on the grammar of narrative inquiry itself. In any case, a brief synopsis of the novel here will help lay groundwork for the ensuing analysis.

On Chesil Beach opens in medias res with two inexperienced and underinformed newlyweds trying to navigate the complexities of their wedding night on the eve of the sexual revolution in England in 1962. The first sentence sets the scene: "They were young, educated, and both virgins on this, their wedding night, and they lived in a time when a conversation about sexual difficulties was plainly impossible" (3). The first part of the novel explores the characters' states of mind as they sit down to dinner in their honeymoon suite in a Georgian inn on the Dorset coast. For Edward Mayhew, the groom, and the son of a father who is headmaster of a primary school and a mother

who suffered brain damage because of a freak accident on a railway platform, the idea of having sex with his new wife is at once tantalizing and a source of worry. But for Florence Mayhew (née Ponting), a professional musician-in-the-making whose mother is a professor of philosophy and whose father owns an electronics company, the prospect of consummating her marriage with Edward causes a deep, paralyzing anxiety.¹⁸ Thus, whereas Edward “merely suffered conventional first-night nerves, [Florence] experienced a visceral dread, a helpless disgust as palpable as seasickness” (8).

From this point until the final ten pages of McEwan’s 203-page novel, the narrative alternates between, on the one hand, periodic shifts back in time that provide information about the main characters’ family backgrounds, life stories, and courtship and, on the other hand, a detailed, blow-by-blow recounting of the events of the present moment. The present-day events lead up to what proves to be a disastrous attempt at sexual intercourse by Edward and Florence and an angry, marriage-ending exchange on the beach—Chesil Beach—afterward. Then, in the final portion of the novel, the pace of narration speeds up drastically, covering some forty years of story time in about 5 percent of the page space used previously to narrate events lasting just a few hours. Most of this final section is refracted through the vantage point of Edward, who eventually comes to the realization that though all “[Florence] needed was the certainty of his love, and his reassurance that there was no hurry when a lifetime lay ahead of them” (202), on that night on Chesil Beach he had nonetheless “stood in cold and righteous silence in the summer’s dusk, watching her hurry along the shore, the sound of her difficult progress lost to the breaking of small waves, until she was a blurred, receding point against the immense straight road of shingle gleaming in the pallid light” (203).

Antimimetic, Unnatural, and Postmodern Narrative Theory

Brian Richardson

Fictional representation may take several forms. There is a realistic tradition, which I will call “mimetic,” that attempts to provide narrators, characters, events, and settings that more or less resemble those of our quotidian experience. Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* is a paradigmatic example of this form; it attempts to reproduce in the fiction the salient features of typical people and the historical world of mid-nineteenth-century Russia. By contrast, antimimetic or antirealist modes of narrative representation play with, exaggerate, or parody the conventions of mimetic representation; often, they foreground narrative elements and events that are wildly implausible or palpably impossible in the real world. Nabokov’s *Ada, or Ardor* (1969), for example, opens by quoting a mistranslation of the first sentence of *Anna Karenina* and goes on to construct a parallel universe, Antiterra, that regularly parodies various literary representations of the actual world. It should be noted from the outset that most postmodern works of fiction are antimimetic narratives; insofar as they problematize their own ontological status, they are by that very fact antimimetic.¹⁹

Virtually every narrative has two aspects, one mimetic, the other artificial; one concerning what is represented, the other how it is represented. Furthermore, nearly every narrative represents some portion of the world we inhabit in one way or another, and it does so in a particular manner. That manner of representation may be conventional or unconventional, stylized or straightforward, unmarked or outrageous, clumsy or artistic; it is always constructed. Mimetic narratives typically try to conceal their constructedness and appear to resemble nonfictional narratives, while antimimetic narratives flaunt their artificiality and break the ontological boundaries that mimetic works so carefully preserve. Henry James once objected to Anthony Trollope’s narrators’ unnatural practice of suggesting to the reader that the events in the novel did not really happen and that they could therefore give the story any turn they chose; James felt such admissions were “a betrayal of a sacred office,” even a “serious crime,” by the novelist (30). Insofar as a work strives to adhere to a mimetic framework, such a practice is a significant violation, even a betrayal. But of course the author of a work of fiction *can* give the events any turn he or she prefers; at these moments, Trollope is following instead the more playful, antimimetic role of the anti-illusionistic writer who acknowledges the fictionality of the fiction.

