Narrativity:
From Objectivist to Functional Paradigm

Meir Sternberg
Literature, Tel Aviv University

1. Definition: How Generic Terms and Concepts Vary

The term *narrativity* was coined in the late 1960s (e.g., Greimas 1970 [1969]: 157–60), but its meanings and applications have proliferated ever since. They only agree, more or less, about what in the field the term should capture, if possible. Before or outside narratology, this restricted agreement likewise shows across various other terminologies used to single out the genre. As generally used today, narrativity is what makes a text a narrative, what in it constitutes a minimal narrative, what distinguishes it from other genres or text types.

But there have been some deviant, even idiosyncratic, uses. David Rudrum (2005: 198) thus misdescribes "narrativity in theoretical parlance" as "something extra" (i.e., a concept superimposed on that of event representation) necessary "to make a text a narrative." On the contrary, the "something extra" (what else is required for narrative, if at all) divides the "theoretical parlance" of narrativity, while the use of the term narrativity itself (to signify what makes "a text a narrative") unifies that parlance.

Even the less peculiar reference to extras by this term in Gerald Prince (2005: 387) is far from acceptable, or indeed accepted. In this uncommon usage, "narrativity designates" not only "the quality of being narrative" but also "the set of optional features that make narratives more prototypically narrative-like, more immediately identified, processed, and interpreted as narratives." Whether these "optional features" belong to the issue is not at

all clear; but their subsumption under the same umbrella term (*narrativity*) is clearly misleading. At best, such optional features would bear not on narrativity itself—already established otherwise as a distinctive generic "quality"— but on what I call "narrativity-plus" (Sternberg 2008a: esp. 49–52).

Other rare uses deviate otherwise. For example, "narrativity" appears when "the story comments on its own fictivity" (Kermode 1978: 153). Hayden White (1980: 6–7) inverts this usage into one just as peculiar. He associates narrativity with "a discourse that feigns to make the world speak itself and speak itself *as a story*." In the turn from flaunting artifice to feigning naturalness, the value carried by the term also inverts itself, from positive to negative. And both evaluative poles contrast with narrativity's usual bid for value-free impartiality, or its appearance at least.

Not only the use, moreover, but the term itself sometimes varies, usually with a conceptual difference. In cognitivism, for example, "story"/"storyness" widely refers to a subtype of "narrative" (see Sternberg 2003a: 330 ff.). Gary Saul Morson (2003) opts for "narrativeness" as the contingency of events, our sense of an open future. This quality is definitely not the same in meaning and range as "narrativity" elsewhere but (what with its plus value) narrower: some works of narrative lack it altogether, according to Morson. If anything, both this label and its application would appear advisedly divergent, to judge from his (groundless) complaints about "narratologists." In mainstream narratology itself, some (e.g., Herman 2002; Prince 2008) oppose *narrativity* to *narrativehood* (or *narrativeness*) as a gradable and a categorical generic term, respectively.

But such usages, labels, bearings are exceptions rather than the rule in the field. Notable in itself, this broad agreement about what "narrativity" should capture also highlights the disagreement about everything else, especially the features and products to be captured through the generic term: to be defined as narrative. Even the question, Narrative as opposed to (or distinct from) what?, *if* raised, finds no established answer. The firmest and best comparable antitype lies in description, since Lessing (1963 [1766]), but also shifts or extends to argument (e.g., Goodman 1980: 115–19; Black and Bower 1980; Bruner 1986; Chatman 1990; Worth 2008: 48 ff.) or, more often, to drama along with "nonnarrated" and/or nonverbal media at large (Genette 1980, 1988 [1983]; Stanzel 1984; Prince 1987: 58; and more discriminately, Fludernik 2008, Nünning and Sommers 2008). These divergent polarities already indicate that "narrative" hasn't yet gained a univocal *sense* (distinctive features) and *reference* (class membership), which a well-defined concept of narrativity can alone provide.

So, more evidently, do the definitions of narrative/narrativity themselves. As a matter of historical fact (*pace* Abbott 2009: 311), the term(s)

developed a "lively range of conceptual roles" much before "the emergence of postclassical narratology in the last decades of the 20th-century." Like other novelties wished on "postclassicism"—if it corresponds to any actual reality of time and/or thought—the alleged late development is at best overstated. Just witness the dates of the references given throughout this overview. (And if the diversity has recently grown more "lively," we'll see, this is in part owing to a shifting balance between rival approaches: former Structuralists, or so-called postclassical narratologists, inter alia, have been moving, in various ways and degrees, toward the functional reorientation for which I argued well before "the last decades of the 20th-century.") Across any changes in the field, therefore, the "sense" and "reference" of narrative/narrativity keep multiplying. Whether absolute or scalar, whether officially conceptualized into an abstract formula, exemplified through some "minimal narrative(s)," or, most often, implied in analytic practice, they ostensibly ramify beyond convergence or adjudication. What's what, how, why—all these questions remain elusive, disputable, and almost as a matter of course at that.

2. Why Bother about Narrativity?

Viktor Shklovsky (1990 [1929]: 53) felt obliged "to confess" that he had no "definition of 'story' as such," and yet he nevertheless embarked on his famous theory of storied, narrative "prose." Why, then, bother about such an abstract concept as narrativity? Even specialists who do bother—a growing minority today—rarely explain; and the majority behave as if their practice didn't require and reflect some general idea. They invest their efforts elsewhere, in lower-level, tangible problems, without displaying Shklovsky's apologetic embarrassment or laboring under the exigencies of a discipline newly (re)born. But look at what has happened, or failed to happen, in the absence of a proper, never mind unanimous, concept and consciousness. For all its growing sophistication on matters of detail, narrative theory is still in its infancy, because the disciplinary foundations have yet to be laid. To define the very object of study, two complementary questions require an answer: (1) What is narrative, and (2) What becomes in it of the components shared with other discourse genres? About the first issue, evidently bearing straight on narrativity, theory has shown too little concern and nothing like consensus.[1] The second has not even been generally raised thus far, least of all in correlation to its mate.

1. As with the theory, predictably, so with metatheory. There's no reliable guide to the state of the art concerning narrativity. The few existing overviews (e.g., Sturgess 1992; Fludernik 1996: 26 ff., 318 ff.; Prince 2005, 2008; Rudrum 2005; Ryan 2007; Abbott 2009) leave much

Much the same twofold deficiency betrays itself in related or paral-lel enterprises—like cognitivist story analysis, often imported these days to narratology. (For overviews, see Sternberg 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2009.) There, the lack of generic definitions and delimitations is far more con-spicuous in artificial intelligence (AI) theorizing and programming than among psychologists. The latter, for example, have produced a diversity of story grammars, modeled on Chomskyan linguistics and so committed to an ideal of explicitness, from the premises upward. In cognitive psy-chology, accordingly, "the issue of 'storyness' vs. non-storyness is often an important concern" (Norvig 1992: 2). Or *was* rather than *is*, because the story-grammatical approach more or less petered out during the 1980s and with it, or parallel to it, much of this concern for sorting out the object of inquiry.[2]

On the other hand, the AI line of cognitive science rarely bothered with such definitional premises, not even at the time when Roger Schank and his group at Yale competed or openly quarreled with the story gram-marians. (A rare exception is Wilensky 1982a.) Ultimately, however, where attention is (de)focused hinges, for better or worse, on what those com-puter researchers take for the due order of priorities. In AI, "the goal is to characterize the interpretation process, and therefore often ignores the question of stories, assuming that the program will only be presented with valid stories" (Norvig 1992: 2). All the more "valid" because the program-mers themselves fabricate those stories or decide which outputs qualify for stories. Either way, there's no need, as it were, to trouble with what's what beforehand.

This neglect of definitional groundwork sometimes runs to defiant reactionary extremes. In "The Big Picture: Is It a Story?," Reid Hastie and Nancy Pennington (1995) thus mock their own title. They attack "the 'methods police' of conventional experimental psychology" in the name "of what cognitive science does best: a freewheeling, but rigorous[?], exploration of genuinely interesting ideas," like that of storied "Knowledge and Memory" by Schank and Abelson (1995). "The 'methods police' will be after Schank and Abelson for not defining elementary concepts such as 'story'";[3] but "the chapter is worth a dozen or so closely argued essays

---

to be desired, from coverage to analysis to even-handedness, some more, some less. Nor do they steadily, if at all, improve over time. The following account partly draws on my earlier proposals, especially in Sternberg 1978, 1981a, 1982a, 1983b, 1985, 1990a, 1990b, 1990c, 1992, 2001a, 2003a, 2003b, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2009.

2. Along with its counterpart in Structuralist narratology, where Pavel (1985) interestingly doubles as the last and the best attempt.

3. As indeed happened in the immediate critical responses of Brewer (1995) and Rubin (1995) or, later, Velleman (2003: 8).

on the definition of story" and will "encourage future researchers to put the hobgoblins of methodological precision in the peanut gallery where they belong at this stage of the research endeavor" (Hastie and Pennington 1995: 133–34). At what stage will dealing with the universals of narrative become fruitful? How to explore, or to compare notes, without defining our key term of art as best we can at the moment? Can even the mockers help doing so anyway, if only to operate on an unspoken, unmotivated, maybe unstable, certainly untested premise (not to say preconception) of their own? Why not try to avoid, or resolve, the difficulties into which Schank et al. run, failing a definite concept and delimited object of study? (An example would be the programming mistake discussed in Sternberg 2003b: 548–50.) For an answer, we receive police work, hobgoblins, and a peanut gallery.

Such inversion of priorities—both what comes first and what counts most—has typified further lines of work on narrative, whether disciplinary again or subgeneric. Thus Jone Kvernbekk's (2003: 267–68, 278) complaint about the research done in the field of education, or Allan Pasco's (1991: 408) regarding the short story. This omission extends, inter alia, to the controversial "Against Narrativity" (Strawson 2004). The argument there doesn't object to defining the titular concept (though actually never defining it) but to conceptualizing, arranging, and judging all subjective life in its terms (whatever they may involve). The usual silence on the concept, in short, only becomes more perceptible here than usual.

Approvingly alluding to this title in "Against Narrative: A Boring Story," Pekka Tammi (2006) goes from oblivious silence to overzealous dismissal. As a student of literary fiction, he refuses to enter "the technical debate about defining narrative," by appeal to a false analogy. The concern with such definition is likened to one who drives the grocer crazy "by repeatedly asking to purchase a fruit, in general. Not an apple, or an orange, but a fruit" (ibid.: 21). The false analogy, with its rhetoric, turns self-defeating. For "an apple, or an orange" is itself a token of a (sub)type: the very reference to it would presuppose a concept or definition both of the "fruit" type and, presumably with another "technical debate," of the subtype "apple." How else can the mind sort things out?

That a literary scholar should provoke such an elementary boomerang effect, as if fiction, its typology, and the rest of its study could all profitably dispense with narrativity, is doubtless revealing. More so indeed than is the commoner sheer neglect of the issue. Further equivalents appear within narratological practice itself (e.g., Rudrum 2006: 202–3) as well as in outside attacks on its overspecialized hairsplitting. The two negative attitudes oddly combine when a narrative theorist who has invested more work than

most in the rudiments of the field begins to speak like a disparaging out-sider. The question of narrativity, or the debate on it, "do not carry signifi-cant cognitive consequences": so Marie-Laure Ryan (2007: 31), though her own debate on it (Ryan 2006) shows, indeed argues, the contrary.

Let me therefore spell out in brief the crucial difference made by whether and how, or how well, we address the paired questions formulated above. Unless narrative has been defined in or by its narrativity, we leave the subject matter undelimited and risk missing its generic feature(s): nar-ratologists then become liable to do everything indiscriminately together with, if not anything but, narratology. Nor is poor definition much better than none. In either case, the risk extends from theoretical systematizing to the branches of application and corpus-oriented work.

This liability to a hit-or-miss practice (of generalizing, analyzing, inter-preting) threatens even subjects traditionally centralized in the field. Does "point of view," say, constitute a (the?) differential narrative feature, or does theory's endless investment in it remain beside the generic point and might equally apply elsewhere? Whatever the investors' indignation at the questioning of this old narratological axiom and monopoly, they have no principled answer in the current state of the art. The less so because all discourse actually has perspectivity built into it: there is no representa-tion without evaluation across media, no communication without sender/addressee encoding/decoding asymmetry, and no language use without orientational subjectivity as well, via deixis. Given such omnipresent com-mon denominators, what, if anything, marks off narrative perspectivizing and why? (For details, see Sternberg 1978: 236–305; 1981: 81–88; 1985: 58 ff.; 1992: 529 ff.; 2005; 2009: esp. 480 ff.)

Likewise with the question of what would distinctively narrativize—or how narrativizing would distinctively affect—other common properties, semiotic, mimetic, thematic, ideological, rhetorical, spatial, temporal . . . . And likewise with the focuses of cognitivism, none genre-bound: mem-ory, schemata, world knowledge, mental representation, conceptualizing, understanding, processing, computing, troping, learning, liking . . . . Even the least disputed narrative essentials, event and character, are also found in descriptive writing—hence across polar variety. Come to that, how to separate description within and outside narrative?

Worse, the hit-or-miss extends to the alignment of scholarly with read-erly first principle. If, as often declared, we all know a narrative when we encounter one, then our analytic inquiries must begin by articulating and orienting themselves to this intuitive sense of narrativity—on pain of forfeiting, or even contradicting, psychological realism. Analysts would then generalize, classify, interpret regardless of tacit universal knowledge

and mindwork, competence and performance, one's own included, starting on the wrong foot. Again, a poorly conceived is not much better than a thoughtless or false start. Witness the ongoing divergence and quarrel among concepts of narrativity, unresolved, apparently unresolvable. They suggest a profession out of touch with the most basic realities of telling/reading—experience generated/felt, effects elicited—hence also with the only common ground available to the embattled practitioners as a point of departure and reference. Glib talk about pluralism, Zeitgeist, open-endedness, and so forth rings hollow in the face of this hole at the genre's deepest experiential level.

Nor is it true that the question of narrativity hardly arises, "unless of course we are narratologists" (Ryan 2007: 31). Besides leaving its own foundations shaky, its practice or use unanchored, narrative theory's failure to establish generic differentials and/or specify intergenre commonalities exposes it to attack and dismissal from without. The challenge actually arises from opposite directions. On the one hand, narrative has become an issue in a range of (inter)disciplines outside literature or even the arts; and they predictably look to narratology, often in vain, for well-founded yet flexibly extendible competences, coordinates, controls, beginning with what's what. In their absence, an editor of a recent special issue on narrative in a philosophical journal can boast that, though newcomers to the field, "philosophers are now exploring the idea of narrative with the kind of energy and acumen that we have not seen since Aristotle wrote his *Poetics*" (Carroll 2009: 2). Not that the boast nearly justifies itself in the philosophers' actual theorizing—not even compared with the existing narratological record—the less so given their poor knowledge of developments "since Aristotle." For all its naïveté concerning the fresh (re)start, though, the boast does point to a fundamental issue ("the idea of narrative") left underexplored, certainly unsettled, by the supposed longtime experts.

At the same time, nowadays more than ever, scholars legitimately bring to narrative texts (or to a miscellany of texts) problems and interests other than narrative. But does this justify the oft-drawn corollary that narrativity, and with it narrative theory, have no bearing on their concerns?[4] They in effect say, "Our interest lies in signification, or figurative language, or allusiveness, or reading, ontology, ideology, cultural criticism (etc.), rather than in your specialized anatomies of plot, viewpoint, narrator type, much less free indirect style and the rest. So what good are your theories to us?" What good indeed? The discipline has to meet their challenge in turn—by showing that the narrative factor always makes a difference to the work and its

---

4. For an array of even more negative attitudes, see Argyros 1992: 659–61.

workings, regardless of one's special interest—or else doom itself to isolation, inbreeding, and extramural irrelevance, on top of incoherence within.

3. Two Logics of Definition

Various attempts at definition are nonstarters, because they fail to pass one or more elementary tests. Some locate narrativity in properties that narrative obviously shares with other, or all, discourse genres, including its common antipoles (description, argument). Thus recall the conditioning on point of view alone, especially in modernist, Jamesian criticism, Lubbock (1963 [1921]), say, or in the German tradition, notably Stanzel's (1984) "mediacy." Given that the rest of discourse also has these features built into it, what singles out narrative perspectivity or mediacy, and to the extent of sufficing to define the genre in its narrativity?

As indiscriminately, Roland Barthes (1988a [1966]: 100) equates the genre with language: "Narrative is a great sentence, just as every constative sentence is, in a way, a little narrative." Neither predication holds, of course, if only because either combines opposite minuses, being too inclusive and too exclusionary at once. For Barthes's homology, or any equivalent, likewise applies to the antitype of descriptive writing—another great sentence, just as every constative sentence is, in a way, a little description—as well as rules out either genre's nonlinguistic media and members. In turn, the same equation holds for any other antitype, like expository writing.

No better than the analogy to the language system, especially to its biggest grammatical unit, is the genre's reduction to mere language use. "Let us define a narrative as any minimal (written or verbal) linguistic act" (McQuillan 2000: 7). With the unit size and "constativity" (i.e., statement) as well as grammaticality kept optional, the range of this definition stretches even further than the descriptive other to include all linguistic expression. At the same time, it excludes the rest of semiotics (as Garcia Landa 2008: 427–28 rightly notes).

At the limit, we find an empty (because unspecific or, inversely, text-specific) and discourse-wide criterial feature:

> Narrativity, taken in the widest general meaning of the term, is one of the principal articulations of texts at the deep level.   (Greimas 1989 [1973]: 625)

> Any narrative may be considered as a set of items, whether characters, initial facts about them or their setting, or events that happen to them.   (Holloway 1979: 79)

> A story is a relating of an intelligence of relations in such a way that further relational thought is incited.   (Caserio 1979: 6)

> Narrativity refers preeminently to the way in which a narrative *articulates* itself, the way in which each stage of its extension creates what might be called a crisis or dilemma of the discourse, which is solved by its own furtherance in whatever form that happens to take.   (Sturgess 1992: 26)

The concept's overgeneralization mounts again, and with it the overinclusiveness of nonnarratives alongside narratives.

Similarly hopeless are definitions at the poles of logical unreason, either circular or inconsistent at their very core. Here is a paradigm case of circularity: "At the lowest level of simplification, narrative is a sequence that is narrated" (Cobley 2003: 7). The merely circular "narrative . . . narrated" even compounds here with the overinclusive "sequence," open to any series of any items (e.g., numbers, letters, adjectives, as well as acts). Or a double circle: "By 'narrative fiction' I mean the narration of a succession of fictional events . . . . The term *narration* suggests . . . a *communication* process in which the narrative as message is transmitted by addressor to addressee" (Rimmon-Kenan 1983: 2). So "narrative" is defined in terms of "narration" and "*narration*" in terms of "narrative." In little, this double circularity also makes nonsense of Scholes and Kellogg's (1966: 240) formula: "By definition narrative requires a story and a story-teller," and in reverse, "teller" and "tale." One again doesn't know which of the terms is named after the other, whether the two are reducible to one, any more than one knows what properties and patterns and products they designate.

Or, with the circularity less flagrant, "a text is a narrative if it is commonly *used* as a narrative" (Rudrum 2006: 198; also Chatman 1990: 6–21). The italicized verb alludes to Wittgenstein, as if the appeal to authority could do duty for the function ("use as a narrative") that is supposed to define the genre (what makes "a narrative") but is itself defined by reference to that genre. And a genre with such assorted uses, as well as senses and references, at that. No less circular and vacuous is a philosopher's definition: "Maybe the larger genus should be labeled 'tales,' which encompasses anything that's *told*" (Velleman 2003: 4). The italics here add a nice rhetorical gesture toward self-evidence, as though begging the question, and ambiguating "'tales' . . . *told*," were for once innocuous.

(Far more innocuous-looking in this regard are the standard definitions, oriented to the narrated world. All will prove circular as such—and so unproductive in turn—but not on their very surface, like these nonstarters.)

At the opposite pole to circularity, there is self-contradiction, logically deemed nonsense and often operationally irreconcilable, hence unsalvageable as well. Just compare "narratives without narrativeness" (Morson 2003: 60) and narrativity without narrative or narratives: "Not all histories

are *narratives*," which represent events taking place in time, but "all histories are founded on a *narrativity* that guarantees that what they represent will 'contain' meaning" (Kellner 1987: 29). Thus, how can the latter "narrativity" break with narrative's "representation of events taking place in time" and rather define itself by "meaning"? Inversely, doesn't a portrait or a still life "'contain' meaning" as well? Representational meaning, then, is equally foundable on and guaranteed by *descriptivity*, so that narrativity, unlike narrative ("in time"), merges here with its space-oriented antipole.

Nonstarters apart, definitions (and implicitly practices) fall into two main general concepts ("logics," paradigms) of narrative/narrativity. Beneath the ostensible limitless diversity of particular definitional formulas, complete with infighting and claims to novelty, there lurks a basic polarity. Is narrative/narrativity attached to some event form, and thus inherent, or is it (re)constructed for a unique generic purpose, and so mappable on very different-looking surfaces in the finished text? One conception is formalist, or more specifically objectivist, originating in Aristotle's *Poetics* as "mimesis" and regnant over the millennia since, down to narratology and its latter-day (e.g., cognitivist, philosophical, historiosophic) parallels elsewhere. The other is functionalist, effect-based, hence also mind-driven, launched in my early work (e.g., Sternberg 1978) clean against the old/new objectivist tradition and gaining currency nowadays in several relevant disciplines. This overview will move, in line with the conceptual shift along history itself, from the objectivist to the functional paradigm.

4. Objectivist Definitions: An Overview in Long Historical Retrospect

Since the *Poetics*, the differential of narrativity has been usually located in the so-called "what" of narrative representation, the kind of object singled out for imaging. Objectivism having originated there, with most of its particular lines to this day, the origin is worth briefly recalling in its original terms.

For Aristotle, art and mimesis coextend. "Epic poetry and tragedy, as also comedy, Dithyrambic poetry, and most flute-playing and lyre-playing, are all . . . modes of imitation" (*Poetics*: chap. 1); so is painting. But some arts imitate a world at rest, not in movement, as literature does. Distinctively, therefore, epic and drama (verbal narrative in the large sense) coextend with this changeful poetic mimesis.

Among the numberless echoes since, contrast two latter-day ones that relate directly to the issue of narrated object. Like Aristotle, both associate the ontic key term (mimesis, representation) with how narrative is defined. Yet they polarize in the scope assigned to the term vis-à-vis its original use, which ranges over all artistic images of action.

The first echo is tendentiously restrictive, against the original usage. "Most definitions of the term 'narrative' have a clear mimetic bias and take ordinary realist texts of 'natural' narratives as being prototypical manifestations of narrative" (Alber et al. 2010: 114). In this narrow sense of "mimetic"—as normal, ordinary, verisimilar, more or less interchangeable with "realist"—the statement is downright false.[5] Most definitions are simply, advisedly, and understandably too general (e.g., "narrative represents an event" or "at least two events" or "a causal action") to specify, far less to privilege, the verisimilitude (or otherwise) of the represented as narrated world. Hence, they show nothing like "a clear mimetic bias."

By the same token, most definitions are too general and too concise to specify "ordinary realist texts or 'natural' narratives" (or, again, the reverse) "as being prototypical." Nor do they assume, let alone valorize, these specific normal types. Quite the contrary, if anything.