My own work is part of a larger critical and theoretical movement known

as “unnatural narratology”; in what follows, I will use the term “unnatural” as a synonym for “antimimetic.” Other theorists of unnatural narratives have rather different perspectives and provide alternative or adjacent definitions; among the most notable of these is Jan Alber’s statement that unnatural narratives are those that include physically or logically impossible scenarios or events (Alber 2009; for a comparison of such definitions, see Alber, Iversen, Nielsen, and Richardson, forthcoming). Thus, not every theorist working within the domain of unnatural narratology would subscribe to the claims I develop in the pages that follow. Finally, I wish to note that while I will be focusing on Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* as my primary text, I will also allude to a wide range of even more extreme works in order to indicate the scope, extent, and significance of antimimetic strategies in texts that for too long have been dismissed or neglected as minor, marginal, or transitory.²⁰

In nearly all approaches to narrative theory, past and present, there is a significant and unusual gap: a sustained neglect of antimimetic narratives and, most importantly, an absence of comprehensive theoretical formulations capable of encompassing these works. Most narrative theories are thus substantially incomplete. Nearly all are based on mimetic presuppositions and start from the position that narrators are rather like human storytellers, that characters resemble people, that the settings and events we encounter in a narrative are comparable to those we might meet up with in life, and that readers process characters and events in a work of fiction roughly in the same manner that they comprehend people and events in daily experience. This mimetic approach is useful; all authors striving for realism or verisimilitude will naturally try to reproduce the conditions of lived experience; thus, an author of a novel written in the first person will try to approximate as closely as possible the conventions of an autobiography. This is why the terms “true to life,” “lifelike,” “faithful,” “realistic,” and other synonyms have been terms of high praise for many fictional works.

Of course, not all narratives strive to be mimetic. Nonmimetic works of fantasy, for example, postulate very different worlds, entities, and behaviors. More radically, antimimetic narratives refuse to obey or openly flout mimetic conventions; instead of imitating nonfictional discourses, they traduce their conventions. *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (1776) does not reproduce the form of an autobiography, it travesties it. Tristram begins his narrative with the story of his own conception and then devotes so many chapters to explaining the family circumstances before and during his natal state that he doesn’t get around to narrating his birth until a couple of hundred pages into his story. The narrator of Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* (1980), Saleem Sinai, has the same problem. More radical is Anto-

nio Machado de Assis's *Posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas* (1888), a Shandean memoir written after the death of its author, and still more unnatural is E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Life and Opinions of the Tomcat Murr* (1822), which purports to be the memoirs of a cat inappropriately interspersed within the biography of a man. Most extreme is Beckett's *The Unnamable*, composed by someone who does not know who or what he is and who cannot in fact differentiate himself from others. Alain Robbe-Grillet has succinctly articulated the viewpoint of the antimimetic author. He refuses "to reproduce a pre-existing reality" (*New* 146); he chooses instead to create that which has never existed. He further notes, "I do not transcribe, I construct. This had even been the old ambition of Flaubert: to make something out of nothing, something that would stand alone, without having to lean on anything external to the work" (162). Robbe-Grillet and numerous authors like him do not wish to reproduce the world of our experience; they want instead to create original or unprecedented scenes, figures, progressions, and worlds. Their works are part of an alternative tradition that has not yet been properly accounted for by narrative theory.

Antimimetic narrative theory attempts to provide a conceptual framework for works that refuse to follow the conventions of ordinary storytelling (or conversational "natural narratives") or mimetic (realistic) forms of narrative representation. Antimimetic narratives play with, ignore, or transgress these conventions. A natural or a realistic narrative has a speaker, recognizable characters, a set of related events with a certain degree of "tellability," a consistent ontological frame, and a more or less defined audience. But antimimetic narratives challenge rather than conform to these conventions. If a natural narrative consists of someone telling someone else that something significant has happened within a recognizable storyworld, an antimimetic narrative may contest each of the terms in this statement. More specifically, it may dispense with a single, consistent, human-like speaker, using only inconsistent, nonhuman, or collapsed voices; it may represent insubstantial or inconsistent fictional artifices rather than human figures; it may recount events that seem unworthy of being narrated or that are hopelessly confused or contradictory; it may locate these events in an unrecognizable kind of world; it may project a receiver of the story that is as unusual as its narrator.