In narrative poetics, the foundational mimetic definer already demoted history and reality effect in favor of a sequence "necessary or probable" by its own action logic, however "impossible" (e.g., unearthly, fantastic, otherworldly, science-fictional) by ordinary criteria. So why force the door of ontic "impossibility" and analogous unnaturalisms? Opened as early as Aristotle's *Poetics*—itself referring to ancient literature—this door has been kept open since, in theory as well as in practice, to a variety of new deviant arrivals in a variety of narrative forms, periods, and subgenres, aiming to deform, "defamiliarize" time, space, action, character, thought, point of view. (Programmatic analyses of these, within narratology, go back to, say, Shklovsky on estrangement, against "motivation," Barthes 1974 [1970] on sequence-breaking, Genette 1980 [1972] on a deviance-based, Proustian narrative theory, Cohn 1978 on mind-quoting, Waugh 1984 on metafiction, Yacobi 1988 on denaturing, McHale 1987 on postmodernism, all foregrounding "impossible" variants.) And later definers than Aristotle, as we'll see, have even tended to lower his requirement of probability. The definitional range thus progressively widens away from, or beyond, "realistic texts."

Whatever their faults, most definitions are therefore nothing like this, but "mimetic" in the widest possible sense of representational, object-oriented, with various high-level strings (e.g., eventhood, number of events, event linkage) attached to the mimesis as conditions of narrativity. In scope, these definitions are accordingly far more assorted, permissive, inclusive than claimed by this (Alber et al.) misstatement, bent to magnify the range, novelty, and iconoclasm of the authors' so-called "unnatural

5. So it is also in regard to the intersecting senses taken by Plato's "mimetic" (vs. diegetic) and sorted out in Sternberg 1982a.

narratology."[6] If "a clear . . . bias" shows itself here, it is their *anti*mimetic drive, which obviously (re)crosses two long familiar, trendy negatives: general anti-representationalism and genre-directed antinarrativity, which have often converged since the Russian Formalists, with "estrangement" as inherited supreme countervalue (Sternberg 1978: 307–308n15, 1983b, 2006, 2007).

Further, the same holds in principle for narrative (or otherwise "mimetic" or representational, e.g., descriptive) entities, concepts, theories, analyses that are more specific than the definitional minimum, all the way to the particular work. "Time denatured" (in Tamar Yacobi's [1988] phrase) out of earthly duration or order is still modeled upon (if against) familiar time; unrealistic space must yet remain at least three-dimensional, on pain of becoming inconceivable; a supernatural (e.g., omniscient, omnipotent) perspective is still reality-like, because God-like. And similarly with every other aspect or item of mimesis on this wide front. All are reality-like in making sense by appeal to the logic, grammar, organizing principle of reality: by flexible analogy to the way of the world, without necessarily corresponding to any specific world or world type. Across text level as well as ontic lines, in short, mimetic opposes not realistic but communicative motivation (see note 7 below).

Like its precedents or parallels, however, "unnatural narratology" has a vested interest in attributing such narrow "mimetic" theories and practices to mainstream narratologies, beginning with the concept of narrative/narrativity. As we'll find, some "unnaturalists" even promote or adopt a domesticated, "natural" concept of the genre themselves, with the same end in view: to polarize the concept as sharply as possible with as much as possible of the actual narrative performance, and so discredit the allegedly "natural" narratological dealings with it.

So much for the unduly and, when it comes to Aristotelian reference or to definitions since, untruly restrictive extreme of "mimesis" or the like.[7] At the opposite extreme, "mimetic" and "representational" appropriately serve as umbrella terms for world-imaging, whether or not Aristotelian

6. As already with various predecessors. Pekka Tammi's (2006: 27 ff.) call for a "literary narratology" thus also opens by alleging "the bias in narrative studies," definitions centrally included, "towards privileging . . . the natural, quotidian or *realistic* modes of narrative." The terms evidently recur and migrate unexamined, as code words among partisans.

7. Compare Boris Tomashevsky's (1965 [1925]: 78–87) "realistic motivation," which, as hinted above, has a close bearing, possibly even influence, on the usage, question, and value frame at issue. Adapted from Viktor Shklovsky, the term *realistic* narrows down here to (undesirable) lifelikeness or illusionism. But the idea behind it surely cuts across all ontic differences (as when a fantastic world motivates an artistic device or necessity, like estrangement). This is why I renamed it "quasi-mimetic [or, for short, mimetic] motivation" (Sternberg 1978: 236 ff.; 1983b; 2005), and Shklovsky would probably agree.

in all the aspects involved. For now, compare one latter-day variant that is both otherwise wide-ranging and otherwise discriminate. "Narrative is just one form of representation, distinguished in some way from representations of other kinds—essays, treatises, arguments, insults, portraits, lyric poems, for example" (Currie 2006: 309). The representational criterion persists and again distinguishes narrative at large, "in some way," yet extends beyond art.

Such variants multiply a hundredfold, and along different lines, within the objectivist circle. Whatever its surface label, must, origin, or discipline, an objectivist conception defines narrative/narrativity by the represented object. The tags for this object widely vary among, say, "content," "meaning," "semantics," "signified," "subject matter," "what," "mimesis," "representation," "*fabula* level" "the told," the field or focus of reference, and so forth, but shouldn't obscure the underlying commonality. A double commonality, in source as well as in substance, because the variants generally trace back to the *Poetics*.

Throughout, the definitional object lies here in the narrated dynamics, as an image of the world's mobility: in some form of events, that is, often called "action" or "plot" and always specified to exclude (or at least marginalize) other formations, regardless of their eventhood. This or that objective dynamics is in effect alleged to be a necessary and sufficient minimum (or, if gradable, measure) for narrativity, hence omnipresent in the narrative genre and there alone, though possibly to a varying extent.

This objectivist paradigmatic commonality once noted, the differences among the proposals on record grow more orderly and traceable, as well as less weighty, than appears, because nothing principled separates them. They all refer to the same conceptual paradigm. Nor are the appeals to it regularly separable by value frame, or disciplinary origin, or the pseudo-historical distinction of "classical" versus "postclassical" approach. The claim that theory "presents a cacophonous array of definitions and contested elucidations" of narrativity (Livingston 2009: 26) is therefore exaggerated, because too superficial to discern the underlying "paradigmatic" lines of objectivist harmony and agreement, often as invisible to the contesting parties themselves. At the same time, against the background of this paradigmatic commonality, the differences will also prove far nicer and even more numerous than immediately visible and traditionally acknowledged.

The movement of the next section will complement the running analysis itself in bringing out this interplay of unity and variety. The following overview will proceed in a roughly ascending order of objective stipula-

tion for narrativity, from the barest minimum object to various and often
cumulative extras demanded. This means that each concept after (i) below
subsumes one or generally more of its predecessors, though the theorists
involved may not say or think so and their divergent claims and/or termi-
nologies may suggest otherwise.[8]

Narrativity, then, allegedly consists in (the representation of):

(i) *A single event at least*. The rock-bottom demand would seem reasonable,
by objectivist logic. Given the dynamizing of a world, entailed already by
a single event, why reach beyond it?[9] Explicitly or otherwise, the event is
understood by theorists as a necessary and sufficient condition (or even as
just another label) for the change of state over time, which remains pecu-
liar to the narrative genre.[10] Witness already Aristotle's mandatory "change
of fortune," which a single event (notably a peripety or a discovery) can in
principle effect, motivate, represent. The change is essential to both epic
and drama, as to comedy and tragedy within each: to narrative in the large
sense, that is. With Aristotle's approval, this category would also subsume
other, newer media, the entire range of mimesis as action imaging.[11]

Arguably, this necessary movement in the agents' world (and with it
minimum eventhood) is deducible from the *Poetics* as sufficient too. Con-
sider how tragedy's definitional narrative there amounts to an "act of suf-
fering" (*pathos*): "Somebody injures somebody close to him," entailing
some change(s) of fortune for the worse. Comedy would presumably have
a corresponding act(ion) to define it, with the shift(s) of state for the better,

8. What further complicates the sorting out is that multi-part definitions intermix require-
ments into some miscellaneous package, at times even in disregard for entailment, overlap-
ping, or incompatibility within it. Thus the redundant "event plus state" or the impossible
"causality without temporality." A limit case would be the agglomerate in Wolf 2004: 87–91,
made odder by its very bid for tidiness. Other examples will recur throughout.
9. Unless you would reduce it to statics, hence to nonnarrativity, as a few have inexplicably
done. Monika Fludernik (1996: 323) thus designates texts "with just one event" as "event-
less," exactly like those that proceed "without triggering a change." Compare Wendy Steiner
(1988: 13), who jumps from the lack of "multiple" events in painting to "a frozen moment of
action," as if the single move were perforce immobile. This again verges on a contradiction
in terms. See also notes 10 and 42 below.
10. Even stranger than the denial of change to one event would be its divorce from event-
hood. This is why narrative theorists do *not* "posit change as an additional requirement
[for narrative]" to event(s), temporality, or causality (Hühn 2008: 142, 145) but as the very
requirement of eventhood, let alone of temporality or causality. Far from an addendum,
change thus lies at the heart of most narratologies: mine even locates it on and between nar-
rative's two peculiar sequences, as the interplay of the actional with the communicative pro-
cess, of event with discourse dynamics, of narrated with narrational movement.
11. Like myself, therefore, the classicist Malcolm Heath (1989a: 38) has found it appropri-
ate to "use the term 'narrative'" as co-referential with "Aristotle's phrase 'imitation of an
action.'" Cf. Brian Boyd's (2009: 159) "imitation" (mimesis) as "storytelling."

toward good fortune. If so, then below the two subgeneric variants there lurks a common denominator, in the form of the most general, genre-wide narrative: "Somebody does something," to some fortune-changing effect.

One might accordingly expect "the telling of an event" to suit Porter Abbott's (2000b: 261) description of it as "the commonest definition of narrative." Oddly enough, however, this barest yet distinctive nuclear minimum of eventhood-as-temporal-dynamics has rarely been judged sufficient by objectivists, with Aristotle the "whole" promoter at their head. His whole, "beginning → middle → end" sequence already includes event multiplicity, among further demands. This higher numerical must is typical and sometimes overt, even exclusionary. Thus Scholes (1980: 209): "We require more than one event before we recognize that we are in the presence of a narrative." And this higher minimum binds narrative regardless of extension. "Even the shortest story must recount more than one event": so the philosopher David Velleman (2003: 5). Or in exclusionary fashion, Prince (1982: 2): neither "There was a fight yesterday" nor "It was a beautiful trip" constitutes a narrative, since they represent the fight or the trip not "as a series of events but as one event." A more extreme view (in note 9 above) would consider such one-event discourses "eventless" or "frozen" as well as nonnarrative.

What with factors other than number, the single event counts even more rarely as sufficient than will appear from a hasty, or automatized, glance at the record of objectivism. Beside or beneath the single postulate itself, known or generally unknown to the postulator, there often occur further conditions (distinctions, assumptions, gradations) that level it up to one or more of the ensuing higher, composite narrativities. Thus the modest-looking Genette (1980: 30) on "narrative" undertaking "to tell of one or several events," like "*I walk*, *Pierre has come*," or Prince's (1987: 58) "one or more real or fictitious *events* communicated by" some narrator(s). With increasing explicitness, these phrases attach to eventhood the string of narrational mediation, hence language, and the membership of narrative decreases accordingly.[12] This besides the generic premise of narrative's twofold, "story/discourse," represented/communicative linearity, which most theorists since Russian Formalism assume but, like Genette and Prince, do not bring into the (representational) definition. Still, even if left unconceptualized and unintegrated within the narrative minimum—to predictably fatal effect, as will emerge—the key premise of bi-sequentiality in effect increases the constraints on that minimum. The higher the thresh-

12. The definitions "championed by Prince, Genette," then, are not purely "story-oriented," as Nünning and Sommers (2008: 334) claim, and so not quite opposed to Stanzel's orientation to "mediacy."

old, the lower the numbers; the broader the range of features postulated, the smaller the circle of favorites admitted.

Contrast, for example, Genette (1988 [1983]: 19) himself elsewhere on "minimal narrative" as a sheer "action or an event, even a single one," transforming "an earlier state to a later and resultant state." Likewise, contrast Claude Bremond (1973: 112) on "God created the heavens and the earth" as "a minimal narrative but a complete one"; or Abbott's (2002: 12) categorical and accordingly inclusive minimalism, "an event or a series of events." This eventhood doesn't require a narrator or even language to present it, Abbott (2000a: 249) maintains, as if to wave away the further strings attached by others and so underline the contrast.

But then, the contrast is in fact partial. Such ostensible minimalisms, even when kept consistent regarding event singularity, generally prove in turn to be demanding in other regards. A closer look will disclose that they assume further conditions for narrativity, which don't emerge at all, or not in the official event-based definition. Most often, indeed, these extras never break surface: too obvious to stipulate, as it were, or literally to perceive. The major lurking demand concerns the generic premise just indicated regarding bi-sequentiality. Of the two sequences that mark narrative, that of the represented "story" (or *fabula*) alone comes into objectivist definitions—as a certain event form—but that of "discourse" (*sjuzhet*) is nevertheless assumed and constraining on its own. This conspicuously lurking presence of the fellow sequence, unacknowledged and uncorrelated, though given in the telling/reading, will predictably typify objectivism throughout (and play a central role in its displacement in sections 5–6). Additional assumptions range over features (ii)–(xii) below. The constraints of agency, humanity, specificity, modality, for example, typically recur among the one-event approaches just cited, usually in silence.

The definer's overmeasure, however, may run to the event number itself and so incur self-contradiction. By this variation in number I don't mean principled approaches to an event as modular, multiform (e.g., decomposible, integrable, extendible, condensable), hence singularized or pluralized at will. One such approach lies in the idea of "micro-sequence" (Barthes 1988a [1966]: 114–17) as "a logical succession of [insignificant] nuclei" or in "script" (Schank and Abelson 1977) as a routinized event series: either lends itself to evocation by its name (e.g., "going to the cinema") or by some part(s), with the rest omitted. An earlier, different approach is latent in the Russian Formalist "motif" (Tomashevsky 1965 [1925]) as irreducible unit or, I would add, the other way round: as the unit that composite narrative units (episode, scene, indeed event itself) both reduce to *and* freely combine.

But analogous ideas of (de)composibility have arisen elsewhere too. For instance, the philosopher John Passmore (1987: 72–73) argues that "every event has a duration" and therefore enjoys modularity: it can be generalized into a "phrase" or specified into "a set of courses of events" represented along a book-length narrative.

Inter alia, the allegedly one-event fight or trip excluded by Prince (1982: 2) from narrative readily lends itself to decomposing into anything between a two-part and an epic or novelistic multiplex. Indeed, "fight" decomposes into the *Iliad* and "trip" into the *Odyssey*. (Examples of multiplication by inference from the single-looking given itself will appear below.)

But such flexibility is one thing, inconsistency another. Recall how Prince negates a one-event minimum here and affirms it there. Even within the same account (ibid.: 2–3), the mention of a fight or a trip is disqualified for narrativity, yet on the next page "sometimes regarded as narrative" (e.g., "At 2 a.m. yesterday, the US declared war on England"). Likewise, how to reconcile Seymour Chatman's (1978: 94, 107) "existent plus event" minimum with his generalization that all narratives "turn on plots—events in a series" (1999: 318)? Sarah Worth (2008: 43 ff.), shifting from the minimum to two events plus, betrays a philosophical counterpart still more divided against itself.

Below we will encounter examples of a larger removal from a posited single event. Inversely, as will emerge in (vi) below, some definitional requirements overtly cast into multi-unit, even multi-link form amount to a single event, once we look deeper.

(ii) *"Event," or eventhood, restricted to an "act" or (if multiphase) "action," as against sheer "happening."* But what exactly makes the difference, across variant terminologies? Aristotle draws the line absolutely, if implicitly, in terms of the presence or absence of human agency. So absolutely that the deficient agentless and/or minus-human alternative ("happening") is ignored altogether: it receives no mention, no name. An event like the unintentional "The king shivered," or the nonpersonal "Snow destroyed the garden," or the impersonal "It rained at last" would fail to qualify. Nor does Aristotle mention humanlike agency, as in Aesopian fable. (The science-fiction humanoid—e.g., Isaac Asimov's robot—would fare no better.) Though separable in reason, the two differentials, personhood and performance, anthropos and agent, go together in eventhood to ensure purposeful action and to raise the generic threshold higher.

If anything, the action envisaged by Aristotle grows *inter*personal, since the agent and the patient are related—literally kinfolk, at best. Even more

generally, the *Poetics*' reference to "'agents' in the plural" shows that "the action of tragedy or epic is an interaction" (Heath 1991: 389).

Again, the agent's endowment with "character" (*Poetics*: chap. 6) redoubles the sense of humanity, because that "character" involves choice, hence ethics, thought, mental activity at large behind the visible performance. Barthes (1974 [1970]) overemphasizes this choice (*proiaresis*) in naming after it the entire "proiaretic code," which governs the "logicotemporal" action as a whole. But choice, and the agent assuming "character" with it, remain for Aristotle a possibility: they *can* attach to the logicotemporal whole, if only in the role of an aid to motivating how the agents act. Being such-and-such, they choose and proceed accordingly.

Further, even though Aristotle's own obligatory "mimesis of action" can do without "character," it yet moves between poles of the human condition—happiness and unhappiness, success and failure, good and ill fortune. Such fortunes, and certainly the movement between them, entail agency. "All human happiness or misery takes the form of action. . . . It is in our actions—what we do—that we are happy or the reverse" (*Poetics*: chap. 6). Inversely, "an inanimate thing or a lower animal or a child . . . is incapable of deliberate intention [that typifies the agent]; nor can 'good fortune' or 'ill fortune' be ascribed to them, except metaphorically" (*Physics* 2: 6). The insistence on a change of *fortune* therefore narrows down the larger, heterogeneous range of change: (inter)personal ups and downs alone qualify. Narrative (epic, dramatic) mimesis accordingly requires "Somebody does (and/or undergoes) something," as distinct from "Something happens."[13]

This rise above mere eventhood has tended to persist in narrative theory. But the "act(ion)/happening" line, whether again enforced or just theorized, is variously, sometimes confusedly, (re)drawn there. Thus Chatman's dichotomy,

> *events* . . . are either *acts* or *actions*, in which an existent is the agent of the event, or happenings, where the existent is the patient . . . ,   (Chatman 1978: 32)

fails to accord with his ensuing variant,

> events are either *actions (acts)* or *happenings*. Both are changes of state. An action is a change of state brought about by an agent or one that affects a patient. . . . A happening entails a predication of which the character or other focused existent is the narrative object: for example, *The storm cast Peter adrift*.   (Ibid.: 44–45)

13. On the other hand, "Something happened" literally figures in Barbara Herrnstein Smith's (1980: 232) known definition of narrative—echoed in Chambers 1984: 3–4, Phelan 2005: 217, Ryan 2005b: 11—as well as in the title of Joseph Heller's (1975 [1966]) novel. However, the phrase there does not exclude but rather presupposes the genre's human-centeredness.

According to the first conceptual polarity, everything depends on role: in a "happening"-type event, the existent is the patient rather than the agent (e.g., presumably, "John suffered a loss" or "The apple was eaten"). According to the second, however, "an action" may itself involve a change "that affects a patient," like John and the apple above; while a "happening" may feature an existent as agent, like the storm that affects Peter as patient ("object"). The opposition in role has now disappeared either way, with no visible substitute at that.

To confuse matters further, a statement I omitted from each of the Chatman quotes above, and marked there by dots, adds another problematic (complementary? crosscutting?) divide. "An existent, in turn, is either a *character* or an element of *setting*, a distinction based on whether or not it performs a plot-significant action," and "if the action is plot-significant, the agent or patient is called a character," respectively (ibid.). But how can "an element of setting" perform anything as such? And if it can, by somehow assuming kinesis, a fortiori personified agency, then why can't that performance run to "a plot-significant action," accidental or even designed? (See Yacobi 1991, "Plots of Space.")

Moreover, given "a plot-significant action," will an "agent" like the storm casting Peter adrift, or a "patient" like the object in "John ate the apple," or both, like the role-players in "The storm cast the ship adrift," become "a character"? Inversely, will an "agent or patient" involved in no plot-significant action (like numberless minor personages) forfeit characterhood to become "an element of *setting*"? On the contrary, such minor figures, left unconstrained by plot exigencies, enjoy a greater freedom to express or develop their character. Going by the quotes from Chatman, however, the answer to the last two questions (whether "plot-significance" can elevate a nonhuman to characterhood and its absence reduce a human to setting) must be yes, but against reason. Also, apparently, against Chatman's intention. Taken together, his "action/happening" and "character/setting" polarities may well attempt to (re)correlate the variables of ±agency and ±humanity, or humanlikeness, but the outcome is increasingly messy.[14]

In cognitive linguistics, George Lakoff et al. have reinvented the dis-

---

14. For another untenable "action/happening" divide, see my analysis (Sternberg 2003b: 585–88) of Ryan (1991: 129), who conflates this binarism with design/accident. The problems are even more troublesome, because, unlike Chatman, she would exclude "happenings" (e.g., Kleist's "The Earthquake in Chile" as fortuitous) from narrative/narrativity. In another variant of Ryan (2005b: 13), the exclusion of them changes, or appeals, to their figuration, and so directly recalls Aristotle on the metaphoricity of discourse that casts "an inanimate thing or a lower animal" as agent.

tinction, to somewhat better effect, complete with the juncture of ±agency and ±humanity (now including humanlikeness, even sheer animacy). They have also extended it from metaphor as story, their chief concern, to storytelling proper, especially in Mark Turner's *The Literary Mind* (1996). Here the newly joint polarity returns with questionable additions typical of the discipline—but we're at least spared the narratological tangles. An event with an actor is an "action"; one without an actor remains again without a name, as without a teleology—a mere antipole. Agentless stand opposed to agentive events, nonaction to action stories, and unmotivated to causal developments.[15]

The reinvented happening/action divide, though, gets neutralized in cognitive-linguistic practice by reinvented appeal to the universal workings of the mind, which supposedly transform the one kind of entity into the other. *Re*invented, again, because this idea of a humanizing and agency-projecting mental drive is not only long known in and through the literary traditions of animating, personifying, allegorizing, or pathetic fallacy but also (though less favorably) conceptualized in philosophy and other disciplines. It goes back all the way to David Hume (1957 [1757]: 29–30) on how humans "conceive all beings like themselves," and later to Friedrich Nietzsche (1989 [1887]: 45), if not already to Aristotle's diagnosis of the intentionality ascribed to the inanimate and the animal order as metaphoric transfer.

Moreover, the philosophers' "natural frailty" and "fundamental error of reason" newly arises in neurology as a deficit or pathology. In Oliver Sacks's *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* (1998: 8), the titular patient also "saw faces where there were no faces to see" and expected inanimate things to reply.

About the same time, the idea reappears in another mind science, first in metaphor study, then in its carryover to narrative. The cognitive linguistic group alleges an "events are actions" rule, whereby we (observers in life, readers in literature) metaphorically project an actor (or "causal actor") onto some nonactor associated with the event. In a tale of mutability—aging, extinction—time may thus become an animate, even personified devourer.

Though often problematic, then, the action/happening binarism has determined, polarized, weighted narrativity for millennia, in various guises and disciplines. A few theorists nevertheless dissent from this long-time exclusionary mainstream. Among examples of narrative, Prince (1982: 73) adduces water boiling and rice burned thereby. Nelson Good-

---

15. ". . . less . . . non . . . un . . ." suggest a charged minus/plus, negative/positive opposition, rather than an equipollence or bipolarity.

man (1980) begins with the report of how a horse won a race as a paradig-matic story. Peter Lamarque (2004: 394) pointedly affirms that "'The sun shone and the grass grew' is a narrative." Noël Carroll (2007: 12, 14) argues against limiting "causal inputs to subjective [mental, intentional] states," because objective conditions "can also raise narrative questions. . . . Surely one may tell . . . about the collision of a comet with an asteroid in a galaxy far, far away." Throughout this line of dissent, in brief, "Something hap-pened" will do as well as "Somebody performed something."

But these remain minority views. To some others, with a foot in each camp, this variant of change will also do, but not quite as well or on its own.[16] These qualified inclusions of "Something happened" in the narrative circle accordingly modulate toward the old and strong "action"-favoring orthodoxy. However termed or conceptualized, the linkage of eventhood to agency, humanity, and usually both is standard among diverse ideas of narrative/narrativity—and most often so taken for granted, Aristotle fash-ion, as to go without saying, without a conceivable, let alone viable ("hap-pening") alternative. It thus underlies various requirements of causality, motive, goal, intentionality, planning, thought, telling, viewing, experi-ence, or meaningfulness (details in [vii] below). Here and there, the under-lying assumption breaks surface, as a definitional fiat among others.[17]

Even if narrative requires "more than one event and/or state of affairs," this does not yet mean "at least two events," never mind such further requirements as unity (Carroll 2001: 22). Likewise with other jumps from "more than one" to "at least two" (e.g., Scholes 1980: 209; Velleman 2003: 5; Yevseyev 2005: 114). Jumps, because event-plus can take various forms, even within the formal or form-bound objectivist paradigm itself. Of the two primary forms in turn, "*more* than one event" (any addition) outreaches "more than *one* event" (larger number) in multiformity, yet both ramify to some extent. The very demand for "an act(ion)," rather than a "happen-ing," already goes beyond "one event," of course;[18] so do other possible alternatives (e.g., tense or modality below) to numerical "more." And even the numerical addenda to the definition needn't be events and may logi-cally amount to nothing, because entailed by the concept of eventhood.

16. For example, Bremond 1980 [1966]: 411; Scholes 1980: 209; Currie 2006: 313–14; Feagin 2007: 20.

17. For example, Culler 1975: 113; Scholes 1980: 206; Bruner 1986: 13–14, 1991: 7; Argyros 1992: 662; Fludernik 1996: 12 ff.; Cohn 1999: 12; Toolan 2001: 8; Wolf 2003: 186, 2004: 88, 90; Kafalenos 2006: 8, 66; Ryan 2007: 26; Nanay 2009: 126; besides the references cited above.

18. A fortiori if "happening" counts as a nonevent or metaphorical event.

The last set of options is most to our immediate point. Thereby, narrative represents:

(iii) *event(s) combined with other reality items*. Thus narrative is defined as "existent plus event," the former branching into "characters and setting" (Chatman 1978: 94, 107). Or "narratives are about people acting in a setting" (Bruner 1991: 7). Others make do with one of these two ("characters and setting") event-pluses. "A story—that is, a succession of events involving existents" (Abbott 2000a: 249). Alternatively, and more formally, "narratives comprise (1) events which happen in (2) states of affairs; neither (1) nor (2) is sufficient to make up a narrative by itself" (Holloway 1979: 5). Or in cognitivist parlance, we are allegedly most familiar with "basic . . . small stories of events in space: The wind blows clouds through a sky, a child throws a rock" (Turner 1996: 13).

Compare the misunderstanding of reality items and dimensions shown by a team of psychologists. "Like objects," Tversky et al. (2004: 6) claim, "events are bounded; objects are bounded in space and events are bounded in time." If so, then "events" must join with "objects" or, more generally, (co)existents or (co)existence, in order to gain a spatial boundary as well and with it, presumably, a qualification for narrativity. Our definers above, who require "character" and/or "setting," might draw both a theoretical grounding and moral support from this interdisciplinary parallel. Along with Tversky et al., however, they miss the rudimentary fact that an event is two-dimensional by nature, an intersection of when and where, time and space coordinates (or "boundness," if you will).

All of these addenda to eventhood in narrativity would therefore appear entirely, and the character/setting subdivision at least partly, redundant. For "event" already logically entails "setting" (or "scene" or "space"), given that it must take *place* somewhere as well as sometime, at a spacetime juncture.[19] And there must also be a "situation" or "state of affairs" (notably an expositional one) for an event to change into another situation. Further, the (onto)logically redundant space/state needn't materialize, either, not even in the finished text—let alone the generic kernel—because the mind will supply it by inference where and as required. Whenever the narrative starts *in medias res*, for example, we gradually reconstruct (among other gapped antecedents) the initial state of affairs prior to the actual start: to

19. The inverse extra requirement of "a dynamic temporal" setting (Wolf 2003: 186, against Chatman) is another superfluity, given an action. More generally and constructively, I have established that a twofold, narrative/descriptive function is built into every representation as an image of spacetime, manifest or latent and only variable in degree and dominance (e.g., Sternberg 1978, 1981a, 1985: esp. 321–64, 1990c).

the given changed middle. And that state will normally include a spatial as well as a temporal coordinate to be figured out in retrospect (Sternberg 1978). By force of the same entailment, the same essentially applies, a fortiori, to the mind's inferential completion of the bare single event of (i)–(ii) into event plus space/state; and so with the rest of the definitional narrativities of eventhood below.

Whether "event" likewise entails "character" depends on the meaning of this term, ambiguous between sheer agency (e.g., "a tragedy with six characters") and distinctive existential attributes (e.g., a strong character, behave in character, a character actor): between participantship and specific personality or portraiture.[20] In the one sense, the *Poetics* rightly assimilates the character-as-agent (as *pratton*, or for that matter, as patient) to the action, which necessitates a doer along with a doing. *Somebody* must do (and/or suffer) something. How can we know the dancer from the dance?

In the other sense, however, "character" figures in the *Poetics* under a distinct rubric and name, *ethos*, whatever impels, reveals, differentiates an agent as a psychomoral being, especially at moments of choice, when tested at the crossroads.[21] The sheer agentive *pratton* thereby gains a personality, emergent in and through his action. As *ethos*, of course, "character" isn't anymore logically redundant, given an "action"; but then, Aristotle considers it *functionally* redundant in the last analysis—dispensable to narrativity, you might say. Recall the compelling, if unwelcome, argument for this action-first order of narrative priorities as inherent in mimesis, tragic or otherwise. Why is "the most important element" found in the plot (*mythos*) that represents and composes the artwork's event line?

> Tragedy is essentially an imitation not of persons but of action and life, of happiness and misery. All human happiness or misery takes the form of action; the end for which we live is a certain kind of activity, not a quality. Character gives us qualities, but it is in our actions—what we do—that we are happy or the reverse. In a play accordingly they do not act in order to portray the Characters; they include the Characters for the sake of the action. . . . A tragedy is impossible without action, but there may be one without Character.   (*Poetics*: chap. 6; see also Sternberg 1983b: 146–47)

A diametric contrast, this, to the widespread downgrading and dismissal of action (hence also narrative interest) in favor of *ethos*/character, with the artistic priorities accordingly inverted. This quote is even a far cry

20. For example, which of the two referents does Vladimir Propp (1968 [1928]: 20 ff.) mean in his influential statement on "function" as "an act of a *character*, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action"?

21. This self-revelation through choice is Aristotle's *proiaresis*, and from it Barthes (1974 [1970]) derives his "proiaretic code" as a term for the code of narrative actions.

from Henry James's celebrated, subtler plea in "The Art of Fiction" for a two-way traffic between the apparent rival components, to the point of interdependence and inseparability. "What is character but the illustration of incident? What is incident but the revelation of character?"

Instead, the *Poetics* goes below the discourse surface to bring out the underlying one-way dependence, which ensues from the action-first imperative of mimesis and can at will, or need, produce an action-only minimum.[22] Here, *ethos* ultimately serves *mythos*, motivating its action's start and/or development and/or finish in lifelike terms; and the servant is always replaceable by other lifelike motivators, other means to the dominant end. In principle, for example, the action's advance toward a happy or unhappy closure may arise from external circumstances and vicissitudes, rather than from the agents' characters.

Not that Aristotle disfavors character, let alone excludes it from tragedy and the rest of poetic art.[23] Character as *ethos* remains among the objects of mimesis, second only to plot and always assimilable to it (as cause to effect, motivation to behavior): assimilated, indeed, in the best works to form together an indivisible whole.

The excerpt cited, however, bears not on the contextual but on the *generic* scale: the universal priorities and hierarchy of narrative as such, rather than comparative value judgments of particular finished narratives, between the characterful and the characterless. Within this definitional core of mimesis, which of the two options (±character, *mythos* below or above *ethos*) applies in the last analysis? The second, by the genre's own rationale, if you think it through. Given that change makes the generic narrative difference, then what embodies change, "plot" (*mythos*), willy-nilly comes first in the genre's scale, before all variables and regardless of values. Plot can get the obligatory dynamic mimesis ("change of fortune") enacted, even enchained, without *ethos*, Aristotle cogently reasons, thereby establishing itself as the poetic dominant.[24]

22. The claim made in Halliwell 1986: 146 that the *Poetics* develops an "agent-centered perspective" therefore compounds three errors, all strange for a classicist. First, the "perspective" in Aristotle is action- rather than agent-centered: witness the above quote. Second, by "agent" Halliwell means not, properly, one who acts but, misleadingly, "character/*ethos*." Third, Aristotelian poetics is not "character"-centered, *ethos*centric, any more than agent-centered—not in the rigorous sense—and actually less when it comes to the basic priorities of mimesis. See also notes 23–25 below.

23. As Elizabeth Belfiore (1992b: 83–110; 1992a: 361 ff.; 2000) repeatedly misreads. She mistakes Aristotle's comparative ranking of "character" below "plot" for its categorical devaluation, and his insistence on its dispensability in principle for an all-out drive against the co-occurrence and synthesis of the two in artistic practice. No "characterful action," allegedly.

24. When character itself changes, as well as or rather than the exterior world, it assimilates, or can even amount to, the Aristotelian plot (*mythos*) in a dynamic role.

With this inescapable reasoning overlooked or garbled, the consequent order of priorities has outraged psychology-minded critics since Romanticism and the novel, the inward turn of modernism, above all. Chatman (1978: 108–13) is among them, down to the level of narrativity: "Plot and character are equally important. . . . Stories only exist where events and existents occur." Both count for him as definitional, and valuable, in their own right. Moreover, he spells out the opposite hierarchy, implied by the formula "existent plus event," in raising the argument that "character is supreme and plot derivative."[25] Nor is he alone, not even within the psychology-unfriendly Structuralist camp (e.g., Barthes's "proiaretic code," misnaming the entire logico-temporal structure of action after "proiaresis" as a "characterful," *ethos*-laden act, or Ryan's [2007: 25–26] iterated insistence on "individuated participants"). In the opposite, humanist camp, Bakhtin's (1984: 85) "chronotope" goes with "the image of man in literature." Either way, there ensues a multiple, or rather mixed, object to be narrated, half temporal and dynamic, half spatial and static.

(iv) *Event multiplied into a series, from two upward.* Here, "more than one event" does signify what users of the phrase generally intend—more than *one* event—and what less equivocal formulations often articulate into "an event series," "two events at least," and so forth. The conception arises, again, as early, and unfavorably, as the *Poetics*: "A, then B, then . . ." linearity informs there the merely additive, "episodic" and, if anything, overlong series in chronicle or pre-Homeric epic.

> The Unity of a Plot does not consist, as some suppose, in its having one man as its subject. . . . There are many actions of one man [or, of one war, like that of Troy] which cannot be made to form one action. One sees, therefore, the mistake of all the poets who have written a *Heracleid*, a *Theseid*. . . . They suppose that, because Heracles was one man, the story also of Heracles must be one story.   (chap. 8)

This multi-event sequence allegedly falls short of genuine, "whole" ("beginning → middle → end"), chrono-logical artistic mimesis, yet still unrolls a (hi)story in looser, chronological order. Aristotle never specifies

---

25. A closer analysis would show that Aristotle's reasoning holds: Chatman typically misunderstands his argument and the issue itself, including the level at stake. The same reasoning would hold against the overprivileging of the cognate secret life in modernism, or of Fludernik's (1996) neomodernist "experientiality," by their elevation to the genre's top priority. We mustn't confuse what makes or breaks a genre with what generic instances (dis)favor or (de)focus, that is, the definitional invariant of narrativity (e.g., change) with the variables (e.g., character, inner life) open to the narrative text, or tellability, amid such invariance.

the chronology of this event series, any more than he does the *chrono*-logic of the "whole" initiated by Homer. But he clearly suggests it in his reference to biographical epic, then to the "episodic plot" as "sequence of episodes," and later in distinguishing *post hoc* from *propter hoc*: clearly and always unfavorably, because of the looseness of the mere series, its weak coherence relative to the *Odyssey*, say, let alone drama. Aristotle, though, equivocates about its status, deploring the shortfall ("episodic" plots "are the worst") without excluding the product outright (the way he does sheer metrical discourse as nonmimetic altogether). In effect, he marginalizes the tenuous serial option.

However, this "A, then B" minimum lends itself to tightening by other resources than Aristotelian "A → B" enchainment. The resources involved are part of a larger coherence-promoting repertoire, to which we will come back in (v) under the wide heading of "sequentiality-plus." A few of these, available even to the barest-looking, chronological event sequence, may yet be worth indicating now.

Aristotle himself already assumes there, besides, the unity of the object: an event series geared all along to a single war or hero, though not to the single-action optimum. Still less, one may add, does it equal Homer's *Odyssey*, which assimilates this one continuous focus, typical of earlier epic, to a newly unitary action. (Likewise with Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* as against Jane Austen's *Emma*.) Recall also his earlier mention, in chapter 5, of the work's focus on "a single circuit of the sun" (i.e., twelve or twenty-four hours). Standard practice in Greek tragedy and later imposed on neo-classical drama—as the "Aristotelian" unity of time—this concentrated mimesis is freely extendible to the rest of narrative. A telling limit case would be Bloomsday in Joyce's *Ulysses*: the daylong as well as chronological objective framework of June 16, 1904, that encloses the novel's ultra-"episodic" streams of consciousness.

Of course, these aids to integrity—via hero as object and/or objective time frame—equally apply in principle at the level of narrative kernel or minimum, starting from "A, then B." Even so, Aristotle does not consider such aids equivalent to his favored causal whole—by the measures of action logic we'll encounter in (vi) below—though worth specifying and disputing. Nor would he presumably consider equivalent a range of other (e.g., thematic, analogical, perspectival) unifiers, which lie beyond his ken, yet are alternative, as well as joinable, to the action-logical whole.

In modern chronological series, as in chrono-logics, we find these aids to unity recurring, or replaced, or reinforced at will, beginning with the definitional multiplex. As to the "episodic" series itself, the best-known direct (if unacknowledged) echo, complete with attempted backdating and down-

grading and opposition to a higher, causal event-line, is E. M. Forster's (1962 [1927]) "story." It is exemplified by the first "minimal narrative" on critical record, here amounting to a two-part series: "The king died and then the queen died" (ibid.: 93). In everything but focus and length ("magnitude"), this notorious mini-series corresponds to the cradle-to-grave biography and other "episodic" chronicles that Aristotle relegates to the primitive epic before Homer. Forster in turn judges the "A, and then B" form "atavistic," its "and then" looseness plus "and then?" expectancy befitting cave dwellers. Here, though, "story" is nevertheless grudgingly admitted to persist, suffice, and at times dominate even in novels. "Yes—oh dear yes—the novel tells a story": willy-nilly, the highest common denominator "of all the very complicated" novelistic "organisms" lies there.[26] Indeed, the picaresque episode sequence would often count as a novelistic paradigm of "A, then B . . . ," though, again, not without a unifying hero for sequentiality-plus.

Compare Labov's (1972: 360) "*minimal* narrative as a sequence of two clauses which are temporally ordered": same low "A, then B" threshold, with the same relative (because language-only) inclusiveness, yet also with much the same low opinion. To grow "complete," the "skeleton of the story" requires "a beginning, a middle, and an end" (ibid.: 362). For interest ("point," "tellability"), again, the minimum needs to be raised, in effect emplotted, as high as a sixfold tale of personal experience: Abstract, Orientation, Complicating Action, Evaluation, Result or Resolution, Coda (ibid.: 363 ff.)

Elsewhere, the value-laden distinction reappears, with taxonomic force, opposing the permissive, loose genre to a well-made subgenre. Reappears, because Aristotle already opposed "episodic" to "whole" action, early to Homeric epic; and Forster divided event sequences along much the same evaluative lines: the atavistic "story," impelled by sheer "and then?," as against the consequential "plot" ("The king died and then the queen died of grief"), which takes memory and intelligence to follow. In AI, one later typological variant opposes "pre-narrative," with its "episodical events," to well-formed "narrative" (Dautenham 2001: 257). The opposed terms change in another variant from cognitive psychology: "A narrative simply relates a temporal sequence of events; a story relates a causal sequence of events relevant to a protagonist pursuing some goal or resolving some problem" (Black and Bower 1980: 226). Unity of action-plus-agent outbids

26. Against the misreading of Forster in Culler 1981: 183 or Currie 2006: 309, whereby "story" does not make a narrative, only "plot" does. Still less would it qualify according to Ryan 1991: 262–63 or Fludernik 1996: 323, where "plot" itself (judged insufficient *or* inessential) does not fare much better. More on this in (vi) below.

Aristotle himself, who requires the former alone. But this composite unity also newly suggests the autonomy, modularity, and ascending evaluative/integrative order of the objective requirements at work here: chronology, chrono-logic, teleological chrono-logic, hero-centered teleo-chrono-logic. For genre-wide narrativity—what "a narrative simply relates"—the first and loosest and lowest of these modular deployments will again suffice here, at a pinch.

Less often, the value scale reverses this Aristotle-old "episodic/whole" hierarchy. In "The Storyteller," for example, Walter Benjamin (1955 [1936]: 89) eloquently commends the deceptively plain-looking event series, even with informational gaps left between the members in place of causes.

> Half the art of storytelling is to keep a story free from explanation. . . . The most extraordinary things, marvelous things, are related with the greatest accuracy, but the psychological [hence causal, psycho-logical] connection of the events is not forced on the reader. It is left up to him to interpret things the way he understands them, and thus the narrative achieved an amplitude that information lacks.

This storytelling, of which Nikolai Leskov is a modern master, arose in Herodotus's *Histories*.[27] From it, Benjamin cites the story of the Egyptian king Psammenitus, whose "extraordinary" conduct has since provoked divergent readings. They ensue from the opaque, gapped, and accordingly suggestive chronology of the telling. A true artist, "Herodotus offers no explanations. His report is the driest. This is why this story from ancient Egypt is still capable after thousands of years of arousing astonishment and thoughtfulness" (ibid.: 89–90). The gains associated with unexplanatory storytelling are large as well as rich—from amplitude to astonishment to thoughtfulness to memorability—and they all evidently presuppose an "episodic" concept, or at least façade, of storyness itself, as against narrative in general. Less is more.

If Benjamin sounds like a reversal of Aristotle's chrono-logic-above-chronology hierarchy and, more pointedly, of common historiographic opinion, then Hayden White (1980) sounds like a reversion to Benjamin. From the practice and theory of history writing, he adopts the age-old threefold distinction among "annals," "chronicle," and "(*narrative*) history" proper,[28] but he challenges the ascending order of merit traditionally forced on them. The *annals* form thus consists in a list of dated successive

27. The ancient paradigm is actually the Bible. Modernism also perhaps offers still better exemplars in Dashiell Hammett, Ernest Hemingway, Albert Camus, Alain Robbe-Grillet, each with his art of parataxis or paratactic behaviorism.
28. Mainly via Barnes 1963 [1937]: 17 ff., 64 ff.

events. Like it, the *chronicle* unrolls in chronological order and without closure, but it has a central subject (the fortunes of a hero, war, region) and so a unity already mentioned in Aristotle. "History" alone counts as "narrative" proper, showing causal emplotment reinforced by beginning, middle, and (closed) end.

Even so, White rejects and largely reverses the established a priori scaling of the three. Instead of treating "the annals and chronicle forms" as "'imperfect' histories," lacking in narrativity, he reviews them as divergent but equally viable "conceptions of historical reality," "alternatives to, rather than failed anticipations of, the fully realized historical [narrative] discourse that the modern history form is supposed to embody" (ibid.: 10). Actually, in the sequel, the annalistic and chronicled "alternatives" to narrative/narrativity would even appear superior to it.[29]

More judgment-free variants include "the representation of *at least two* real or fictive events or situations in a time sequence, neither of which presupposes or entails the other" (Prince 1982: 4, 2008: 19; also, e.g., Steiner 1988: 13–14 on visual art). As unweighted is the modern action theorist's return to the "episodic" as a one-"life" story, a "biography" (von Wright 1966: 125–26). Whether novelistic, intermedial, sociolinguistic, historiographic, cognitivist, Structuralist, or action-theoretical, and whatever the grouping and/or naming involved, these variants show a definite likeness, even beyond their common appeal to the objectivist paradigm: they will all make do, for (sub)generic hallmark, with a more or less plain, chronological line, from two events upward.

(iv: 1) *Below the surface agreement on two events.* But this convergence falls much short of consensus, even shorter than the exemplified variations in typology and judgment indicate. Above all, the reason lies in the divergent assumptions that underlie the show or even the claim of agreement, mostly remaining unspoken and unperceived. It is thus important to realize that conditions for narrativity like "two events" (or "multiple eventhood") and "event series" (or "action sequence") are far from interchangeable, as they may seem. Their interchangers come in for an unpleasant discovery. Multiplicity is possible, and possibly sufficient, without seriality, though not vice versa.

According to Lamarque (2004: 394), for example, narrative requires "at least two events. . . . There must be a temporal relation between the events, even if just that of simultaneity. 'The sun shone and the grass grew' is a nar-

---

29. In turn, some theorists have adopted White's tripartition—and extended its coverage beyond history—while reversing back the scalar value judgment into a topmost narrativity, which the others fail to achieve. For example, Carroll 2001 in philosophical aesthetics.

rative." Few would agree, of course, if only because the lower limit allowed ("even if just") involves the supposedly wrong "temporal relation"—"that of simultaneity." This means that analysts who agree with the quote's first sentence, concerning event number (like Forster and all the rest cited above), would be surprised, even troubled, by the apparent comedown in the second. But there is actually no comedown, let alone inconsistency, between these sentences, for "two events" includes the time relation of "simultaneity" as much as that of successiveness. Only, those who assent to the quote's former sentence read into "at least two events" (or "more than one event") the further demand "[a series or sequence of] at least two events." Their surprise at the immediate comedown should therefore defamiliarize this widespread automatic assumption of plus-sequentiality, exclusive of the equally possible and (in Lamarque et al.) equally viable "simultaneity."

This surprise should also draw notice to the fact that theorists' official usage, phrasing, even definition is liable to clash with their meaning and/or practice in this regard. Thus, some who officially require an event sequence for narrativity dispense with it in effect, treating at least certain simultaneous occurrences as equally viable. This is the case with various philosophical aspirants to narrative theory (e.g., Velleman 2003: 5–6; Currie 2006: 312–13; Barwell 2009: 54–55) who revisit Aristotle's example of marvelous convergence: when the murderer of Mitys was watching a public spectacle, the statue of Mitys fell from its pedestal to kill him (*Poetics*, end of chap. 9). They all discuss the coincidence as if it were a sequence, and even call it so. Other professed sequentialists may want to test their own definitions against the same or related counterexamples.

Even so, those who might settle for simultaneity at the lower generic limit would as a rule object to Lamarque's own example of two-event simultaneity, "The sun shone and the grass grew." In other words, they would in turn experience a surprising comedown, and this would betray another unspoken, probably unconscious assumption, now one of simultaneity-plus. To dispense with event sequence is not yet to accept all concurrences as narrative.