When doing narrative theory and analysis, we must recognize the central, crucial status of fiction. No matter how closely it tries to imitate nonfictional discourses, narrative fiction is always a very different kind of speech act. Its functions, intentions, and effects diverge substantially from those of nonfiction. Nonfiction is falsifiable and can be tested against other nonfictional accounts of the same events; fiction can never be falsified by real-

world sources. Fiction offers narrating animals, corpses, and even machines; in the actual world, only humans can narrate. Temporal sequences that are impossible in the real world, contradictory spatial configurations, and the inversion of causal sequences where the effect precedes its cause can exist only in a work of fiction. Fictional characters can personify ideas as part of a larger allegory, they can be known more intimately than the people around us can be, and characters can even realize that they are fictional creations. The fundamental nature of the difference between fiction and nonfiction is most prominent once death appears. In fiction, characters can plead with their authors to spare their lives, temporality can be run backwards so that the dead come back to life, or a figure can die several times in fiction and miraculously be alive again in the next chapter. In life, there is only one death, and it is irreversible.

Salman Rushdie provides an excellent example of this crucial difference. Part way through *Midnight's Children*, the narrator, Saleem Sinai, realizes that he has made a mistake: "Rereading my work, I have discovered an error in chronology. The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi occurs, in these pages, on the wrong date" (189–90). Saleem, however, does not correct his text: "in my India, Gandhi will continue to die at the wrong time" (190). In a work of fiction, an author can kill off any character, even historical ones, at any time. Rushdie's deliberate reconfiguring of historical events in a work of fiction is not merely a game. Instead, it is pointedly juxtaposed with and powerfully opposed to the Pakistani government's falsification of historical facts. Thus, during the invasion of East Pakistan, we read "Shaheed and I saw many things which were not true, which were not possible, because our boys would not, could not, behave so badly; we saw men in spectacles with heads like eggs being shot in side-streets, we saw the intelligentsia of the city being massacred by the hundred, but it was not true because it could not have been true" (432). Saleem reenacts in a satirical manner the government's censorship of news of these actual atrocities. We are vividly shown the difference between altering the historical record in a work of fiction and falsifying historical facts in nonfictional discourse. The former is a serious kind of play, the latter a sordid lie.

NARRATIVE THEORY has long had a bias toward the representational aspects of narrative. At the very inception of narrative theory is the *Poetics* of Aristotle, with its pronounced focus on mimesis and lifelike representations of human behavior. Literary theory from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century continued to insist on literature's duty to "hold a mirror up to nature,"

and nearly all twentieth- and twenty-first-century narrative theories are likewise grounded in a mimetic conception of narrative. This is even true of a theoretical approach like structuralism that purports to sidestep questions of representation and bears no particular allegiance to mimesis. Nevertheless, it often limited itself to mimetic models. The central category of the highly influential structuralist account of narrative time, for example, is that of “order,” or the way the story (*fabula*) is actually arranged in the text (*sjuzhet*). Such a conception is perfectly adequate for all nonfictional works and for most works of fiction. One event comes earlier or later in the story; it is presented either earlier or later in the text. We can say “World War I preceded World War II” or we can say “World War II was preceded by World War I”; though the order in which the events are presented (the *sjuzhet*) is different in each sentence, the sequence of events in the story (the *fabula*) remains the same. As long as we are dealing with nonfiction or fiction that imitates the conventions of nonfiction, there is no problem. However, the many works that do not have a single, recoverable story or a single, fixed presentation are necessarily omitted from this account; we will need to reconceptualize the entire nature of the representation of temporality if we are to have a complete theory that includes the unnatural and impossible chronologies that exist only in fiction. As we will see, attention to antimimetic narratives regularly demands that we extend or reconstruct basic categories of narrative theory.

Antimimetic narratives have been around since the time of Aristophanes and Petronius, and they were common in the Middle Ages (dream visions, Rabelais’ *Gargantua and Pantagruel*) and the Renaissance (especially Shakespeare’s more fanciful and self-conscious dramas such as *The Winter’s Tale*). Antimimetic strategies inform the entire tradition of works inspired by *Tristram Shandy* and are especially prominent in postmodern fiction and the theater of the absurd. Popular narrative media are also well stocked with antimimetic series and genres, from tongue-in-cheek Broadway musicals to comic books to children’s cartoons to the Bob Hope–Bing Crosby “road” movies. Even natural narrative contains its own antimimetic examples, like the “shaggy dog” story that continues endlessly or the more extreme kind of tall tale.