For example, Italo Calvino (1988: 51) says that he would like to collect tales of "one sentence only, or even a single line. But I haven't found any to match the one by the Guatemalan writer Augusto Monterroso: 'Cuando despertó, el dinosaurio todavía estala allí' (When I woke up, the dinosaur was still there)."[30] In this exemplar, the narrator's waking up does intersect with the dinosaur's ongoing presence. And to Monterroso himself, this

---

30. Others translate it "When he awoke . . . ," as in Stavans 1996 and references there.

should suffice. He called "The Dinosaur" a short story, "simply because it narrates something . . . something happens to so and so in a period of time" (Stavans 1996). His minimalist definition of the genre thus requires even less than appears from his specific brilliant performance. However, Calvino and others presumably see in this exemplary art(ifact) of brevity higher generic rewards and demands than two characters whose paths intersect, "I" and "the dinosaur." Their intersection, hence co-temporality, is itself fantastic and incongruous to the point of shock: like the metaphysical conceit, it violently yokes together elements far removed by nature. Taking such extra links and appeals of simultaneity-plus for granted, Calvino would doubtless regard the purely simultaneous "The sun shone and the grass grew" as insufficient for narrative.

However, Lamarque himself might well endorse the low opinion of his example, without conceding its insufficiency for the genre. To him, "there is little intrinsic interest in narrative *per se*. . . . some narratives are boring, rambling, disorganized" (Lamarque 2004: 393, 401), and the narrative about the sun/grass concurrence is quite possibly among them. Further, we encountered a similar, and similarly debatable, opinion (e.g., Genette's) regarding the interest of the one-event minimum itself. Together, these begin to illustrate a significant parting of the ways, according to whether (or rather, we'll find, *how*) narrativity and the quarrels about it correlate with each objectivist definer's valuation of its makings, even if officially avoided or denied.

Indeed, counter to both appearance and profession, Lamarque himself does not escape value judgment, in the form of an implicit simultaneity-plus. Though ostensibly making do with the barest event multiplicity and "little intrinsic interest," he still assumes unawares at least one extra feature for narrativity. Unawares, because his mandatory "temporal relation between the events" looks like a redundancy, hence an empty demand. By "temporal relation," however, Lamarque apparently means the nonobvious "clear (lucid, legible) temporal relation," even or especially within the narrative minimum, to begin with. This would exclude ambiguity between a sequential and a simultaneous reading of the given events,[31] as well as the unidimensional one between different or reversible sequentialities (e.g., "A is earlier/later than B"). Contrast both Forster's univocal linear story "The king died and then the queen died" and the presumably concurrent, even possibly unitary, variation "The king and the queen died" with "The king died and the queen died": the last doublet wavers either between suc-

31. For such ambiguity, see Sternberg 1978: 85–89; 1985: 451–53; 1990c: 123–36; 2008b: 83–108; also see note 33 below.

cessiveness and co-occurrence or between a chronological and a reverse, scalar ordering.[32] Given the meaning or norm of "temporal relation" assumed by Lamarque, the sequent and the concurrent event-doublets would equally qualify for narrative, while the one left indeterminate would not.

In demanding a lucid relation, Lamarque doubtless betrays the philosopher's occupational, Aristotle-old *rage against ambiguity*, a fortiori within the concept and core of narrative. On this as on other fronts (e.g., Sternberg 1978: 183–203, 258–73; 1982a; 1982b; 1985: 186 ff.; 1990c; 2001b; 2008a), however, the same rage exhibits itself in a variety of disciplines. In Sternberg 2003b: 519 ff., I already traced it throughout cognitivism, from the psychologist's story grammars to the computer scientist's reading/writing programs to related approaches, including some cognitivized narratologies, all with their underlying notions of storyhood. Here are some parallels in further domains.

Reconsider the basis of Labov's (1972: 360) sociolonguistic inquiry:

> We can define a *minimal narrative* as a sequence of two clauses which are *temporally ordered*: that is, a change in their order will result in a change in the temporal sequence of the original semantic interpretation.

This definition in fact requires, or inversely, excludes, more than it says and more than usual for two-event minimums. That "temporally ordered" excludes any pair of simultaneous events from narrativity goes here without saying, or thinking, as is generally the case elsewhere too. This judgment directly results from the test of whether or not a formal change in the event pair's clause order involves a semantic change in the narrated event order itself. Accordingly, the sequent "He drove home and got drunk," irreversible on pain of changed meaning, counts as narrative, while the simultaneous and freely invertible event pair "He drove home and drank all the way" doesn't.

Calvino's exemplary minimal narrative, "When I woke up, the dinosaur was still there," would fare no better if tested by reversibility. And it would fail the Labovian test even though the reversal of its clauses does make a difference: only that the difference is rhetorical or experiential—in the impact of the surprise—not "semantic"—in reference—and as such wouldn't count.[33]

So far, at any rate, so usual, given the unequal awareness and knowl-

32. On these and further rival ordering mechanisms, see Sternberg 1981; 1983a; 1985: Index under "word order"; 1990b: 940–45; 1998: Index under "sequence."
33. For a theory of why and how narrative renders simultaneous events or event lines, with biblical poetics as exemplar, see Sternberg 1990b: 940–45; 1990c: 96–136; 2008b: 35–108.

edge of the respective time relations. Further requirements, however, and exclusions to match, apply in Labov within temporal ordering or sequence itself. Thus he rules out "The teacher stopped the fight. She had just come in." Some, even two-event sequentialists, may wonder what the problem is here. But then, a clause order like this reverses the event order without any semantic change, because the reversal is signaled and duly interpreted by the "past perfect"—"had just come in"—and therefore does not qualify here as narrative, either (ibid.).

By "temporal order" or "sequence," accordingly, Labov means and stipulates at least three features beyond what the phrase denotes:

(1) *a chronology*, though unentailed by the wording. Just as "temporal relation" includes by nature simultaneity as well as sequentiality, so "temporal order/sequence" includes a dechronologized as well as a chronological event line;

(2) an interlinkage that is *additive* (or "episodic," paratactic, coordinating, Forster's "and then") rather than embedding (hypotactic). In short, even among temporal-as-chronological sequences, the clauses that qualify as narrative are the independent, to the exclusion of the subordinate, hence reversible, variety;[34]

(3) a time-ordered sequence *actual or given* in the text, rather than one inferable from the givens. This pushes beyond, even against reason a plausible (though challengeable) fiat of ordering in narrative/narrativity.

The fiat that the definitional two-event (or any longer) minimum should unfold a chronology makes sense, literally, because it reflects the time order inherent in the events themselves, as they occur seriatim, from anterior to posterior. As such, this order of occurrence constitutes the most basic zero-degree of natural, lifelike, coherent, intelligible arrangement, which *underlies* all finished narratives as such and offers a point of reference for their actual unlimited (dis)ordering choices. At the common underlying level, so basic and natural and mnemonic is the sequencing by occurrence that definitions often take it for granted (e.g., leaving the time relation of "two or more events" unspecified).

With Labov, however, the fiat runs to an extreme that is anything but natural. Why this insistence on chronological ordering in the finished as well as in the minimum or underlying narrative, and against both the time maneuvers performed throughout narrative history and the anti-

34. For example, out with the chrono-logic "As the boys had started a fight, the teacher came in": the wrong syntax, allegedly, because missing, or in fact outdoing, an additive juncture.

chronologism regnant since Renaissance theory at least, down to con-
temporary narratology?[35] Because Labov privileges instead the orderly,
reality-like, intelligible march of events from early to late. So much so that
the verb *infer*, as applied by him to the reader's translation of the clause
order into an event line, means little more than "understand." How much
inference does it take to determine that "*I punched the boy and he punched
me*" (ibid.: 360) narrates a chronological sequence? The example's iconic,
word/world movement demands less time and effort to read than the
merest reversed or dechronologized counterpart.

Inversely, the most famous topos of dechronologizing since Homer, often
commended as artistic, interest-laden, is here found wanting in transpar-
ency. Beginning "in the middle of things without any orientation [exposi-
tion] section" produces what Labov (ibid.: 367) calls a "meaningless and
disorienting effect." "*Meaningless*" is a pejorative and even so overloaded
word for ambiguous, and "disorienting effect" for uncertainty, both result-
ing from the plunge *in medias res*. This sweeping dismissal recalls the histo-
rian's occupational objection to time maneuvers or the overcritical thrust
of Anthony Trollope's poetics of lucidity, except that Trollope (mis)judged
novel-length (dis)ordering rather than clauses, kernels, anecdotes (Stern-
berg 1978: 183–203, 258–74; 1990b: 934–40; 2006: 205–6). But the lin-
guist typically ignores such enormous, near-qualitative differences in mag-
nitude. As demanded by Lamarque even concerning simultaneous events,
the "temporal relation" must stay lucid (here, therefore, chronological)
from the narrative minimum upward.

Still, Labov's (ibid.: 359) "narrative" is advisedly confined to a certain
storytelling type, one "method of recapitulating past experience." But
other two-event stipulators impose comparable extra sequentiality-pluses
on the narrative genre at large, including manifestations, even traditions,
incomparably more complex and variable than his fabricated or real-life
mini-tales from Harlem. (Labov and Trollope rolled into one, as it were.)
The comparison gains further point from disciplinary variations, as among
(socio)linguistics, narratology, and philosophy.

Even if few take narrative as both inherently and distinctively ambiguous,
owing to its gradual (re)constructive processing between two sequences—
the way I do—narratologists are generally too aware of its breaches,
ellipses, turns to demand such iconism (parallel ordering) and transparence
(complete retrievability) on pain of narrativity lost. How to demand them
in the finished narrative, long considered best told against time, if not

35. For details and counterproposals, see Sternberg 1978: 183–305; 1990b; 1990c; 1992;
2006; 2008a; 2008b.

opaquely or indeterminately throughout? By contrast, the minimal narratives exemplified in the field are as a rule orderly and univocal, just like Labov et al.'s. More strangely yet, the contrast remains unmotivated. The formal definitions that cite or generalize those minimum examples never resolve the twisted/orderly, ambiguous/univocal antipolarity between the manifest and the inferred or the minimum sequence. Even so, Brian Richardson (e.g., 2001: 173) pushes this dualism to an extreme, one typifying the excesses of "unnatural narratology" at least.

He claims that in Samuel Beckett's *Molloy* "we are left with discourse without a retrievable story," so that the very story/discourse (*fabula/sjuzhet*) opposition "collapses" and the narratologist must then "work with . . . the discourse" alone. But then, Richardson compounds incongruities: a traditional objectivist definition of narrative, as an event chain, goes with a notoriously elusive postmodernist test case; a high causal threshold for narrativity—which dooms everything below it to exclusion—with an unrealistically higher threshold for retrievability, as if it were all or nothing. He would seem unaware of the fundamental realities of narrative sense-making: that the "story's" retrieval or (re)construction always grapples with gaps, more salient or less, temporary or permanent, and that even where they defer and/or elude closure, there remain alternative hypothetical "stories" for us gap-fillers to correlate with the "discourse." Or the other way round: we are left with a storyless, uncorrelated discourse only in the unusual case (itself still presupposing the basic "opposition") that the gaps have so twisted and ambiguated the givens as to disable meaningful (even if multiple) reference to any narrated world. This is far from the case with *Molloy*, as its actual readings testify.

In comparison, Goodman's formula of disordering ("reordering") sounds reasonable and balanced. "Narrative will normally survive all sorts of contortions," but "sometimes when we start with a tale, enough twisting may leave us without one" (Goodman 1980: 119, also 115). And the set of mini-tales with which he opens exemplify the relevant latitudes. It is a pity that, in the recent upsurge of interest in narrative among philosophers, his formula has apparently gone unnoticed.

Ironically, for example, Carroll (2001: 23 ff.) invokes the Russian Formalists' key polarity, *fabula* versus *sjuzhet*, only to reverse the discordant time relations (e.g., late before early) and effects (e.g., estrangement) favored by them and their adherents to this day (Sternberg 1990b, 1990c, 1992, 2006). Instead, he progressively constrains and domesticates those *fabula/sjuzhet* relations into temporal harmony. Binding on all narrative levels again, Carroll's forced harmony ascends from readerly, mental to objective textual correlation: from the given discourse sequence offering a transparent

window on the event sequence to the one sequence forming an icon to the other through analogous ordering.

First, Carroll insists, the *sjuzhet* must be so "perspicuous, reliable," or "discernible," as to enable a certain retrieval of the *fabula* or, interchangeably, the "narrative connection." Otherwise, "there is no narrative." So, allegedly, narrativity demands perspicuity, perspicuity means retrievability, and retrievability entails the narrative's ultimate univocality to the retriever or, more precisely, the narrated events' unilinear continuity as a time sequence. In other words, this generic imperative (as with Aristotle, Trollope, Labov) disallows permanent gaps and ambiguity and rival, let alone reversible orderings anywhere, from the minimal narrative in theory to the finished discourse we experience.

Various philosophers, sharing the disciplinary bias against ambiguity, predictably follow Carroll's lead (e.g., Levinson 2004: 429; Feagin 2007: 22–23; Worth 2008: 43, 47). Further, this bias shows all over the domain of the traditional paradigm, across expertises and other differences. Most narrative theorists since Aristotle would also agree with their fellow objectivists, at least regarding the need for transparence within the definitional event nucleus; while cognitivist story analysts would extend the agreement to the finished discourse itself, along with the historians, of course. Even such analogues, however, and certainly the narratologists, tend to draw the line somewhere along the range of obligatory intelligibility. These might well disagree with Carroll's (as with Labov's) further pushing of the lucidity requirements toward the limit. Indeed, the harder and further the push, the more does Carroll himself incur trouble.

Briefly, the further hardening begins (Carroll 2001: 23–24) with his refusal to accept a common, well-grounded presumption: that, unless otherwise indicated, the text order is iconic in reflecting, and so making "retrievable," the event order. Next, and most drastically, his veto on irretrievable sequence extends as far as a reversed or otherwise disordered one, no matter how this given sequence is univocally, irreversibly retrievable into due "perspicuity." Again echoing Labov and Trollope, Carroll proceeds to impose a chronological unfolding on the discourse, an iconic harmony between the *sjuzhet* and the *fabula* or "narrative connection" (ibid.: 31). Otherwise, narrativity breaks: again no *in medias res*, among other forms of inversion or retrospection manifest in strength throughout narrative history. He also sadly underrates, or ignores, the narrative mind's power of retrieval, which is assumed and actualized in those countless manifestations—overinsuring for harmony and lucidity, in brief.

All this exceeds by far the common failure to see that, if narratives can and often do unfold the events freely, then the definitional minimum

needs to reflect and highlight, indeed conceptualize the genre's ordinal flexibility. Except for mine, approaches to narrative/narrativity assume, require, and/or exemplify the minimum to be chronological, without reconciling it with the frequent and favored dechronologizing. But the extremist will harmonize the two the wrong way, by violence at that. Instead of leaving the event order free, variable in both the narrated minimum (or the generic definition) and the manifest narrative—to suit the visible license of (dis)ordering—Carroll forces both into chronology. Even the widespread contrast between his orderly narrative minimum (as between the looser *fabula*) and the disorderly narrative practice (or properly Russian Formalist *sjuzhet*) is not resolved here but eliminated: all uncongenial practice gets in effect ruled out by fiat as nonnarrative. Wholesale narrativicide again, even far beyond the call of event multiplicity per se.

The drive against ambiguity, toward narrative/narrated, discourse/world harmony, mappability, or specifically, iconism—itself carried to various lengths—joins the assorted variations, possible and actual, in the requirement of (iv) for narrativity. Accordingly, to say, as I did at the outset, that the frequent convergence on multiple eventhood falls short of consensus understates matters. But then, any overstatement to the opposite effect— just like that on the near-consensus about the sufficiency of one event—has now proved to be far wilder and more deceptive than it looks. "One of the least controversial claims of contemporary narratology is that a narrative is the representation of a number of events in a time sequence" (Ryan 1991: 109; cf. Tversky 2004: 380). More wishful than factual, this harmonious picture. It jars against the old/new theoretical record on several grounds, against the objectivist majority view as well as my principled functionalist alternative, even against Ryan's own unstable defining practice and surveys of how narrative gets defined. In the mainstream itself, actually, the lower limit of narrativity rises higher and higher than "a number of events," mounting as follows.

(v) *Events organized (linked, tightened, unified) into sequentiality-plus* to exclude an "unrelated sequence . . . devoid of any narrative cohesiveness" (Pier 2008: 118). Why? As a rule, by appeal (often tacit) to a double standard, unrealistic and question begging. It originates in Aristotle's reconception of mimetic art (against Plato) as analogous to the imitated nature, yet superior in unity and continuity. Among the numerous follow-ups since, here is a multidisciplinary chorus.

"Narrative [cannot] exist without the unity of a plot but only chronology," as "a succession of uncoordinated facts" (Bremond 1980 [1966]:

390). Or "history is meaning imposed on time by means of language: history imposes syntax on time" (Partner 1986: 97). Or a story tells "events in a way that renders them intelligible, thus conveying not just information but also understanding" (Velleman 2003: 1). Or "whereas our lives may not be coherent, our stories are" (Schank and Abelson 1995: 34). This sounds like a veto on story as a mimesis of life's incoherence (against B. S. Johnson 1999: 66) and a fortiori of the mind's uncontrolled stream.

Even so, why should the fiat, or the corresponding veto, already apply to the lowest generic level, as deep as the minimal narrative/narrativity? "Narratologists over the past twenty years have generally shared a minimalist definition of narrative as *a representation of a sequence of non-randomly connected events*" (Rigney 1991: 591). Like foregoing generalizations about the state of the art, this "generally" is overstated but replaceable with the still noteworthy "often" or, here perhaps (given the inclusive scope of "non-randomly connected"), "most often." Nor, again, does the cogency of the definitional (pre)conception hinge on its currency. Rather, is this the case in narrative? Where? And why?

But, granting the normative premise, what would make "our stories" coherent at any level? Even Pier's synonymous-looking negatives, "an unrelated sequence . . . devoid of any narrative cohesiveness," already amount to two progressive exclusions or, inversely, conditions, not one. As will appear below, sequentiality-plus cohesiveness (including that demanded, outright or in effect, for narrativity) may be other than distinctively narrative. It also ranges much wider than the age-old favorite of causal enchainment (and often, again, wider than narrative proper). Witness Aristotle's own marginalized unities, of object (e.g., hero) and/or time frame (e.g., day). Both focuses are adjoinable, as well as alternative, to any sequential rationale, including, whether he likes it or not, his favorite action enchainment. (For example, Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* or Austen's *Emma* join two, and Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* all three, of these integrating strategies.) But we may add (or, given their independence, substitute) further coherencies, such as are undreamt of in Aristotle's mimesis-cum-mobility-centered philosophy. These include unity of theme; of meaning; of analogy; of viewpoint, the teller's and/or the reflector's and/or the audience's; of progressive and/or retrospective simultaneous apprehension; even of mimetic arena (e.g., the uni-space likewise forced on drama by neoclassicism).

Even the low minimum for narrativity and narrative sense-making found in chronology itself, as distinct from enchained chrono-logic, isn't an "unrelated sequence" but one unrolling along *the* objective time line, in the natural and uniquely inherent order of happening, with generic coherence to suit. As the icon of real life's own temporality, and so the most

basic principle of narrative sequence proper, there's more to chronology, in this light, than understood by its frequent dismissal as "merely *post hoc*," one damned thing after another. Here indeed lurks, all too often missed since Aristotle, the extra connectivity of (wholeless) "chronicle" or (Forsterian, plotless) "story," relative to their ostensible nongeneric equivalents. In *linear* unity, the former, time-ordered event series outrank, even subsume, rather than equal, various linkages outside narrative time.

Among these event series, "A, then B, then . . ." relates the serial items more thickly, hence more firmly, than does the bare "A + B . . ." additiveness of description, item by contiguous item—all objectively unordered because geared to space, and possibly to space alone, as sheer simultaneous existence. Compare "Man proposes, God disposes," for example, or *veni, vidi, vici*, with "Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich": the one (action) series is unchangeable in unit order on pain of changed meaning, the other (coexistent) series is freely reshufflable, hence in truth a set. The former sequentiality, which inheres in the time logic of events, compares favorably even with nontemporal sequencing, which is ordered indeed but not by nature. Subjective, artificial or culture-made, instead, such ordering is always reversible (e.g., the hierarchical "man and God" can switch into the descending hierarchy "God and man," the deictic "you and I" into the impolite or politeness-free "I and you").[36] Chronology thus reveals itself as a composite linkage, not just subsuming description's metonymic contiguity between world items and an observer's or culture's unstable ordinality, but superimposing on them the irreversible directionality peculiar to event time, from earlier to later. No wonder that, for a discourse to make sense, and thus to count, as narrative, it must make chronological sense, whatever the gaps and uncertainties left. The mandatory sense of the sequence needn't be perfect, then, except for those who cannot tolerate ambiguity, to the exclusion of much everyday as well as most artistic and historical storytelling. (Recall Trollope, Labov, Carroll et al., or cognitivism, with their excessive demand for "temporal perspicuity," i.e., for gapless retrieval of what happened or even straight, luminous telling in the order of happening.)

I have tested this imperative against a variety of works rich in surface discontinuity, and it applies in still more extreme cases. Thus, despite the notorious fragmentation of Nathalie Sarraute's childhood autobiography *Enfance*, Johnnie Gratton (1995: 300) sees in it a "narrative potential." This mostly concerns the arrangement of the fragments "in what is by and large

36. For details, see Sternberg 1978: 203–35; 1981a; 1983a; 1985: Index under "word order"; 1990b: 928–45.

a chronological order. . . . They follow one another without following *on* from one another." Accordingly, "a movement toward narrativity may be seen to occur over the fragmented course of *Enfance*."

As usual, even such analysts don't recognize the compositeness of the chronological sequence, which includes rather than equals or rivals the additive, the episodic, the linear deployment. Still, the exclusions of two-events-in-sequence minimalists would be moderate relative to higher thresholds, especially chrono-logic. Reconsider how historians and their followers deny the "story forms" of annals and chronicle (as they might deny the picaresque, the journal, the TV series) the title to narrativity, simply because these two forms supposedly reduce to "mere" early-before-late. What's more, the discipline's negative view of the two "story" lines finds a vigorous counteranalysis and counterjudgment in Hayden White (1980), but not the typology itself vis-à-vis the meaningful chain of "narrative." Precisely because they are the more realistic, in White's opinion, the annalist and the chronicler do not overlink, overcode, overload their sequence the way "narrative" does. So, for better or worse, the classification of the three story types persists, always by reference to an ascending scale of connectedness.

The implications therefore range wider than this typology within or without this discipline. If the requirement for narrativity exceeds multiple, "A, then B" eventhood, it's best generalized into an umbrella organizing term like *sequentiality-plus*. The umbrella would then cover (i.e., leave room for) a diversity of specific organizing principles imposed or imposable on the "natural" event sequence. These principles advance beyond the chronology that is distinctively built into narrative to its fortifying or harmonizing through various other constraints (iv: 1), to its further tightening into chrono-logic via causal enchainment ([vi_1] below), to the chain's own reinforcing elaborations ([vi_{2-5}], [vii]), and/or to nonnarrative patterning, whose forms ([viii]–[ix] below) may compound with one another and with the generic narrative staples. Definitions of narrativity beyond (i)–(iv) can settle for the sequentiality-plus umbrella—any plus will then do as extra, "nonrandom" connectivity—or press for one or more specific extra linkages found under it (in [iv: 1], [vi–ix]), as usually happens.

(vi) *Events linked into a causal chain*. This dates back of course to Aristotle's norm of mimetic, actional wholeness as a "beginning → middle → end" concatenation (*Poetics*: chaps. 7–9), if only as the first, highest organizational priority. His "whole" is itself a composite ideal, a sub-umbrella, if you will. It brings together at least five distinct event-organizing parame-

ters, which variously constrain and elaborate the rudimentary generic nucleus "Somebody did (and/or underwent) something, with reversal of fortune."[37] Together or apart, they have important bearings on the genre and its study, from narrativity upward, as shown by their checkered fortunes over the millennia. These coordinates have endlessly recurred since, but seldom without losing their distinctiveness as parts, their network as a whole, and, above all, their rationale. The whole's objective forms now reappear without holistic (or otherwise operative, never mind artistic) functions to inform and explain them, how's out of touch with why's, requirements shorn of reasons, even where declared obligatory. A comparison of the original account in the *Poetics* with its offspring will thus reveal notable variations.

Taken as a set, and numbered accordingly, the five Aristotelian parameters that organize the basic "Somebody did (and/or underwent) something, with polar change of fortune," would require:

(vi₁) *quasi-logical, action-logical (in effect, chrono-logical, because causal) enchainment throughout*, as superior to the looser, additive, "episodic" (in effect, chronological) "A, then B" deployment; or event sequentiality tightened into consequentiality. By such chrono-logical movement, the opening transforms into the final state, whether in a straight, predictable ("simple") cause-to-effect line or with unexpected ("complex") twists en route. Thus, in the abstract "complex" schema underlying the plot of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*, an act of violence (*pathos*) about to be committed in ignorance against a brother is averted by timely discovery of his identity (*anagnorisis*), so that the changed knowledge of the near-fratricidal agent both amounts and in turn actually leads to a change in fortune as well (indeed a reversal, *peripety*). From the unhappiness latent in imminent *pathos*, via *anagnorisis* and *peripety* as a sequent double (epistemic → ontic) turn, to happiness.

Simply or complexly handled, this causal event-line runs throughout the "whole," all the way to the final state, with each link both generating ("effecting") the next link and, relay-race fashion, handing on to it the propulsive force. So, in Aristotle's (ibid.: chap. 8) own empirical test, "the transposal or withdrawal of any one of them will disjoin and dislocate the whole." A negative result would be, for example, the harmless omissibility of a serial item from a chronicle or a Forsterian "story"; likewise with its transferability at pleasure from one slot to another, which no more

---

37. This besides equivalence relations, untheorized (actually, not even discerned as such) by Aristotle, yet inherent in the whole's necessary movement between polar fortunes: see (ix) below.

incurs any "disjoining or dislocating" effect. This means that wholeness depends on a consequential line of events, none removable (in either sense, omissible or transposable) without felt and fatal breach. Much hangs in the balance, since wholeness determines poeticity and what we call narrativity, across the epic/drama boundary.

Still, Aristotle allows epic some latitude in this regard. For "variety" and "grandeur," it may thicken or amplify the finished *mythos* beyond the arrow-like cause-to-effect advance of the *whole*. Even Homer, though his newly invented wholeness marks a quantum leap vis-à-vis the episodic sequencing current before him, yet loosely intercalates episodes (e.g., Telemachus's journey or the Catalogue of Ships) into the overall enchainment "to relieve the uniformity of his narrative" (ibid.: chaps. 23–24). Here epic license accordingly varies from the higher causal rigor of drama (ibid.: chap. 26), with implications for the respective thresholds as well.

Epic and drama alike, however, must not only avoid overall looseness—with components transposable at will—but also resist any discontinuity in the shared chrono-logical backbone itself. This no to causal discontinuity is historic, even beyond the immediate significance. It further indicates that the theoretical overdrive toward the narrative minimum's lucidity, or against its (often also the narrative text's) ambiguity, began at the very source of poetics and has even extended to noncausal minimums, as already shown in (iv), but usually without the Aristotelian motivation given here or any comparable reason. By implication, no permanent gap must yawn anywhere along the event sequence—keeping a cause and/or an effect open, hence ambiguous, in the nuclear whole—for a link missing or uncertain will break the action-logical chain. Such breach will nullify the values that motivate enchainment here. Goodbye to the unity of action, to the differentiality of the artistic sequence vis-à-vis the loose chronicle ("history"), to the pleasure of causal inference between general ontic laws (rules, models, frequencies) and specific givens, and to further advantages that will emerge in the next coordinates of wholeness. The prohibitive loss incurred by any gappy minimal nucleus always threatens to carry over to the finished narrative (*mythos*, "plot"), with a vengeance, and so redoubles the pressure for continuous, unbroken linkage.

(vi$_2$) *A minimum of three actional links*, "beginning → middle → end," unlike (say) Forster's two-link minimum plot, "The king died and then the queen died of grief." This involves a higher numerical stipulation than (i)–(iv), of course, but low enough in view of the further operational gains offered in return. It is owing to the relatively low threshold that the "whole," though

corresponding to the modern fabula,[38] extendible to any length, can also double as the abstract well-formed minisequence underlying all (poetic) fabulas, and so as the objective condition for narrativity. At the same time, the flexible distance between threshold and ceiling, minimum and optimum, opens the way to both a teleology and a typology of "whole" sequence at both generic levels. I'll quickly outline the services rendered thereby—or renderable, because they are mostly left implicit in the *Poetics* and unnoticed since.

It all starts with the modularity of the basic trio. Among them, the intermediate member can and preferably will be extended (that is, decomposed or otherwise multiplied) into a number of mid-links: a mid-subchain that draws out the time, route, progression from initial cause to final outcome. Hence Aristotle's reference now to "middle," now to "middles," as against the invariably singular "beginning" and "end": a multiple, forked cutoff at either extreme (John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* style) would perpetuate a gap, just like a missing cutoff. Between the given forked possibilities, which really triggered, which terminated, the action in the world? Again, to use my own terms, such permanent linear ambiguity would break the whole chrono-logic and so, for Aristotle, the overall effect.

Further, if no link is omissible without damage, least of all the middle, on pain of causal and otherwise artistic breakdown, the same middle is alone extendible with profit: $m_1 \rightarrow m_2 \rightarrow m_3 \ldots$. Extending it not only enables the artist (e.g., Euripides in *Iphigenia* or Sophocles in *Oedipus Rex*) to incorporate the surprise turns of "discovery" and "peripety," which "complicate" the enchained whole into its highest, most affective form (ibid.: chap. 9).[39] Even the lesser, "simple," untwisted kind will thereby reconcile the two opposed conditions of aesthetic beauty: unity with multiplicity, hence magnitude. Though equally unified, Forster's doublet "The king died → The queen died of grief" falls *short* of wholeness not just literally, by one link, but also cognitively and poetically, and a variety of other apparent chains fall shorter yet, as will soon emerge. The longer the event chain, Aristotle argues, the finer, subject to its perceptibility *as* a whole; the limits of the narrative chrono-logic are the limits of our memory (Sternberg 1990a: 61–65). And the chain's extension beyond the minimum trio, with the resulting

38. The correspondence is not only in their linkage (the *fabula* similarly requires "indications of cause" as well as "time" [Tomashevsky 1965 [1925]: 66]) but also in the reconstructive mode of existence (Sternberg 1978: 8–14; 1992: 474 ff.).

39. As distinct from its "simple," minimum form, which just represents a straight, unsurprising change of fortune. Contrast the misreadings (e.g., in Kermode 1967: 18; Smith 1978: 194; Caserio 1979: 7; White 1980: 11; Genette 1992) whereby peripety turns into an obligatory feature of narrative. For details, see Sternberg 1992: 491–92.

benefits, can occur at any level or, progressively, stage of development: from the enlarged complex-plot nucleus—one that incorporates peripety and/or discovery in the bare threefold eventhood required here for narrativity—to the full and full-length emplotment of the actual narrative.

(vi$_3$) *All three minimum actional links are dynamic*, in that they initiate or sustain or arrest change, exclusive of static (descriptive, "expositional") premises (traits, setups, laws of nature, culture, existence, reality models, in brief). Cause and/or effect, each of those links forwards the action, makes an intelligible difference to the world. As such, those kinetic links don't reduce to their half-and-half latter-day namesakes—the twofold, even threefold but partly immobile "causal sequences" often postulated today for narrativity or minimal narrative—any more than they reduce to sheer multiplicity.

(vi$_4$) *A stable endpoint*:

> The beginning is that which is not itself necessarily after anything else, and which has something else naturally after it; the end is that which is naturally after something itself, either as its necessary or its usual consequent, and with nothing else after it; and a middle, that which is by nature after one thing and also has another after it.   (*Poetics*: chap. 7)

How does this abstract, rigorous, all too logical-sounding set of interlinkages translate into earthly action logic, with its (con)sequential movement? The "beginning" launches a "change of fortune" (*metabasis*) in the world, which, having run through the "middle(s)," gains firm, univocal closure at the "end." So the two cutoff points mark a former (un)happy stability disturbed, to begin with, and established anew at the finish, in antipolar shape. The consequentiality of action logic, or mimetic teleo-logic, drives the process all the way to a secure final arrest; the overall "no permanent gap" directive assumes a special weight at the terminus, closed both as an immediate effect of its antecedents and "with nothing else after it," dead against the modern rage for open-endedness.

(vi$_5$) *Strongest concatenation*. Throughout, the enchainment unrolls "by necessary or probable sequence": the highest standard of mimetic likelihood, followability, and integrity at once. So high, indeed, that action logic sounds here like aspiring to the condition of logic proper. Though Aristotle knows that rigorous, logical (e.g., syllogistic) "necessity" doesn't much apply to human affairs—or their representation—he still postulates it, if only as an ideal of tight enchainment, along with the more humanly feasible, second-highest-and-tightest "probability."

In turn, to top off the cohesive effect, such likelihood of event enchain-ment needn't conform to scientific law-likeness or to any sociocultural worldview with its notions of lifelikeness. Hence the paradoxical-sounding maxim that, in artistic terms, "a probable impossibility is to be preferred to a thing possible and yet improbable" (ibid.: chap. 25): no paradox, actually, because the (im)possible refers here to a natural, and the (im)probable to a poetic, framework. The "impossibility" of Alice constantly changing size in Wonderland, for example, is better than the "improbability" of a villain sud-denly acting out of character in a comedy, or melodrama, to ensure a happy end. As already argued, here Aristotle first opens the door to "unnatural" mimesis, which some latecomers would force with fanfare. Narrative event sequencing operates by internal ontic norms, art- or work-specific reality models: again, strictly a matter of part/whole relations, culminating in the licenses taken by fictional chrono-logic. (Sharper analysis in Sternberg 1978, 2008a on exposition as the key to probability registers; 1985, 1998 on the Bible's reality model; 1983c on the play of worlds in the James Bond saga.)

So much for Aristotle's elaboration of his rudimentary mimetic kernel "Somebody did something, with polar change of fortune" into a well-constructed whole, from the definitional minimum to its optimal develop-ment. This fivefold set of wholeness coordinates is therefore supposed to govern the narrative genre in its full range and extent: all poetic mimesis, across the lines of kind, size, epic, drama, tragedy, comedy, ontology, ver-bality, visuality, even musicality, and the newer subgeneric arrivals over the millennia. For example, tragedy's peculiar narrative—a deed of horror within the family—will map itself on the abstract, allegedly universal action schema: as a well-defined type thereof, which branches out into yet more determinate narrative subtypes of its own. Transmedial, as well as trans-literary, the minimum composite quintet would underlie them all, along with their equivalents in comedy or elsewhere: though high, and of course restrictive, this minimum remains abstract enough to invite free specifica-tion within its limits and to keep the typology open to holistic novelties.

The aftermath indeed goes strong to this day, playing endless varia-tions on the objectivist paradigm arisen there, to double-edged effect. In theory since, as in practice, these five conditions of Aristotelian whole-ness have among them dominated the field, in numberless subdomains, variants, makeups, (under-, over-, mis-)readings, counterpoetics. Were it not for them, narrative study and, to a lesser extent, history would evolve otherwise. But those imperatives have seldom reappeared all together,[40] let

40. Except, with debatable adaptations or updates, in the Renaissance, neoclassicism, and the modern neo-Aristotelian Chicago school (Crane 1952).

alone as a set, least of all as a motivated set, and exhibit a roughly descending order of normative currency.

Among the five, enchainment (vi_1) has most often recurred, far beyond its recanonizing by neoclassicists as the unity of action. It later echoes not only in conceptions of "plot" (as in Forster or R. S. Crane) but also of narrativity and, almost invariably, of storyness in cognitivist grammars, schemata, or models, and of "historyness" within yet another discipline. Thus the enforcement of causal or "logical" (actually, chrono-logical) interlinkage in Tomashevsky 1965 [1925]: 66; Propp 1968 [1928]; Barthes 1988a [1966]; Rumelhart 1977; White 1980; Culler 1981; Stein 1982; Mandler 1984; Bal 1985: 5, 18; Martin 1986: 100; Adams 1989; Ryan 1991: 154, 2007: 29; Branigan 1992: 3, 20; Lotte 2000: 3; Richardson 2000: 170; Carroll 2001; Toolan 2001: 8; Herman 2002; Wolf 2004: 89; Feagin 2007: 19 . . . . Indeed, I would add, the range of such coherence widens beyond its official, or familiar, stipulations.

Take a closer look at (i) itself. Given that an event involves change and change necessarily derives from a cause, even this barest-looking single event minimum already entails a chrono-logic. We reason backward, that is, from the single event, taken as effect, to the likeliest cause in the narrative antecedents. "The child ran away from the snake" thus invites reading as the causative "Having been frightened by the snake, the child ran away from it" or "The snake frightened the child and therefore he ran away from it." At another glance, the single event-as-act of (ii) belongs here too. It entails by definition an agent with a purpose as inner cause for the act that is effected in the event—to generate a two-link minichain—and can itself trigger a further effect, such as a reaction caused by the act. In the face of "The detectives broke down the suspect's alibi," one can easily infer some antecedent(s) and consequent(s), mental as otherwise.

Again, even the unconcatenated seriality of (iv) may be assimilated to this tightest seriality-plus, and has in fact been, clean against the "great difference" that Aristotle (chap. 10) marks "between a thing happening *propter hoc* and *post hoc*." Some (e.g., Barthes 1988a [1966]: 108–9, 112 ff., 142; Chase 1978: 217; Prince 1982: 39–40; Scholes 1982: 62; Rabinowitz 1987: 107–9; Adams 1989: 152–53, 155; Argyros 1992; Turner 1996; Hogan 2003: 122–23; Walsh 2007: 60) erroneously believe that all *post hoc* tightens by implication into *propter hoc*. And if so, then all event series would meet this higher condition of narrativity.[41]

By contrast, Forster tacitly objects to this rule of narrative synthesis, of course, along with others who remove post hoc from propter hoc. But

41. The issue has been revisited in Pier (2008), who himself takes the closer linkage as the reader's working assumption vis-à-vis an event series. See also Abbott 2002: 39–40.

Aristotle openly disallows any such rule by (over)emphasizing the distance between them, as logicians since have done, who even call the move toward enchainment a fallacy. So have some rigid typologists elsewhere, like Morton White (1965: 224–25) in the philosophy of history. An *over*-emphasis, this, because they draw the line as categorically as their counterparts erase it.

Contrast Paul Grice's (1975: 44–45) still odder denial that in "He is an Englishman; he is, therefore, brave," the latter statement explicitly follows from the former. Instead, he demotes the overt ("therefore") consequentiality to mere implicature, where the "post → propter" camp would upgrade (possible, debatable, "defeasible") causal implicature through weak contiguity ("A + B"/"A, then B" = "A → B"?) into unequivocal, failsafe enchainment. So much so that, according to another philosopher, we hold onto the stronger linkage even against the data and reason itself. "I think we find it hard to give up the assumption of a connection even when explicitly told to" by a narrator (Currie 2006: 312): a revealing measure of the lust for sequentiality-plus, carried here *ad absurdum*.

These views form striking mirror images. Only, we needn't choose between the extremes: they rather expose each other, and the rich empirical evidence clinches the contingency of both. Always frame-dependent, the instances of ostensible narrative parataxis sometimes read as a loose chronology, sometimes as a firmer chrono-logic, sometimes as another firmer (e.g., ascending, descending, perspectival) sequence or supralinear (e.g., simultaneous, analogical) configuration, sometimes as a joint gestalt, a multifold sequentiality-plus. The multiple functions assumed by surface chronological or episodic form disable the rule of any single mechanism of integration—here, into causal well-formedness.

Apparently misled by Aristotle's logical phrasing in chapters 7–9 about the "whole," however, Barthes (1988a [1966]: 112 ff.) and others compound this error in misunderstanding how the "A → B" relates to the "A, then B" linkage. Aristotle having "already attributed primacy to logic over chronology," modern analysis tends "to 'dechronologize' narrative content and to 'relogicize' it" (ibid.). Accordingly, they assert that *propter hoc* displaces (rather than tightens) *post hoc* to detemporalize narrative: as if chrono-logic were, and were better, separable from chronology, a sequence order apart, not a (or *the*) time sequentiality-plus. By *S/Z*, Barthes seems to have realized, or recalled, that causation, "the proiaretic code," is "logico-temporal," since the cause not only produces but normally also precedes the effect in world time. At all events, whether a reinforcement or a replacement, whether for better or for worse, propter hoc would yield tighter linkage than post hoc.

A related measure of this tighter linkage's appeal is that analysts impose it on action patterns forwarded and unified along other lines—notably that of the chronological series. Thus the misreading of Forster's story/plot distinction by Jonathan Culler (1981: 204) in poetics or Edward Branigan (1992: 11–12) in film study or Gregory Currie (2006: 309) in philosophy. All of them would have him deny what he in fact regretfully emphasizes: that "the novel tells a story," just like the caveman's "and then" series. In turn, the "story" is "a narrative of events," just like the "plot," except that its time series dispenses with causality (Forster 1962 [1927]: 35, 93). But even this explicit, even-handed recurrence of the key term *narrative* escapes their notice. According to their misreport, instead, "The king died and then the queen died" story does not make a narrative, but only the plotted "of grief" variant does, owing to its causal connection. The binarism thus alleged would accordingly oppose, not two different types or aspects of narrative, but absence to presence thereof, so that "plot" literally interchanges with "narrative" there.

Likewise, some in effect apply the "post hoc, ergo propter hoc" rule to this "story" doublet, claiming that it tightens by implication into a "plot" chain. So they read, interestingly, whether (like Ryan 2004: 11, 2005b: 10; and possibly Chatman 1978: 45–46) or not (like Abbott 2002: 38) their own definition of narrative would raise the minimum from sheer event sequence to sequentiality-plus, at best causality. But then, the common driving force behind the misreading is gestaltist—the lust for the strongest possible (here, causal) integration of the narrative data (here, chronological). The will to the plus, if you like, whether manifest in ad hoc sense-making, interpretive ground rule, and/or generic concept, our main business.

Again, Katharine Young (1999: 197–98) misattributes to Labov causality, instead of chronology, as the "minimal criterion" at the "core" of narrative. She emphatically opposes this narrativity to "stories" that consist in "just one thing after another": they "fail to produce at least two necessarily sequenced clauses of which the second is consequential on the first," and so do not "achieve closure" any more than enchainment.

Or take the action pattern famously introduced by Schank and Abelson (1977) as "script": a predetermined event sequence, like going to a restaurant or riding a bus. What integrates and propels the script is again the chronological order of occurrence, but now this sequentiality derives support (a "plus") from familiarity, convention, routine, hence more or less automatic linkage. Inversely, Schank (1980: 252) himself explains in retrospect that a script is "something else" than "causal connectedness": it was designed "to tie together texts whose parts were not [or not wholly] relatable by chain of results and enablements." Yet others do require this chain

in his name, on top of the script's unifying force of routine. For instance, "The scripts captured the causal connection holding in a stereotyped situation" (Mateas and Sengers 1999: 1).

As with earlier conditions for narrativity, starting with (i), causality has in turn been described, for some reason, as "the common view" (e.g., Carroll 2007: 11). What with the enchainment wished by analysts on all serial lines in narrative and on some in narrative theory, however, this over-harmonious estimate happens to be closer than most to the truth about the scholarly opinion of the genre since Aristotle. If not *the* common view among all the ages, movements, disciplines involved, then apparently the commonest.

But we need to keep in mind that, of the set of features defining the "whole," this strong persistence applies only to (vi$_1$), and without its Aristotelian motivations at that. In his account, the event chain renders the narrative integrated, pleasurable, memorable, extendible, complicatable, and hence also a force for the optimum subgeneric affect, that of tragedy, say. Recall also how the danger of a broken chain implicitly strengthens the pressure for continuity all along, hence for lucidity, and correspondingly negates any ambiguous, unresolvable gapping. But it is this implicit drive for lucidity, against ambiguity, that has recurred, openly or otherwise, in concepts of narrative/narrativity across the board—except, on principle, mine—and even without the original grounding at that. Little wonder that we have already regularly found this drive operative even in demands for perspicuous noncausal (serial, simultaneous) event multiplexes. What lies behind causal enchainment itself isn't explicated, either, by its inheritors. The *Poetics*' thick rationale has since almost vanished, to leave a bare, demanding, gratuitous-seeming, and accordingly vulnerable fiat, or has at best narrowed down to one of the original reasons (especially unity) or a substitute (especially meaningfulness, in lieu of affectivity). Such flattening carries over to the rest of the original quintet.

Less frequently, the "beginning → middle → end" imperative (vi$_2$) reappears in an assortment of tripartite event sequences. Below the surface numerical and nominal commonality of those threefolds, there lurk profound deviations from the *Poetics* (even when invoked) and/or from one another, especially in their ratio of causal to merely temporal progress and of dynamic to static components. In other words, they vary in the relations of (vi$_2$) with (vi$_1$) and/or (vi$_3$). As these lines of variance (a fortiori what they imply for narrativity, let alone for theoretical continuity and consensus) have tended to escape notice, they will repay some detailed attention.

In late recurrence, first, the common Aristotelian number and name

of (vi$_2$) may bear no relation whatever to the key imperative of action-logical enchainment. In the most extreme cases, the "beginning, middle, end" units and sequence needn't even be mimetic, or can even freely interchange or mix mimetic and discoursive bearing. Narrativity therefore comes and goes. Such is the case with Kenneth Burke, who regularly extends the favorite threefold beyond time and narrative: to, say, the three-phase development of imagery in a lyric poem (1969 [1945]: 243). A more recent example would be James Phelan's work on "progression" along this three-point line, allegedly informed by both neo-Aristotelian criticism and my theory of narrative dynamics (Sternberg 1978). Thus, conflating Aristotle's "beginning" with my "exposition," and so a mimetic, actional sequence with a discoursive intersequence, Phelan (2007: 16, or already 1989: 15 ff.) identifies "the beginning" as "that which generates the progression of the narrative by introducing unstable relations between characters (instabilities) *or* between implied author and authorial audience or narrator and authorial audience (tensions)" (italics mine). The 'or' in italics signifies the interchangeability of the mimetic (Aristotelian) "instabilities" with the (non-Aristotelian) discoursive "tensions," again to the loss of narrativity itself, by any standard. For once "the beginning," as tension between communicative partners, grows independent ("or") of any actional "instabilities," it equally and necessarily typifies all initial communicative dynamics, progression, processing in time, including that of a descriptive or philosophic text. The same applies to "the middle"—developing "the global instabilities and/or tensions" (ibid.: 19)—with even graver consequences for genre itself. Most of the alleged "narrative sequence," at least, will then remain eventless, whether descriptive or expository. And what, or what else, will the "end" then resolve?

Less extremely, within the proper, mimetic framework, "beginning, middle, end" retain their actional but not their causal value, so that their title to narrativity varies among definitions. The three marked units then succeed one another in world time, chronologically, without following by reference to chrono-logic. This trio is not enchained through the strong linkage demanded by the *Poetics*, nor through the regular time-to-cause inference alleged by the "post hoc, ergo propter hoc" formula, but left merely serial, according to the theory that encodes or denarratizes or just mentions it.