There are several reasons why antimimetic narratives need to be included within narrative theory. Such an inclusion will allow us to have a comprehensive theory of narrative rather than merely a theory of mimetic narratives; it will enable us to come to terms theoretically with some of the most interesting literature of our time: avant-garde, late modernist, and postmodern; it helps us understand and appreciate the distinctive nature of narrative fiction; and it provides a set of terms and concepts for the analysis of hypertext fiction.

In addition, the inclusion of antimimetic works opens up to narrative theory a vast segment of the history of literature that has until now been largely excluded. Including unnatural narratives reconnects modern experimental literature with experimental work in other genres, especially painting, whose extreme, unnatural, antirealist, impossible, and nonrepresentational works have provided inspiration for writers of prose for over a century. Finally, the goal of narrative theory is to provide a theoretical account of all narratives. A theory of narrative that excludes antimimetic works is as incomplete as a theory of art that treated all art as representational and could not discuss abstract art. The goal of my work is to expand or re-form the categories of narrative theory so that it is able to circumscribe these playful and outrageous kinds of texts.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Prince's "On a Postcolonial Narratology." [RW]
2. I am referring to Genette's many disclaimers in *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. [RW]
3. For a classic discussion of this link between experimental fiction and feminism that greatly influenced feminist narratology, see duPlessis. [RW]
4. See, for example, Aldama's *Your Brain on Latino Comics*. His corpus is made up of pointedly non-mainstream texts; in keeping with the larger project of cognitive narrative theory, however, his work is focused on the commonalities among human brains and bodies. [RW]
5. I am referring to the mid-1980s, when Susan Lanser's work and my own first began defining the term "feminist narratology." See Lanser, "Towards a Feminist Narratology," and Warhol, *Gendered Interventions*. [RW]
6. As will become clear in what follows, I use the term "referential" in a broader sense than does Dorrit Cohn in *The Distinction of Fiction*, for example. Discussing ideas also explored by theorists such as Philippe Lejeune, Lubomír Doležel (*Heterocosmica*), and Marie-Laure Ryan (*Possible Worlds*), Cohn argues that fictional narratives are non-referential because, in contrast with historiography, journalistic reports, biographies, autobiographies, and other narrative modes falling within the domain of nonfiction, fictional works are not subject to judgments of truth and falsity (15). As Cohn writes, "in fictional poetics, though the concept of reference has recently been reinstated, its qualification by such terms as *fictive*, *nonostensive*, or *pseudo*- sufficiently indicates its nonfactual connotations, even when it denotes components of the fictional world taken directly from the world of reality" (113). In my approaches to the present volume, however, I link worldmaking to "the referential dimension of narrative" to preserve the intuition that fictional as well as nonfictional narratives consist of *sequences of referring expressions* (see also Schiffrin), whose nature and scope will vary depending on the storytelling medium involved. Through these referring expressions, narratives prompt interpreters to co-construct a discourse model or model-world—that is, a storyworld—containing the situations, events, and entities indexed by world-evoking expressions at issue (for further discussion, see Herman, *Basic Elements* and *Story Logic*). In other words, narratives refer to model-worlds, whether they are the imagined, autonomous model-worlds of fiction or the model-worlds about which nonfictional accounts make claims that are subject to falsification. [DH]
7. With signified and signifier, compare story (*fabula*) and discourse (*sjuzhet*). [DH]
8. In *Basic Elements*, I more fully characterize narrative as a mode of representation that (a) must be interpreted in light of a specific discourse context or occasion for telling; (b) focuses on a structured time-course of particularized events; (c) concerns itself with some kind of disruption or disequilibrium in a storyworld inhabited by intelligent agents; and (d) conveys what it is like for those agents to live through the storyworld-in-flux. [DH]
9. Compare Brenner's account of how, for Wittgenstein, "[p]hilosophical investigation recollects the grammar of terms that are deeply embedded in everyday language" (7). [DH]
10. Here I am drawing on Wittgenstein's discussion, in section 122 of the *Philosophical Investigations*, of the key concept of "surveyability." Suggesting that the purpose of philosophy is to provide an overview or survey of the different ways in which uses of

words fit together in a language, Wittgenstein writes: “A main source of our failure to understand is that we don’t have *an overview* of the use of our words.—Our grammar is deficient in surveyability. A surveyable representation produces precisely that kind of understanding which consists in ‘seeing connections’” (54). [DH]