Observe a few examples. "A chronological order in and of itself does not make a narrative, just as anything possessing beginning, middle and end in and of itself is not a narrative," because it lacks "some sort of connectedness, preferably causal" (Kvernbekk 2003: 277). Here, then, the echoing

trio only marks successive points in time, devoid of any sequentiality-plus, let alone causality.

In Alasdair MacIntyre (1981), the trio gains in both connectedness and significance—relative to a sheer chronology—due to its mapping onto an entire life story. There, the beginning, middle, and end correspond to birth, death, and what occurs in between. Notably, the unity of a life (i.e., time plus hero) as a threefold comes here to replace that of action as a threefold, which in Aristotle is qualitatively superior.

In another philosopher, John Passmore (1987: 73), those three points become most widely and freely applicable. He maps them onto existence itself as well as onto its storied or "life story" representation, down to the unit of a single "protean" event. "'I am now writing a paper' describes . . . an event. Yet, of course, to speak of 'a paper' is to refer to a task being undertaken with a beginning, a middle, and, I hope, an end." Or in a psychologist's version, "Events are activities that are perceived to have beginnings, middles, and ends, such as going to work and making a bed" (Tversky et al. 2004: 5).

Elsewhere, causality does newly play a role, as in the original "whole" model, but no longer all along the threefold sequence, or not always. Tzvetan Todorov (1971: 38), for example, relaxes event connectivity below the threshold set up by his two Russian masters, Vladimir Propp and Boris Tomashevsky, in the wake of the *Poetics*. Unlike them, he defines narrative "as a chronological *and sometimes causal* sequence of discontinuous units" (my emphasis). His fellow Structuralist, Bremond (1980 [1966]: 387–88, 405–406), categorically dissociates himself from Propp's necessary sequence of functions, so that, in his model, no function leads perforce to the next. A later analogue, to which we'll return, is Carroll's (2007: 11, 13–14) deliberate weakening of the chrono-logic: it interlinks only "some of the events at issue."

More often, analogous loosenings of the chain into *part* wholeness, at best, are hardly so open. They even hide, apparently unperceived as well as undeclared, if not counterdeclared, in the given definitions. Compare two variants:

> A minimal story consists of three conjoined events [e.g., "He was unhappy, then he met a woman, then, as a result, he was happy"]. The first and third events are stative, the second is active. Furthermore, the third event is the inverse of the first. Finally, the three events are conjoined by the three conjunctive features in such a way that (a) the first event precedes the second in time and the second precedes the third, and (b) the second event causes the third.   (Prince 1973: 31; repeated in 1987: 53 and widely cited)

> The beginning is concerned with events that impact and alter the well-being of the [agentive] experiencer. The middle includes the formulation of goals and the carrying out of plans of action intended to deal with the changes caused by the events. The end is success or failure in attaining or maintaining . . . these outcomes [with each unit "related causally and temporally" to others].   (Trabasso and Stein 1997: 239)

The two trios may well appear variously but equally Aristotelian. The family likeness extends to their declared temporal ordering and causal fastening into chrono-logic, to their evocative terms and turns, as well as, disciplinarily, to their story-grammatical persuasion, narratological or cognitivist. A harder look, though, reveals a sharp difference: between the equal "whole"-like number of surface units involved and the unequal number of dynamic links and steps.

The disproportion will emerge if you begin with a simple "protean" guideline. Not every sequence called or appearing to be a chain of cause and effect is one, or a sequence-length one, because not everything placed along it by the analyst operates as a link, much less as one of kinetic force, least of all as one caused by its antecedent and in turn itself causative. Inversely, links can be missing from a nominal or apparent chain—or hidden in an episodic-looking sequence—unarticulated because routinized, assumed, forgotten, underread, or just missed.

This blank opens as early as the missing antecedent to Aristotle's "beginning," one imperceptibly missing, since the beginning is defined as "that which does not have a necessary connection with a preceding event." Rather than a causeless effect, a self-generated initial change, however, the beginning *must* issue from some preceding dynamic event(s). Only, the emphasis in the definition here falls on "not . . . necessary" consequentiality to imply that the beginning, alone of the whole chain, can arise by chance or accident: it then comes from an unlikely preceding cause, but not out of the blue, even so.

In this light, Prince's three so-called "events" number among them just one causal relation (signaled by "as a result"), generating just one dynamic move (from the premise "unhappy," via the destabilizing and causative "met a woman," to the enduring outcome "happy"). The "three conjoined events," of which "the first and third are stative, the second . . . active," boil down to a single "protean" event mid-posed between two states and changing ("inverting") the one to the other.[42] More like (i) than like (vi$_{2/3}$), really.

42. "Stative event" amounts to "state" but invests it with purely nominal eventhood, as though an event were reducible to immobility: obviously, a contradiction in terms. (Cf. note 9 above.) Worse yet, Todorov (1977: 111) partitions entire "episodes" into "static" vs.

This one-event-likeness would repay comparison with the threefold series "equilibrium-disequilibrium-new equilibrium" ascribed to "the minimal complete plot" or "'ideal' narrative" by Todorov (1977: 111, 118).[43] In the face of this shorthand formula, one may wonder, a series of *what* components, exactly? And how interlinked to form *the* "complete," if minimum, "plot"? The above hyphenated reference to the series by Todorov himself and others (e.g., Hühn 2008: 142) is possibly misleading, at best unrevealing, about its makeup, its linkage, and its continuity all at once. (For example, three events, three states, or a mixture? Additive, chronological, causal, or, again, alternating nexuses? Unbroken or discontinuous sequence? And throughout, obligatory or freely variable?) Increasing the liability to mislead, Todorov (1977: 111) calls the elements of the series "actions" and static or dynamic "episodes," as well as "states." For just one plain misunderstanding, witness how Smarr (1979: 341) turns the hyphens into arrows, "equilibrium → disequilibrium → equilibrium," as if it were a continuous chain of events.

The original, hyphenated threefold series is therefore worth examining in its current role as a shorthand formula for narrativity. Along it, "disequilibrium" requires an event that will upset a preexisting state of balance—the anterior "equilibrium"—and "new equilibrium" depends on another causative effect that will restore the, or a, balance. Hence both elements also point to the absence of these necessary causal interventions (Aristotle's "beginning" and "end") in the given serial formula, which accordingly reveals itself as gapped, discontinuous. Nothing like "the complete plot."

But even "disequilibrium" doesn't have to *be* an event, any more than do the equilibriums on either side; and far less must it be caused or causative in relation to them. Instead, the change to "disequilibrium" perforce implies (hence needn't even specify) a foregoing "equilibrium," but as a temporal and possibly nonadjacent rather than a causal and direct antecedent; while "disequilibrium" itself may precede but does not cause or even logically entail a "new equilibrium." For such a new equilibrium to ensue, the preceding disequilibrium must also reach (via an in-between event), or (if itself

"dynamic," corresponding to "the adjective and the verb," respectively. It is significant that these discordant notions appear in narrative theories strongly oriented to language and linguistics. Rare enough even in Structuralist narratology, though, such contradictory usage often features in event taxonomies by linguists: they want to package-deal verbs with events, surface forms with representational functions. Thus arises the class of stative event in Frawley 1992 or those of "relational" and "existential process" [*sic*] in Halliday 1994. Also influenced by Structuralism, Herman 2002 mentions these linguistic approaches with approval.
43. Adopted in Kafalenos 2006, for example, and widely paralleled under various guises, like those in the next paragraphs.

an event) effect, stable closure: a state of (ar)rest. Otherwise, where is the new terminal balance after the imbalance represented in, say, "He began to learn Italian"? If anything, why shouldn't this unbalancing development generate another change, instead, like "and so to neglect his business"?

In short, the threefold of "the complete minimal plot" strictly levels down to "A, then B, then C." All three of them can be states that differ from one another, but they do not in themselves provide any of the intermediate events necessary for the change of state (A → B) and its changeful arrest (B → C), unless reinforced with these necessities by further stipulation (or in the finished story). Before proceeding to confuse the issue, Todorov (ibid.) does stipulate them, and for once, impeccably: "An 'ideal' narrative begins with a stable situation which is disturbed by some power or force. There results a state of disequilibrium; by the action of a force directed in the opposite direction, the equilibrium is re-established," though never "identical" to the original state. Either "force" provides a causative event missing from the bare serial *trio* and now intervening between its inert members to dynamize (launch, arrest) a *fivefold* plot.

So, in this and analogous formulas, the "earlier-later-latest" sequence of minimal narrative can really dispense with causal enchainment all along.[44] The nature of these units therefore belies their familiar classical number, and any reference to this trio by their Aristotelian names (even if action-directed, unlike Burke's mixed usage or Phelan's) is again liable to mislead. For example, "This story begins in the middle . . . with a state of imbalance created by one of the characters" (Todorov 1969: 75). Or Scholes (1980: 210): "A story is a narrative with a very specific syntactic shape (beginning-middle-end or situation-transformation-situation)." The so-called middle, as a newly "created" imbalance/transformation, hence change, is the *Poetics*'s "beginning," only minus its inevitable or likely effect on the next unit.

Under their different notations, then, the above ostensible trios come down, on analysis by mobility, to a single bedrock event or none. The "protean" unit/move, surface/depth ratio within the trio comparatively improves elsewhere. Not only does the required change of state multiply there, by two at least, but the units also prove more numerous, the sequence longer, than appears in the given formula. And the membership of narrative, or story, further thins out as the members grow thicker.

Aristotle's all-dynamic tripartite "whole" itself entails a state prior to the official "beginning" and another posterior to the official "end": the

---

44. Inversely, for causal enchainment, a narrative will have to tighten the formula's minimum chronological links into a chrono-logic ("plot") by interposing two appropriate propulsive events.

nominal trio actually marks the dynamic heart of a five-part sequence. This de facto quintet recurs in a few genuine equivalents nowadays, like that cited from Trabasso and Stein (1997: 239). Their "beginning" again "alters" (hence silently assumes) a pre-beginning state of "well-being"; "the middle" operates (acts, reacts, counteracts) upon the initial alteration, with a view to another change (now presumably back, for the better); and "the end" either succeeds or fails in actualizing the wanted decisive "outcome" (hence in restoring the, or a, state of "well-being"). Details apart, this action-logical schema indeed matches the original Aristotelian "whole": a threefold chain of developments—no longer just a partial but an all-mobile chronologic—with two states implied, one at either extreme.

Such three-implying-five narrative minimums find an empirical equivalent, possibly on the largest (e.g., epic, dramatic, novelistic, cinematic) scale. By which I mean actualization in a finished narrative left similarly incomplete but inferable. Compare the *Odyssey*-old jump *in medias res* or the statutory if-plot's jump *in medias legis* (Sternberg 1978: 35–128; 2008a), with the past expositional state gapped and at best reconstructible from the dynamic sequel of the action proper (the way we make out what has kept Odysseus so long away from home). At the other end, compare the termination with a dynamic event (e.g., Odysseus's victory or the wedding in comedy) that promises stability thereafter without narrating it, except by implication. The minimum and the manifest, theory and practice, then correspond, but they needn't. A partly implied quintet remains a quintet and, especially if narrativity hinges on it, is best defined as such, in full extension.[45]

Next, how does the ending-specific (vi_4) come into the process, and what has become of it? The fact that all the trios (or longer sequences) mentioned above as definitional terminate in stasis, if only implicitly, remains contingent. This particular "end" involves another sequentiality-plus extra, another formal unifying variable, which is accordingly in need of stipulation and motivation on its own, not an automatic concomitant of the rest. As the mandatory number (vi_2) of the units is in principle independent of their running enchainment (vi_1), so is closure (vi_4) of all other coordinates. Narrative presumes what I call an expositional state, antecedent (e.g., as "happiness" or "unhappiness") even to the whole's "beginning," yet it needn't proceed toward any corresponding terminal stability (e.g., toward

---

45. Similarly with longer sequences. For example, Kafalenos's (2006) nominally ten-function sequence actually runs to twelve world-units, since it presumes a state of "equilibrium" at either limit.

the reverse of the pre-beginning happiness/unhappiness). Thus far, the wanted sequence's ending has therefore been left open in a double sense: the question undetermined in theory and the event-sequence required for narrativity terminable any which way, inconclusively as otherwise.

It so happens, though, that the variables at issue reveal a significant correlation, negative and positive. Concepts of narrativity that dispense with the first two or three Aristotelian sequentiality-pluses, like (i)–(iv), do not usually stipulate a closed or determinate ending, either. (That stipulation may govern particular subgenres of narrative, however weakly interconnected—like the final, even happy/unhappy, equilibrium in biography, picaresque, TV serial—but not the entire generic range.) Inversely, given the first three pluses, or the first alone, the fourth will more often than not follow suit.

By nature, the collocation of features goes with a progressively cumulative specifying (hence, as always, restrictive) effect, an ever higher, tighter, tougher model of linear coherence. For (vi_4) then hardens (vi_1) into causality with stable terminal as well as hitherto unbroken closure, and $(vi_2$–$vi_3)$ into a tripartite all-dynamic enchainment under this further condition. Historically, millennia after the *Poetics*, (vi_4) has often resurged together with other features of the set to approach Aristotle's ascending, everhardening order of mimetic wholeness. The resurgence shows in much the same objectivist quarters as before: from individual theorists (e.g., White 1980: 24–27; Toolan 2001: 4–5, 7) to schools to one multibranch discipline.

Thus already the Renaissance neoAristotelians and their neoclassical successors. In (re)fixing the abstract event sequence definitional of tragedy as against comedy, they newly encoded the shared poetic form that underlies either: the inherited unity of action, more or less consequential from beginning to stable (un)happy end. Similarly with Propp, himself a neoAristotelian of sorts, and his following in Structuralist narratology: Bremond (1970, 1980 [1966]), Greimas (1970 [1969]), Todorov (1977), Pavel (1985), the more discourse-oriented Emma Kafalenos (2006), or the more linguistics-inspired, story-grammatical Prince (1973). Again, in the influential sociolinguistic variant of Freytag's pyramid, Labov (1972) ends his six-part model with a double fixture, "result or resolution" plus "coda." Further parallels show in various traditional and individual approaches.

Whatever the differentials or minimums or trajectories of narrative generalized there, they involve an action logic that drives toward a firm univocal point of arrest (whether called "equilibrium" and the like or just assumed). For Prince (1973: 10), the "knowledge that stories do resolve" even allegedly belongs to humanity's "internalized" rule system, or competence, about storyness.

Internalized knowledge rings still another bell. Outside Structuralist poetics, Propp has influenced the mind sciences' research into storied cognition. There, Proppian also intersects with Chomskyan formalism to reinforce the quest for narrative's deep structure. The outcome is unsurprising, if incongruous. For all its pretensions to a revolutionary turn, cognitivism, whether psychological or computational, betrays a neo-neoclassicist return: a latter-day throwback to the Aristotelian ideal of narrative (or "story") as a gapless, unambiguous chain with a firmly closed ending. Given this cutoff's strategic impact and the mind discipline's little faith in the power of the mind, nowhere along the sequence would resolution allegedly come at a greater premium or ambiguity at a higher price: up to mental and, in computer science, also mechanical deadlock. (Sternberg 2003b: 519 ff. offers a detailed overview.)

Likewise with some other, if less collective, approaches outside poetics, as among historians or philosophers. Hayden White (1980: 9), for example, finds "narrative" devising stable ends beyond the reach of chronicle, let alone annals. The chronicle "does not so much conclude as simply terminate. It starts off to tell a story but breaks off *in medias res* . . . it leaves things unresolved," thus representing the historical world "*as if* real events" appeared to the human mind "in the form of *unfinished* stories." Another historian, David Carr (1986), ascribes temporal closure to the entire range of events, actions, and experiences in life's own narratives, as in those told about life.

Along more original lines, Velleman (2003) substitutes affective for the old quasi-logical closure. Events may "follow no causal sequence," he argues, and yet "provide an emotional resolution" in that their sequence "completes an emotional cadence." *Pace* Aristotle, with his consequential or probabilistic emphasis, "the story begins with the circumstances that initiate some affect, or sequence of affects, and it ends when that emotional sequence is in some way brought to a close." It does not always resolve itself the same way, Velleman insists, except in reaching a point of affective equilibrium. "Having passed through the emotional up and down of the story, as one event succeeds another, the audience comes to rest in a stable attitude about the series of events in its entirety." From reasoning or meaning to feeling: an unusual shift of focus, this, especially for an analytic philosopher. Yet the shift bears on the means, while the *end*, in either sense, persists: the (stable) ending as (generic) end. A narrative should promise and provide "some terminus, finish, or closure" (ibid.: 6, 10, 14).

However, none of these analysts is so representative of his discipline as would be a cognitivist analogously associating (good) narrativity with closure. Practitioners also appear to deem this coupling part of the "cog-

nitive revolution," as if it were a brand-new departure rather than a latter-day throwback to the foundational *Poetics*. Here the cognitive discipline stands poles apart from the corresponding self-declared revolutionaries in the artistic (literary, theatrical, cinematic) field. Out-radicalizing modernism itself, poststructuralism has flaunted a bias for anticlosure, with terminal open-endedness crowning the endless indeterminacy (pun intended) of the discourse. In Barthes's (1974 [1970]: 203) expressive phrasing, typically loaded with value judgment, once "all the proiaretic [action] sequences" are "closed, the narrative will die." For survival, therefore, it needs to elude closure. A matter not of art versus life but of artistic life and death.

So, oblivious to each other, a movement of unwitting anachronists polarizes with that of would-be iconoclasts in their very claims for radical (dis)integrative novelty. But even if faced with the other-minded theory and practice, neither dogmatism is likely to concede the simple conclusion: that the issue of closure remains undetermined in the generic minimum—open to choice en route from narrativity to narrative—along with those of length and linkage.

Within the literary field itself, an analogous divide between closed and open form opposes neoclassicism to Romanticism, Proppian narratology to Derridean theory, Barthes (1988a [1966]) to his poststructuralist *S/Z* (1974 [1970]) phase. Poststructuralists, though, haven't invented original concepts of narrativity to match: they rather invest violence and value in denarrativizing countermeasures. (For example, Barthes of *S/Z* actually goes against his earlier, Structuralist avatar, especially in mounting an all-out attack on the very backbone of narrative: action logic, the "logico-temporal" rationale of the "proiaretic code.") If anything, like the Russian Formalists, their basic concepts of the genre remain oddly traditional for antinarrativist iconoclasts, dogmatic open-enders in particular. Or not so oddly, because the traditional makes an easy target and rupture, as does the so-called "natural" for the unnaturalist.[46]

By contrast, cognitivism's neoclassical rage for closure starts at the level of generic definition across assorted models. (For a long list of references, see the overview in Sternberg 2003b: esp. 533n16.) This bias even gains a quasi-logical appearance from the narrowing of storyness and the generic range to the goal-driven subclass, as discussed in (vii) below. There the agent pursues an *end*: goal and finish, target and terminus, rolled into one. If problem, then (re)solution, as it were.

---

46. Likewise on the major fronts of temporal ordering and point of view, for much the same reasons: see my arguments about the (dis)privileging of chronology (Sternberg 1978, 1990b, 1990c, 1992, 2006, 2008a) and omniscience (1978: 236–305; 1985: esp. 58–185; 2001b; 2007).

A fortiori, if possible, with narratologists who cross the two Aristotelian heritages, joining Proppian Structuralism to neoclassical cognitivism, like Ryan (1991: 154, 166): "The basic conditions of narrativity" or "of narrative intelligibility" are "concatenation and closure." Inversely, alternative or contradictory endings—thematized in Borges's "The Garden of Forking Paths"—supposedly deform narrative into radical incoherence, beyond generic understanding (ibid.: 166, 227–28).

If no terminal closure, then no canonical structure and sense. Ambiguity equals breakdown again. It is as though closure were inherent in human nature at narrative engagement: a mental drive that all stories and action sequences need to actualize, all communicators to internalize, hence all theories to universalize, regardless, on pain of offending against a generic law.[47]

Finally, and strangely enough, the range modulating from necessary to impossible causation or, ontologically rather than logically speaking, from the highest probability to the lowest, is exceptional in having suffered neglect or worse. The relative strength or weakness of the nuclear causal enchainment does not receive much notice, still less informed notice, and least of all does the strong pole originating in (vi$_5$). Further, approaches to narrative do not generally even indicate whether they view causality as a deterministic relation (if A causes B, then A must always be followed by B), and so categorical (yes/no), or as probabilistic (A's occurrence increases the possibility of B), and so gradable (more/less).

The unhappy consequences go further than ever before in our overview, yet once more start with the definition of narrative/narrativity. Regarding enchainment itself, they compound the problems of its (in)determinacy and sheer ill-understanding that have already arisen in (vi$_1$)–(vi$_4$). Where definitions of the genre postulate "causal linkage" but fail to specify it—as usual among the references given above, for example—darkness results, evidently by now. One cannot tell what chrono-logic each definer of the definers has in mind, if anything definite at all; and considering the gulf between determinism and probabilism and, within the latter, the wide range of options between the polar extremes, nor can one tell how each definer stands vis-à-vis the rest. Does any given bid for causality actually agree or disagree with the other unspecified chrono-logics, including those named by it as (un)like-minded? Nor, less predictably, do the fewer specified, even formal-looking counterparts generally prove much better—in the overall grasp of

47. Segal 2007, 2010 develops a balanced, versatile approach to this problem, based on a functional concept of narrativity (see section 6 below) and varied narrative corpora.

the causal relation, in the definiteness of its generic minimum, or in the awareness of what lurks below (dis)agreement on it. Such opacities within overt specifications recall earlier features we examined.

Between these two groups, at any rate, the state of knowledge on our immediate question of causal tightness, a fortiori the larger one of causality-for-narrativity, is again harder to ascertain than suggested by the usual easy answers. What *is* the "common view," if there is one? Where and why does it vary from other views? More important still, how do the existing alternatives relate to what we need to know about the questions concerned in order to venture, argue, adopt, test, challenge, replace a definition of the narrative genre? Generic concepts may stand or fall by such knowledge, affecting all lower-level analysis in turn.

Let me now try to clarify the picture in the way that has served us well thus far, by reference to Aristotle's (vi$_5$) as point of origin and comparison. The commonality since, if any, has been negative, in the sense of contrastive, above all. The feature of "necessary or probable sequence" has virtually disappeared from conceptions of narrativity and exemplars of minimum narrative, even those that echo the rest of the Aristotelian set.

By itself, this can be a good or a bad thing, depending on its fit with the specific theory and the evidence. (By the latter, empirical standard, the minus doubtless counts as a plus, because it accommodates more of the narrative tradition.) What makes the disappearance of Aristotle's (vi$_5$) negative in the normative sense as well is how and why it has disappeared, and what, if anything, has taken its place.

The disappearance includes the very meaning and measure of "probable." The term itself has often unnoticeably shifted from Aristotle's consistent statistical usage ("what happens for the most part," as a rule)[48] to the domain of psychology or rhetoric (what strikes an audience as lifelike, plausible, credible, persuasive, and so forth, all a matter of belief, effect, impression, judgment). Thus the historic conceptual, even nominal, turn to "verisimilitude" within the Renaissance and neoclassical codifications of the *Poetics*. Among modern sequels, compare the typical switch from the original's hard, frequency-based action logic to "plausible" in Richard Walsh (2007: 49), with a linkage to "the rhetorical *enthymeme*" too.

Neoclassicism also kept the insistence on "verisimilitude" for finished works, especially tragedy. The requirement should instead have gone deeper as well as stretched wider, given the official adherence to the *Poetics*. Contrast the consequentiality already built at source into the deepest, most

---

48. As formally defined in, e.g., *Prior Analytics* II: 27.

generalized chrono-logic, that of the "whole's" nuclear and narrative-wide "beginning → middle → end." There, the chain's strength is inversely proportional to its minimum length.

The contrast with the *Poetics* on this issue only sharpens and ramifies in latter-day definitional minimums, which variously tend to avoid the causal force of "necessary or probable" in any sense. Reconsider Prince's (1982: 4; 2008: 19) "*at least two* real or fictive events or situations in a time sequence, neither of which presupposes or entails the other." The last proviso ("neither . . .") goes further yet than nonrequirement of high connectedness: it overtly rules out any necessary linkage ("entails") between the events and maybe the next tightest one too (if "presupposes" means here strong but less than deductive implication). "He killed himself and died" would thus reduce to one event, falling below the stipulated narrative minimum. Inversely, the definition (unlike Prince 1973: 31; 1987: 53) doesn't require any consequentiality whatever, but makes do with the sheer chronologizing ("time sequence") of the "two real or fictive events or situations."

So the question of causal linkage-strength (between necessity and impossibility) arises here only, if at all, in the negative exclusionary requirement, "neither of which presupposes or entails the other." Much the same low threshold and wide range is implied in Ryan's (2005b: 4) demand for a "not fully predictable change of state," whose negative form and substantial fiat echo Prince. (Except that, at the lower limit, opposed to "fully predictable," she elsewhere rules out the "accidents" of "happening.") But even such limits don't show among all those who simply define narrative/narrativity by its multiple ("A, then B") eventhood. The range silently left open-ended by them so widens as to include entailment relations and so, presumably against their intent, yet another reduction of the official multiplex to a single event. "He killed himself and died" would now qualify, strictly speaking. The absurdity, though, tends to escape notice.

Some other analysts of narrativity do address causal enchainment and raise its strength to an even higher level than Aristotle posits, but the rise only happens by mistake. Let me juxtapose a couple of examples from modern poetics and philosophy. They will throw further light both on the key issue of action logic and linkage where the two disciplines meet—where the *Poetics* indeed foundationally crossed them—and on the state of the art regarding it in (inter)disciplinary approaches to narrative.

Generalizing an analysis of the *Decameron*, Todorov (1969: 73) thus asserts "a relation of entailment" (signaled there by →) between such "actions" as "X violates a law → Y must punish X → X tries to avoid being punished"

and so forth. Now, entailment marks the strongest conceivable, Aristotle's "necessary," followability: what must perforce (unescapably, ineluctably) ensue. So strong is this topmost A → B enchainment that to refer to an event linkage as "inevitable but not necessarily causal" (Rimmon-Kenan 1983: 19) is to drive contradiction in terms to the limit of absurdity. It's like saying "entailed but unexpected" or "necessary but accidental": the mind boggles. If anything, entailed (necessary, inevitable) consequence is not too weak but too strong for causality in this or any world.[49] But none of Todorov's arrows fits this relation. (Cf. Holloway 1979: 1–3.) From "X violates the law," it doesn't follow at all (not even in law and ethics, actually, any more than in reason) that "Y must punish X"; just as the latter doesn't enforce "X tries to avoid being punished." Objections or alternatives to the putative entailed consequents (e.g., a secret and a self-confessed violator, like the Icelandic saga's murderers and killers, respectively) are easy to find. All of Todorov's declared entailments are non sequiturs, all the arrows miss the mark.[50]

Further, rather than being subsumable under any single term—entailment or another one—those arrows perceptibly vary in the strength of linkage on the axis ranging from certainty/necessity to impossibility. Along Todorov's event chain, declared to be uniform as well as inescapable throughout, compare the relations between X's infringement and Y's duty to punish and between the latter and X's attempt to avoid punishment. The first nexus is possible, hence weaker than the second's probability.

But perhaps most illogical of all is Todorov's claim that some propositions (e.g., "X tries to avoid being punished") have *alternative* entailments (e.g., "Y violates a law" *or* "Y believes that X is not violating the law"): necessity and alternativity (i.e., possibility) make a contradiction in terms. An event that both must and just may follow from another is inconceivable, even without the absurdity of calling the two unequal follow-ups "entailments." An event has either "alternatives" or an entailment, in short, either a forked or a forced consequent, and Todorov's "or" establishes the former.[51]

Such examples of basic misconception also help to explain the field's little knowledge about causal modality and enchainment generally—

49. On how this inference pattern compares with less rigorous and more informative ones, especially presupposition, see Sternberg 2001b.
50. Similarly with other misreferences to entailed action logic, whether or not following Todorov. Even in a study based on causality's genre-defining force, Richardson (1997: 95; also 2000: 170) presents "direct entailment" as a causal type, with "direct" topping off the usual problems in Todorov et al.
51. As strange are the "related or mutually entailing" alternatives in Chatman 1978: 21.

or, from the reader's side, causal inference—with their implications for defining the genre and much else. Trained in logic, however, philosophers must do better than the common narratologist, especially when referring back to the shared classical ancestor. Or so one would think, until faced with the recent upsurge of philosophical interest in narrative action.

An example would be Carroll's "On the Narrative Connection" (2001) as a hallmark of narrativity. Regarding that connection, he agrees about (vi_1), the need for an event chain, "since narratives typically represent *changes* in the state of affairs, and change implies some subtending causal process." Or the other way round, "where the events bear no sort of causal relation to each other, they seem more of the order of coincidence than of [change-bound] narrative" (ibid.: 26, 30). But what "sort" is "fundamental to our concept of narrative" (ibid.: 40)?

Negatively speaking, Carroll (2001: 26) objects to postulating "too strong a relation" as "operative in all narrative linkages." In terms of causality's extension, this negates Aristotle's norm of continuous enchainment from beginning to end. Instead of a running, relay-race-like interlinkage— as in *Oedipus Rex*—enchaining parts of the event sequence and just aligning others, as in the picaresque novel, will suffice. The causal requirement having become "excessively powerful," he writes, much of the novelty he proposes lies in the attempt to "tame" or "weaken" it by confining the requirement "to some of the events at issue."[52] The stipulated enchainment doesn't constrain "an entire work of narrative, like a novel" (Carroll 2007: 11, 13–14), but certain subsequences along it and, presumably, the definitional narrative minimum.

Even by reference to the definition's and the argument's internal consistency, however, this loosening would hardly accord with Carroll's other defining features, particularly overall integrity and univocality. Given a repeatedly discontinuous chain, what would become of the large rule that "causal relations" are the story's unifying "cement"? And given all those discontinuities, wouldn't the resulting threat of gapping and ambiguity work against the imperative sequential lucidity?

But Carroll's emphasis rather falls on downgrading actual cause-effect linkage, whatever its extent. Here, exactly what relation counts as "too strong" for the narrative minimum is hard to tell, because he keeps lumping together very different options. Thus we find interchanged a miscellany of allegedly excessive enchainments between "earlier events" and "later events":

---

52. Not quite a novelty, though. Recall the license of loosening the whole that Aristotle himself already grants to the epic and Todorov or Bremond stretch to all narrative.

(a) the earlier events "supply sufficient grounds" or "sufficient causes" for
    the later,[53] or
(b) "causally entail" them, or
(c) "causally necessitate" them, or
(d) join with them to form "a strict causal chain" or
(e) to form "a causal-chronological structure," or
(f) "are the cause of" them.   (2001: 26–29, 31)

(a) can sink as low as mere enablement or accident;[54] (b), (c), and (d) indicate
the highest, tightest, out-of-this-world connectivity; and (e) and (f) cover
the entire scale of enchainments between (a) and (b)/(c)/(d). What X → Y
interlinkage can be weaker than the very bottom of the scale? What on this
scale could help being weaker than the very top? What more diverse than
the in-between gradations? Such a range of negative choices covers every-
thing, hence amounts to nothing. Further, how would all these, (a)–(f),
belong to "a strict, deterministic causal model of the narrative connection"
(ibid.: 29)? Indeed, what sense does it make to compare degrees of causal
linkage by reference to a binary, yes/no logic? Why not officially refer
them instead to a scalar, probabilistic model, where the wanted degree
lends itself to pinpointing vis-à-vis Aristotle's high, allegedly overdemand-
ing standard?

    However, the positive account of the weak narrative connection wanted
for generality is apparently more uniform. Carroll (ibid.: 28) identifies it
with "an 'INUS condition,' that is, an *i*nsufficient but *n*ecessary part of
a condition that itself is *u*nnecessary but *is s*ufficient for an effect event."
In simpler language, this involves a "relevant" or "necessary" condition,
whereby "earlier events merely function to make later events causally pos-
sible" (ibid.: 28–29).[55] As such, they may amount to even less than a nec-

53. *Not* "a sufficient condition."
54. Look at Carroll's (2001: 26) own example of "too strong," because "sufficient," causa-
tion: "Creon had Antigone executed; consequently, his son committed suicide." In itself,
surely, the link here remains all too weak, if anything, in the absence of any visible motive
for suicide. *How* "consequently"? This weakness also disposes of the argument in Velleman
(2003) for the same kind of causality. Aristotle's description of the "beginning" and "end" as
cutoff points is "simply false," he asserts, because these points always have "sufficient" causal
antecedents and consequents, respectively (ibid.: 14). "Simply false," rather, is Velleman's
own counteranalysis, because his "sufficiency" is much too weak to neutralize cutoffs. Given
an event, whatever caused it (albeit improbable, abnormal, unexpected, just possible) is evi-
dently sufficient by nature. How else would the given effect result? For further analysis, see
my comparison of different "if-plots," in Sternberg 2008a: e.g., 76–77, and the "INUS con-
dition" below.
55. *Sic*, "possible," because a necessary condition doesn't necessitate what follows (as does
Aristotle's sequencing by quasi-logical "necessity") but only enables it, subject to the other
appropriate conditions.

essary requirement, forming instead just a part of one (e.g., this is how a character's birth in the United States relates to his becoming president).

Here the weakest causal connection reaches its limit of weakness, though still deemed viable: the weakest *possible* chain, as it were. Reduced to such a minimum, Carroll argues, the connection at last grows "under-determined," unpredictable, surprising at will, open to "alternative out-comes," and above all, duly inclusive. Inversely, the conflated and conflict-ing negatives above, (a)–(f), give way to a single one. Any causal linkage firmer than possibility (than [a], *pace* Carroll) would be too strong (over-determined, predictable, exclusive) for the generic definition and range of narrative.

But Carroll contradicts himself again, along several lines and beyond salvage. Take another look at how he formally defines the genre's minimum connection-by-possibility: "Earlier events in narrative are at least (and per-haps typically) causally necessary conditions (or contributions thereto) for the later events" (ibid.: 39–40). If so, it must follow that *all* event sequences are narrative by virtue of their inherent chronology—not their chrono-logic—because all "earlier events" are readable as enablements, possible causes, "causally necessary conditions" (or elements) of "the later events" at issue. Or the other way round: in any event sequence, all "the later events" possibly ensue (as effects) from "earlier events" (as causes).[56]

Take "The king died and then the queen died": given the king's death, we can infer (as some have done) the possibility that the queen died of grief as a result. This possible causation remains hypothetical, tentative, questionable, modifiable, deniable, or otherwise erasable—as I already argued even about firmer inferences, similarly short of certainty—but still constructible from the given event-doublet without reference to any spe-cial framework. Likewise with far more disjointed series—"The king died and the volcano erupted," say, or "The boy rubbed the lamp and a giant emerged." Given an earlier and a later event, one can always think of a reality model (e.g., the pathetic fallacy's and the folktale's, respectively) that will connect them into some possible or even probable chain: of a possible world where they will form a looser or tighter nexus of cause and effect.

The results for Carroll's argument are devastating, especially as regards

56. In principle, of course, all later events do not just "possibly ensue" but must necessarily ensue (because they *have* ensued) from earlier events. In life and art, however, we may (all too often, we do) remain ignorant of those earlier events or of their causal impact on the later ones and can then at best infer them, or it, by reference to that principle (Sternberg 2008a). Hence "possibly." *Post hoc → propter hoc* extremists drive this possibility to the unearthly, and often counterartistic, limit of certainty.

the concept of narrative. There, the hierarchy of linkage-strength collapses and with it the very distinction between event sequentiality and consequentiality: "plot" levels down to "story," propter hoc to post hoc, chronologic to chronology. The same breakdown overtakes Carroll's typology of "story forms"—annals, chronicle, narrative—borrowed from the historians and ranked by their connectivity. As all three "forms" unfold an event chronology, they must all share a "possible" chrono-logic of events as well—if this doesn't bear the name of cause in vain. The linkage of possible causality actually comes down, not even to any sequentiality-plus, but to plain earlier-later sequentiality.

That fellow philosophers should approve of Carroll's "expanded notion of cause" (Feagin 2007: 19; Barwell 2009: 52–53, 55–56) is therefore even less easy to believe. The wonder pales, though, beside that of others in the same discipline finding his "expanded notion" overdemanding rather than, if anything, underplotted for a "cause." His connection is "arguably stronger than needed for basic narrative," which can manage with a "nonlogical" relation, down to the nonlinearity of a simultaneous event pair (Lamarque 2004: 394n3). "Something far weaker will do" than the INUS condition, which remains "too strong": thus Currie (2007: 51) follows suit. He proposes instead "reason-based dependence," no longer causal, any more than "nonlogical" altogether, but "cause-like" in interrelating events (ibid.: 52–53; see also 2006). One wonders whether his alternative relation (or any other, short of yes-and-no, did-and-did-not serial incompatibility, Kafka or Beckett style) can be weaker than the "possible" of mere chronological series. It is weaker in name anyway, because just "cause-like."

Within literary theory itself, Martin Kreiswirth (1992: 639) echoes this comedown from probability in Aristotle's own name. "Poetic plots deal with possibilities (the kind of thing that can happen) as opposed to historic [*sic*] plots, which deal with actualities." Quite the contrary. "History" in Aristotle makes do with "possibilities," or mere episodic series, exactly because tied to "actualities." And probabilistic literary mimesis is therefore deemed "more philosophic and of graver import than history" (chap. 9).

This disappearance of (vi$_5$) from narrativity, by silent or pointed omission—at best downgrading—grows more visible still in the light of the attendant persistences. Thus the continued, Aristotelian demand for agency in eventhood, exclusive of "happening" as "accident" and "metaphor." Or consider the frequent ongoing insistence on enchainment (which weakens, maybe snaps, if improbable or barely possible) with closure (the more probable, the stronger) in some quarters, and the ongoing concern with probability in narrative subgenres, authors, works. Again, recall the

tight linkage wished on every, or some, post hoc as an implicit propter hoc, or on "event" as "action" in cognitivism. Such tightening willy-nilly entails the reference of the posterior event to a wider logic—a causal law or likelihood—and so makes it readable as an effect of its anterior fellow. Thus, and only thus, does a given mere sequence (e.g., "The king died and then the queen died") become a particular token of a generalized consequence type (e.g., "One spouse's death grieves the other to death"). This token/type relation, including our very appeal from one to the other with a view to causal gap-filling, hinges in turn on the probability so lost on action-logical definers and narrative theory generally.

How, then, to explain the omission from the inherited paradigm of objective sequential features? One reason may lie in the illusion that keeping "necessary or probable" consequentiality definitional, along with the rest of the (vi_1)–(vi_5) quintet, would exclude unrealistic storytelling, as if mimesis hinged on ordinary lifelikeness rather than internal likelihood. Actually, Aristotle would rather have a probable impossibility than an improbable possibility. Or in my terms, narrative is a suppose game, and modern fantasy, just like Homeric or biblical supernaturalism, can always run true to its own action-logical premises. But maybe cause-oriented definitions lower, often blank out, this high requirement, more advisedly or less, for the sake of inclusiveness: to accommodate a wider, or the entire, spectrum of enchainments, regardless of probability. But if so, it becomes doubly notable that the generic threshold ascends higher still in further respects, even causal ones and even among those who quarrel with (vi_5) or omit this variable altogether.

(vii) *Event chain marked and/or lengthened in semantic terms*, especially action semantics. If Aristotle's ideal sequence has come down in some respects, or quarters, it has newly escalated in others. Many theorists don't settle for narrativity-as-enchainment, not even with all the strings of "wholeness" attached. They would particularize, hence restrict, it further in makeup or magnitude or both by imposing various meaning-laden features on its world, usually on its action.

In a sense, of course, (i)–(vi) are all already meaning-laden in being representational, unlike a sound or color formation. (Think of such purely formal taxonomic criteria as the haiku's seventeen syllables, the sonnet's fourteen lines.) However, these foregoing concepts of narrative remain open to all candidates in discourse that match the relational, structural, action-logical pattern involved—from bare change or dynamics (e.g., variable between outer and inner world) to the elaborate whole (e.g., tragedy's *or* comedy's, moving away from or toward happiness). These pronounced

variables exemplify the rule and the range of latitude in (i)–(vi). Here, whatever the pattern of relations on which narrativity depends, it can then actualize itself in an assortment of representational materials and meanings: in actional mimesis that is otherwise objectively unlimited. But such further limitation of the narratively representable, on pain of being excluded from the genre, is what drives the members of (vii). No longer as flexibly structural (i.e., relational) as mimetic elements and orderings along an event sequence can be, the new arrivals would fix, besides, (action-)semantic constraints.

As a rule, the new semantic limits imposed on narrative go back, knowingly or otherwise, to two elements from the *Poetics* already encountered above: one implicit but mandatory there, one explicit but optional.

The first arose in (ii), concerning the agent's and the affair's humanity, which we needn't rehearse. Let's just briefly reconsider this feature from the present viewpoint of cumulative action-semantic extras. Humanity, deemed by many essential to narrative, yet varies in range (as well as in weight, overtness, motivation), and the genre varies with it. This feature sometimes extends to the humanlike, personified, anthropomorphic, or just animate (e.g., Turner 1996). Others firmly reserve it for humanity proper, and not always on actional grounds, or on them alone, but also in the name of anthropocentric meaning(fulness).

Hayden White thus considers narrative "a solution to a problem of general human concern," namely, "how to translate *knowing* into *telling*" and arrange "experience into a form assimilable to structures of meaning that are generally human." So narrative is "a metacode, a human universal on the basis of which transnatural messages about the nature of a shared reality can be transmitted" (White 1980: 5, 6). In the bid for human meaning structures, this also partly implies (i.e., constrains) an action to suit. But the meaning-first order of priorities is still notable. And when Frank Kermode casts emplotment in a humanizing role, the emphasis does not even fall on any determinate meaning, however general, but on the meaningfulness of narrative, its force for creating significance. The fiction whereby we agree that the clock "says *tick-tock*," with *tick* as beginning and *tock* as end, "is a model of what we call a plot, an organization that humanizes time by giving it form" (Kermode 1967: 44–45). In turn, this alleged fiction highlights not the clock's humanlikeness but how the human need for meaningful temporality projects ("plots") itself upon the clock's mechanical sound continuum, regardless.

Yet, either way, the human-centered semantics (meaning/fulness) invoked remains comparatively free of any particular human agency, or inversely, exerts little constraint on what, how, why the agents do or suffer.

As the polarity with "happening" (ii) suggests, though, it is "action" logic, hence its action-semantic exigencies and reinforcements, that most interests narrative theory. The human/nonhuman line then sharpens or blurs according to whichever possibility, the distinctively anthropocentrist or the inclusive, suits the purpose best in the eyes of the approach concerned. Whether the definer's choice makes sense in fact or in reason is another matter.

The *Poetics* itself offers the historic case in point. Aristotle takes human agency for granted, though it is logically dispensable even to his ideal holistic form, which can equally manifest itself in other representable objects, like natural processes. After all, this motion in nature is what models the human-centered narrative (epic, dramatic) mimesis of action. And such mimetic action can do without character (*ethos*) at that. On his own premises, therefore, why the invariant need for human agents? Further, even if humankind is judged imperative, for some reason, why agents rather than existents, the way people get immobilized in a visual portrait or a verbal character description? Equally manifestable in static representations as well, the feature of humanity isn't unique to narrative, either, any more than essential even to a "whole" generic action.

Yet this extra semantic must restricts there, not just actional subgenres dependent on our response to human fortune as such, like tragedy's pity and fear, but the genre's mimesis as a whole, and it widely constrains narrativity still.

Less widespread, because a heavier and more particular semantic constraint, with a direct bearing on action logic, is the heritage of *ethos*. It originally means, we recall, psychomoral character or individual psychologic, and Aristotle's own reasoning finds it dispensable to human fortune, even agency, in artistic mimesis. "A tragedy is impossible without action, but there may be one without Character." Examples of such characterlessness abound, he adds, among "modern" and other "poets of all kinds" (chap. 6): not recommended, yet viable, along with the *ethical*, characterful alternative. As character-*in*-action, *ethos* discloses itself best—most genuinely, intensely, readably—under pressure: at moments of crisis, when the agent faces a difficult choice, between evils, say, and must expose his true psychomoral self by the road taken. Not self-exposure for its own sake, though, as if it had intrinsic value. In the process, the agent's disclosed psycho-logic motivates ("causes") the ensuing act, and so assimilates to the overall action logic, as befits the plot-before-character hierarchy. *Mythos* above *ethos*, hence *ethos* in the service of *mythos*, if not replaced altogether by another causal servant.

So much for the Aristotelian source, with its rationale and priorities.

Now, keeping the *ethos* origin in view brings out the aftermath's theoretical commonality, as well as its historical continuity, below the surface miscellany of references to inner life and its place in narrative. Such a long retrospect also highlights one genuine difference from *ethos* at source. Observe how aspects or implications of this optional factor reappear, under various guises, as modern fiats of narrativity.

Choice at the crossroads, as a mental, at best mindful proceeding, entails or suggests:

(vii$_1$) *thought* at large, the most inclusive but also the most restrictively human umbrella for inner life, not even necessarily related to the mind's action or activity in the chrono-logical, teleological sense. Typically, Dorrit Cohn (1999: 12) defines narrative as "a causally related sequence of events that concern human (or human-like) beings": "beings" rather than the traditional "agents," since her interest doesn't really lie in the causal action sequence, acknowledged as a token gesture. She doesn't even approach narrative as a merger of being and agency, thought and conduct, the way done by a rare humanistic cognitivist like Jerome Bruner. A (good) story, he asserts, "must construct two landscapes": one "of action," based on "agent, intention or goal," and one "of consciousness: what those involved in the action know, think or feel," which the modern novel has driven to the limit of sheer "psychic realities" (Bruner 1986: 13–14). Not so Cohn, despite her two-part definition. Actually, her interest concentrates on the feature of humanity, whereby a being rises to the dignity of thinking subject, fiction equates with omniscient mind-reading, and the inward turn of modernism (often deemed "plotless") becomes paradigmatic. Or so she would have us believe.

On much the same ground, though with far sharper aliveness to alternatives, Monika Fludernik (1996) carries this belittling of agency to such lengths as to overstep, indeed to erase, the generic boundary. Like various other definitions we have encountered, hers takes a very common feature for narrative-specific: this time, the subjectivity or perspectivity built into all linguistic representation (necessarily egocentric, value-laden, self-conscious, *or* self-communing) and further elaborated ad lib there. Fludernik defines narrativity by "experientiality," which is anchored in a human subject, and so perforce discourse-wide, undelimitable, rather than by emplotment with its narrative-specific actional framework, allegedly dispensable at will. This reverses Aristotle's hierarchy into the opposed subject-before-agent, self-above-plot, with any outer fortune on view motivating or otherwise enhancing inner life. The priorities turn neomodernist, in short, without so much as a gesture toward "causally related sequence of events,"

outer or inner, hence without an actual precedent even in modernism. The chrono-logic, if any, goes down, and the world semantics turns inward, to an extent never preached or practiced by, say, the late James himself.[57]

As typically, however, Ryan (e.g., 2007: 29) inverts these neomodernist priorities. Back to the Aristotelian hierarchy, with a vengeance, because it is in turn driven to an unprecedented extreme: the psychomoral *ethos*, revealed and causative under pressure, flattens here into the sheer instrumental mind. She too emphasizes the "mental dimension," but only as a requirement for "intelligent agents," and so denies narrativity to "interior monologue fiction."[58] Out with Joyce's *Ulysses*, Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, Broch's *Death of Virgil* . . . . Hard to believe? Perhaps, yet nicely symmetrical to Cohn (1978) devoting an elaborate monograph to such fiction and Fludernik's denial of narrativity to history writing because of its exteriority.