11. For more on the scope and aims of the project of metanarratology, see Herman, “Formal Models.” [DH]

12. As Goodman puts it, “If I ask about the world, you can offer to tell me how it is under one or more frames of reference; but if I insist that you tell me how it is apart from all frames, what can you say? We are confined to ways of describing whatever is described. Our universe, so to speak, consists of these ways rather than of a world or of worlds” (2–3). Compare Merlin Donald’s complementary account of the evolution and functions of mimesis or “mimetic skill.” For Donald, such skill “usually incorporates both mimicry and imitation to a higher end, that of re-enacting and re-presenting an event or relationship” (169). Hence, extended to the social realm, mimetic skill “results in a collective conceptual ‘model’ of society” (173). See also my contribution to Part Two. [DH]

13. See chapter 5 for analogous remarks concerning the need to reassess the grammar of questions about narrative that feature the concept of “Theory of Mind.” [DH]

14. In characterizing narrative texts as blueprints for building storyworlds, I am drawing on Reddy’s critique of what he termed the “conduit metaphor” for communicative processes (see Green, 10–13, for a useful discussion). Reddy suggested that rather than being mere vessels or vehicles for channeling thoughts, ideas, and meanings back and forth, utterances are like blueprints, planned artifacts whose design is tailored to the goal of enabling an interlocutor to reconstruct the situations or worlds after which the blueprints are patterned. Further, in contrast with the conduit metaphor, which blames miscommunication on a poorly chosen linguistic vessel, the blueprint analogy predicts that completely successful interpretation of communicative designs will be rare—given the complexity of the processes involved in planning, executing, and making sense of the blueprints. Hence my emphasis in this volume on the *defeasibility* of inferences about story creators’ intentions. [DH]

15. Relevant studies include Doležel; Duchan, Bruder, and Hewitt; Emmott; Gerrig; Herman, *Story Logic* and *Basic Elements*; Pavel; Ryan, *Possible*; and Werth. [DH]

16. Conversely, Donald explores how narrative, among other semiotic and thus cultural practices, itself contributed to the development of humans’ cognitive abilities (201–68). [DH]

17. There are as yet few critical studies of this recently published text. But see Head, “Novella,” and, for background on the novel’s composition, Zalewski, who reports that Timothy Garton Ash’s comments on an early draft caused McEwan to remove more explicit references to Florence’s sexual abuse at the hands of her father (see my discussion in chapter 3). Meanwhile, Head’s *Ian McEwan* provides invaluable insights into McEwan’s oeuvre prior to the publication of *On Chesil Beach*. [DH]

18. Readers of *On Chesil Beach* familiar with Ford Madox Ford’s 1915 novel *The Good Soldier* will recognize that the first names of McEwan’s two main characters echo those of Edward Ashburnham and Florence Dowell, whose ill-fated, destructive affair is narrated *ex post facto*—and through a complex layering of time-frames—by Florence’s perversely obtuse husband, John Dowell. [DH]

19. There are still other forms of representation as well, such as what I call the non-mimetic, that includes genres like fairy tales, animal fables, and fantasy, whose charac-

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ters and events do not primarily reproduce people and situations in life. Thus, it does not make sense to say that the depiction of a particular fairy or talking pig is realistic or unrealistic. Antimimetic authors can also parody these forms as well, as we see in Angela Carter's postmodern rewrites of classical fairy tales. In my sections I will be concerned with narratives that are predominantly and, in fact, flagrantly antimimetic, since I find antimimetic texts more challenging than nonmimetic narratives in the ways they contest the conventions of nonfictional and realistic representation. [BR]

20. For further reading on these issues, see Alber and Heinze; Alber, Iversen, Nielsen, and Richardson (2010); Richardson, "Narrative Poetics"; and the Unnatural Narratology website homepage <http://nordisk.au.dk/forskning/forskningscentre/nrl/unnatural/>. [BR]

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