Within Structuralism itself, Cohn would find allies in the German tradition of Stanzel et al., Ryan among Proppians (as well as cognitivists). The chronic split in narrative study between perspective and plot, inner and social life, or their overzealous champions, neomodernists versus neo-neoclassicists. Where the polar overzeals meet is in reducing "action" to external action, for better or worse. Either way, there ensues a groundless invidious shrinkage of the narratable world, favoring or disfavoring humanity's secret life, respectively.

(vii$_2$) *Intentionality, in the sense of an agent's goal-directedness*, rather than in the far wider philosophical meaning of a subject's world-directedness: there, "intentionality is that property of many mental states and events by which they are directed at or about or of objects and states of affairs in the world": for example, "belief . . . fear . . . desire . . . intention" (Searle 1983: 1). In the various examples brought by Searle, only the last, "intention," specifies their common world-directed "intentionality"—a subset of mindwork— into a goal of directing some operation in, upon, against the world. Further, it consists in "an intention to do something," not just to mean something, the way the term often applies to an author's text-directedness.

---

57. Among follow-ups, Palmer (2004: 5, 6, 177) repeats this neomodernist definitional emphasis on interiority: "Narrative fiction is, in essence, the presentation of fictional mental functioning," with explicit reference to Fludernik. For some criticism leveled against her definition of narrativity as overinclusive, because nonactional, see Wolf 2003: 181–82; Ryan 2005b: 4n1.
58. Likewise, in explicit contrast to Fludernik, Wolf (2003: 186; 2004: 88, 90) rejects the confinement "to the psychic sphere of the agents": "The mere representation of human thought and feelings would *not* suffice for a narrative" unless they lead to a "change of situation." See now also the corrective pairing of the actional and the experiential in Herman (2009: 139 ff.).

It is in this particular sense that intention(ality) relates to the dynamics of the narrated world, as a goal-directed, teleological process within the characters' own arena. Compared with (vii₁), it is more narrowly action-logical than "thought" in general—or even than the philosopher's generally world-directed "intentionality"—but also more extendible beyond humanity and human agency proper. For the intentional mind can be reduced to mere instrumentality, in the service of ends deemed higher, emplotment above all. An agent's goal-mindedness then operates less to humanize (interiorize, personalize, moralize) the action, *ethos* style, than to generate, motivate, sustain, and eventually, having failed or been fulfilled, arrest the action. Or the other way round, "when animals or non-agentive objects are cast as narrative protagonists, they must be endowed with intentional states for the purpose" (Bruner 1991: 7); so must robots (Dautenham 2001: 255, 257–58). Whatever and whoever the dramatis personae, narrative then basically enacts a goal-driven process or even a sheer "change from one goal state to another" (Stein 1982: 499).[59]

Agentive intentionality has in fact become definitional of the genre for quite a few narratologists, especially revisitors of Propp, from Bremond (1970, 1980 [1966]) to Kafalenos (2006), also for various others (like Paul Ricoeur [1984: 54–55], Adams [1989: 125], Wolf [2004: 88–89]), and most

59. Such agentive intentionality (and mimetic teleology as a whole) is always related to but distinct from *authorial* intentionality, which (1) goes without saying in any communication model; (2) frames, and so controls, the agentive (including the narratorial) variety; (3) operates even in the latter's absence; and, or because, (4) it is not peculiar to narrative as a mimesis of events, let alone acts and agents, but goes, in and through any discourse, from the author's mind to the addressee's. (For detailed analyses of how these two intentionalities relate, cast in terms of "quoting," "motivation," and "self-consciousness," see esp. Sternberg 1978: 236–306, 1983b, 1985: 365–440, 2005, 2009: esp. 480 ff.; and Yacobi's work on (un)reliability, e.g., 1981, 1987, 2000, 2005.) Accordingly, reconsider James Phelan's (2005: 217) so-called "rhetorical [more exactly, communicative] definition of narrative": "somebody telling somebody else on a particular occasion and for some purpose that something happened." If "telling" is circular, as "narrating" would be, then "for some purpose" is redundant in regard to the definitionally intentional (motivating, self-conscious, goal-directed) author; it is even more redundant than "somebody [addressing] somebody else on some occasion." Which also means that this entire "definition of narrative" fails to single out narrative from the rest of communication—least of all in any "rhetorical" terms—not even via the age-old objectivist "Something happened." For, if this "telling" co-applies to characters, as it then must, it becomes an enacted happening itself, regardless of its object. The allegedly narrative "Something happened" then grows interchangeable with the descriptive "Something existed"—hence unnecessary and overrestrictive concerning the represented object—because the mimetic dynamics required for narrativity extends and even shifts its center here at will. This center perforce migrates from the told action ("Something happened"), grown dispensable and (*if* rendered) adjoinable to the character's act of "telling" anything, however changeless, unhappening-like, so that it needn't even count as telling but as speaking, discoursing, and yet enact a dynamics. Rather than being told, something happens in and through the speech act as discursive (inter)action. (See also notes 63, 80, and 96 below.)

cognitivists, as exemplified throughout my two-part overview (Sternberg 2003a, 2003b). The latter include not only some literary cognitivists (e.g., Boyd [2009]) and cognitivist narratologists (e.g., Ryan [1991]; Herman [2002]) but even an otherwise dissident psychologist like Bruner (e.g., 2004: 697) or AI experts in story generation and understanding (e.g., Schank and Abelson [1977]).

The orientation of AI programmers toward goal-driven agency, how-ever, is less surprising if one considers that they have a vested interest exactly in reducing subjectivity to intentionality (even flatter than the phi-losopher's usage) and the intentional to the instrumental (here also com-putational) mind. Anything beyond the association of inner causes or drives (e.g., hunger, anger) with outer effects (e.g., search for food or foe) eludes programming. How would the machine compute the subjective life (including emotivity or even Aristotle's ethical choice) that we humans experience but only God and the Godlike teller know? How to simulate or penetrate it on its own?

Other approaches deal with what AI tries to simulate: with human (or at least humanlike) characters as well as authors and readers, often even required for narrativity. Why, then, should human-centered accounts (e.g., Ryan's, Wolf's) similarly exclude the nonintentional/noninstru-mental mind in favor of the goal-minded agent? Such exclusions being no longer forced there—except by the theory's arbitrary coverage—they accordingly become less justifiable than in AI. In either case, though, the required intentionality appears under diverse names (e.g., motive, inten-tion, goal, desire, teleology) and with varying explicitness (from latency in "human," "agent," "cause," "act(ion)," "character," etc., upward to the manifest surface).

(vii₃) *Intentional activity further specified* into planning, problem solving, trouble, obstacles, conflict, bids for resolution leading to the agent's suc-cess or failure, *and the specifics always enchained along some cause-effect line or teleo-chrono-logic*. Goal-directedness itself already entails a sense of direc-tion, toward the wanted goal state. But as such further components and meaning-ladenness are forced on this activity, they also enforce in turn an appropriate well-defined path: the quest trajectory, for example. By it indeed some define storyhood or narrativity, under the label of "problem solving" (e.g., Rumelhart 1980) and the like. That distinct trajectory itself ramifies into divergent sequences, according to more specific variables of the problem, (re)solution, obstacles en route, and so forth. Compare the quest for a grail and for an answer to a mystery by, say, their future- as against past-oriented actions (Sternberg 1978: 178–82, 2003b: 532 ff.).

Moreover, as these extra action-semantic components ascend in number and specificity, the *thought* required grows increasingly developed, hence difficult to extend or simulate by computer. Even if other orders of existence assume a humanlike intentionality, how would they boast a mind capable of planning and executing a strategy? Maybe this is why Susan Feagin (2007: 22, 1978: 178–82) claims such remarkable definitional and explanatory power for "the agent's plans or policies," with the "psychological complexity" they require. This mindful activity "explains," she holds, "what is distinctive about narratives involving humans," and therefore the "strong inclination" to view them as the only or at least "the most important class of narratives."

Unhappily, those who most privilege and centralize the defining action's meaning-specificity are not exactly notable for their interest in the characters' "psychological complexity." This further requirement, (vii$_3$), again typifies Proppian narratology and cognitivist story modeling. Examples run from the bare trio "setting, problem, and solution" (e.g., Kintsch 2000: 68, 276) to "a goal, an action, a reaction, and an outcome" (Wilensky 1983: 583) to Barthes's (1974 [1970]) "hermeneutic code" to the ten "functions" extrapolated in Kafalenos (2006) from Propp's own line of thirty-one, preceded by a state of "misfortune" or "lack," which impels the hero to seek repair.[60]

You may wonder why these specifics should count as universals of narrative, and some proponents (e.g., Rumelhart 1980: 315) indeed admit their limited scope. Throughout, the narrated object grows more determinate, and exclusionary, than ever before: the agent's choice more perceptible, the links more constrained in number, filling, role, and order, the action semantics thicker, and the criterial event sequence generally longer. Even at their lowest, such minimum narrativities would appear high for a protean genre. Inversely, with the world semantics so fixed a priori, we gain a new measure of the Aristotelian origin as a set of action-logical part/whole relations, comparatively open and maneuverable in all these semantic regards, down to the agent's choice itself. Made in knowledge or, Oedipus fashion, in ignorance? Intended result or boomerang effect? Discovery leading to or away from peripety? The art of relations works for flexibility, against fixture, with fewer exclusions to suit.

The sequentiality-pluses required for narrativity also include nonnarrative, all-discoursive coherences—though typically lumped together with

60. Other variants would include Bremond 1970; Schank and Abelson 1977; White 1980; Pavel 1985; Bruner 1986; Ryan 1991; Herman 2002; Boyd 2009.

some features mentioned above, as if they too were generic hallmarks. Two of these aids to connectivity deserve special notice. Historically, both indeed derive from the same ancient source as the rest, except that they form mirror images there, in articulation and value alike. One is explicit and unwanted, certainly optional, the other implicit and desired. This bipolarity, at least, has been outgrown in modern theory:

(viii) *Events with a thematic thread running through them* for extra continuity. As such, the extra thread adds its linear integrative force to that (or, again, those) of chronology or chrono-logic. Being objective, mimetic, represented by nature, this pair is itself likewise "thematic" in the broader sense of world-oriented (e.g., Tomashevsky 1965 [1925]); or whatever regards "the story or the narrative content" (Genette 1988 [1983]: 16). But they still differ from the rest of "thematics" in their time-boundness. Uniquely, chronology must, and chrono-logic may, attach to event sequences, and to them alone, of all things in the world, never mind out of it. The two related terms, *thematic* and *semantic*, are therefore best kept apart here, for the purpose of distinguishing the general from the generic, the coherence yielded by all world-oriented (inter)linkage from that attaching or attachable to the event line.

With these unique time-bound exceptions, "thematic" here covers the narrated subject matter and the repertoire of sequentiality-pluses anchored in it. Indeed, no longer disdained as an inferior alternative to wholeness, such unity has meanwhile become a desired resource: not only a boon or bonus to narratives but, in certain models, either an obligatory or even a modest-yet-sufficient interlinkage for narrativity itself. At the very least, this thematic resource counters, and excludes, the disunity left, advisedly or unthinkingly, in "A + B," even "A, then B" concepts of narrative, where the events brought together may have nothing to do with each other (like the incongruous pair canonized in Rimmon-Kenan 1983: 19).

Most generally, for example, narrative presents "events connected by subject matter," for without this "continuity" we have a "kind of list" (Scholes 1980: 209). Or narrative "requires a 'subject' common to all the *referents* of the various sentences that register events as having occurred" (White 1980: 19). And inversely, nothing in the annals' dates, or dated "A + B . . . ," can "function as the subject of a narrative" (ibid.; echoed in Carroll 2001: 24–25; Worth 2008: 43–44, 47).

But the requirement of a continuous thematic thread can become more pointed, selective, hence demanding. Recall the unity of space imposed on drama, for optimum integrity, by Aristotle's neoclassical codifiers. It has since resurged in concepts of minimal narrative at large—across sub-

generic (e.g., drama/epic) kinds, possibly on top of the unity of hero but possibly minus that of action, vital to wholeness in Aristotelian eyes. Thus narrativity allegedly demands more than an advance from an initial to a final situation: "Both states, and the change that takes place between them, must be related to one and the same acting or suffering object and the same element of setting" (Schmid 2003: 19). Or the priority may shift and the extent shorten. "Both some continuity of agent and some causal connection are conditions of a minimal narrative" (Bordwell 2008: 89): space out as unifier, chrono-logic in, agent recurrent, yet both extras may diminish from sequence-length to "some."

But then, a unitary figure and/or setting (let alone a "subject") is equally open to a piece of description, verbal or visual; and thematic coherence, in the widest sense of aboutness (e.g., White 1980: 9, 19; Steiner 1988: 17–19, 177), to an encyclopedia entry as well or to a theoretical essay, like mine on narrativity. The integrative repertoire "thematically" working here for event sequentiality-plus co-applies in principle to nontemporal (e.g., hierarchical) sequence, to objects sequenced only in medial, exclusive of mimetic, order (e.g., a verbal character-sketch) or not at all (a graphic portrait). A theme is a theme and its maintenance interconnective, regardless. The thread(s) running through *or* crisscrossing over the miscellaneous lot just exemplified are narrativizable rather than narrative per se, let alone narrative-defining.

(ix) *Event sequence with patterns of equivalence* (e.g., straight, contrasted, mixed analogy, variations on a theme) imposed on it. Apart from A preceding or propelling B, they must accordingly parallel each other (A∥B) in some way. The suprasequential patterning of the sequence into equivalence, or the other way round, the projection of analogy onto chronology and chrono-logic, then adjoins the requisites for narrativity.

Adjoins rather than meets them, least of all in the genre's objectivist conception. For the generic requirements themselves primarily bear on the event sequence unrolling in world time, not on any pattern that transcends or crosses or opposes that time axis—not even if meeting other criteria of literariness or aesthetic value. Roman Jakobson (1960) thus located "the poetic function" and its control over "verbal art" in distinctively supra-linear (to him, even antilinear) forms of, say, phonological or positional equivalence. But he had to concede their insufficiency for "prose." Such formation can't define narrative, in short, not by itself, if at all.

Even as an aid, by the same token, the equivalence-bound switch or crossing of axes also markedly differs from all the sequential sequentiality-pluses in the limited awareness of it. The suprasequential sequentiality-

plus is not so popular or visible as the time-oriented staples—certainly not within the definitional event kernel—and might appear to be of little relevance. Why should narrativity include a nexus or network of similarity? But it often enough supposedly does, though hidden under a variety of guises.

Nameless, never presented as such, and accordingly unrecognized: so, I would argue, this aid to connectivity already lurks in yet another, sixth feature of Aristotle's "whole," that is, its movement "from happiness to unhappiness, or the reverse." Either way, this action dynamics traces not an ordinary but a polarized, inversive change of fortune, whose cutoff points mark ultimate existential opposites. They maximize, via extremity and reversal, the basic (open, minimally determined) "stability . . . stability" equivalence that is latent in (vi_4), even already in (i), and manifest in, say, Todorov et al.'s "equilibrium" at either cutoff: any state there can replace—under the pressure of the in-between action, hence of change—any earlier state. But Aristotle will not rest content with this. Instead, a limit of stable (mis)fortune veers round here in the actional process.

As such, the whole's termini themselves pair off on a new structural ground: "beginning" *versus* "end," across the intervening "middle" that turns the one's polar state into the other's, unhappily or happily, by necessary or probable causation. Their mirror-image analogy, as extremes of human life, thus frames the overall mobile chrono-logic, to the manifold reinforcement of the ideal narrative gestalt. Enclosure, connectivity, perceptibility, memorability, affective impact, all redouble once the tightest sequence joins forces with the closest symmetrical equivalence between the *extremes*, which now become so in a double sense: linear cutoff plus loaded contrast.

Importantly, the conceptualization of these two organizing forces, either as distinct in principle or as joined in the "whole," is mine. Aristotle himself never recognizes anything like suprasequential patterning; nor is it quite articulated vis-à-vis sequence by his heritage, from the Renaissance to narratology, including the examples below. The polarized extremes come into his account, not as ±happiness/±happiness parallel but, instead, as happiness-to-unhappiness process or the reverse. In other words, their very polarity falls under the dominant rubric of action logic—among the mimetic aids to well-made sequencing, as if part of the represented object—and without receiving particular notice even as such (*Poetics*, chap. 7).

Over two millennia after, history repeats itself, for better or worse, in Structuralist narratology. We thus encounter a refocus, varied but convergent, on the beginning/end interlinkage—long overdue and still absent in

most other approaches, particularly as concerns narrativity. Less welcome is the recurrent failure there to disentangle and/or dovetail the twin organizing mechanisms involved. An extensive genesis and comparative analysis would take us too far afield. Briefly, see how the pertinent work of Lévi-Strauss, Greimas, Todorov, and others is generalized by Culler (1975: 213) in his own Structuralist phase. Narrative

> is defined at its most elementary level as a four-term homology in which a temporal opposition (initial situation/final situation) is correlated with a thematic situation (inverted content/resolved content). . . . Those aspects of the movement from the initial situation to the final situation which help to produce a contrast between a problem and its solution are the components of the plot.

By now, this should look familiar enough, because everything turns on cutoff reversal, possibly reversal into the (un)happiness of old. Only, the beginning/end relation has grown more central and explicit than in the *Poetics*, so that the old difficulties come to the fore, with new twists. The quoted excerpt on this Structuralist "general principle" reveals the trouble in small compass, especially the mixed account of the beginning/end relation. Old or new, however, the problems again run both deep and wide, for they start at the definitional level, multiplying accordingly en route from narrativity to narrative and narrative texts.

What actually operates here on, or between, the narrative extremes is not "a general principle," as Culler (ibid.: 213, 222) thinks, but a juncture of two; and remarkably unequal two at that. They differ in generic distinctiveness and salience—hence "generality" itself—as well as in modus operandi. For the sake of clarity, let me use my earlier terms to identify them: mimetic joins forces here with discursive patterning, sequential with suprasequential closure, action-logical with analogical organization.[61] In short, "beginning → . . . → end" merges with "beginning∥end." Further, even if the organized "components" are all "of the plot," only the former ("→ . . . →") structuring "must organize" them *into* plot or "organize the plot" *as* an event line. The latter ("∥") organizes these same plot components, instead, by and into an equivalence pattern, which freely spans the plot: the "end" here circles back to the "beginning" as its mirror image. But then, the reference to "a [single] general principle" based on "plot" may again reflect the power exerted by mimesis, now on Structuralists, who disclaim it and anyway should know better.

Indeed, they apparently do know better, after a fashion. The quoted lines at times suggest a binarism at work, yet without clearly unpacking

61. On the interplay between these compositional antipoles, see, for instance, Sternberg 1981a.

it into the relevant forces. Thus, what exactly "is correlated" with what in the four-term homology? How to correlate the "temporal opposition" of the beginning and the ending with a "thematic situation (inverted content/ resolved content)" or "the opposition between an initial thematic situation or problem and a thematic conclusion or resolution" (ibid.: 93)? These alleged correlations cannot possibly bring together sequence and supra-sequence, action logic and analogy, respectively, because either correlate already mixes the two. "Temporal opposition" entails equivalence by way of contrast, pole against antipole, while the so-called "thematic" member bristles with sequential, temporal, even actional entailments: "inverted . . . resolved . . . initial . . . problem . . . conclusion . . . resolution." Nor do time/theme and form/content make (or reflect or replace) the correlates that are jointly operative here.

So the two principles joined together, yet distinct in theory from each other, as I indicated, are left hopelessly entangled. The pair have even suffered conflation into the one dominant and visible, mimetic force, under the rubric of "plot" or the like.

One can understand why the distinctness of the analogical aid (e.g., to closure) would elude a mimeticist, ancient or latter-day. There is nothing intrinsically world-like, still less anything narrative, and least of all, chrono-logical, about patterning by equivalence or analogy. Least of all, because it enjoys nothing like the irreversibility attached to any time sequence (unlike "A precedes B," if A parallels B, then B parallels A). Nor is it peculiar to any kind of unit or genre, such as events or narrative and, more generally, to (i)–(viii) as features of narrativity. On the contrary, all is grist that comes to the mill of patterning by equivalence.

Such patterning therefore constitutes a discoursivity-plus, not or not just a sequentiality-plus: a general aid to structuring, regardless of genre, level, element, semiotic code. It may freely draw into equivalence-based unity elements other than events, elements other than linear in medium time (e.g., space art), as well as in mimetic time (e.g., states, existents, anything describable), or elements outside objective reality altogether. Characters thereby integrate into doubles, say, pictures into visual networks, themes into variations, concepts into binarism, sentences into parallelism, sounds into meter or rhyme or assonance or counterpoint. (Recall Jakobson's allegedly verbal "poetic function.")

That the same multilevel, multiform principle co-organizes Aristotle's mimesis of action—specifically, opposes the beginning to the end in epic and drama—therefore presents just another instance among a mixed lot. Only, for once, this co-organizing force is liable to disappear here from view under, or into, the official and salient mimetic principle, as has in fact

happened. The beginning/ending contrast, inter alia, may well appear a part or pattern of the narrated reality itself, the very "plot" included. But if it were so, how could these (e.g., contrastive) relations equally manifest themselves in nonrepresentational forms and frameworks? Easy to miss within the resulting composite whole, equivalence yet remains both distinct in structuring principle from (vi_1)–(vi_5) and (vii), as from (i)–(iv), and open to further, multiform narrative implementations at all levels.

With this proviso, the twinned organizing logics have resurged in various quarters ever since. They loom largest in theories of tragedy and comedy, as narrative subgenres that are definitionally opposed by the direction of their movement toward unhappiness *or* happiness. The minimum narratives associated over literary history with either subgenre come and go—a fortiori the actual works grounded in them—yet the polarized endpoint persists and the overall trajectory with it. They enact not merely a change but a reversal of fortune. Among such minimum subgeneric narratives, Greek tragedy as a pivotal deed of horror committed within an intimate circle gives way to the medieval fall from greatness, yet both oppose comedy's eternal story of lovers in trouble that are happily united at last.

Nearer to home, the idea of cutoff equivalence, mimetic bias and all, variously reappears among Structuralist narratologists, probably under the influence of Propp as well as Jakobson. We needn't rehearse the "general principle" that Culler (1975) extrapolates from Todorov and the four-term homologists. But recall Prince's (1973: 31) tripartite "minimal story," where "the third event is the inverse of the first." This now sounds like yet another, direct echo of Aristotle, down to the thematic example "He was unhappy, then he met a woman, then, as a result, he was happy." Again, Propp (1968 [1928]) himself silently develops the Aristotelian "whole" into a sequence of thirty-one "functions," always beginning with misfortune (or lack) and closing with good fortune (or repair).[62] Another familiar, "whole"-like delimitation, this, of the event chain via existential opposites, except that the reversal shrinks (as does comedy's) from bi- to uni-directionality: it adheres, like the twenty-nine-fold "middle," to Propp's happiness-bound folktale corpus. Here another subgenre, then, encloses its chrono-logic between polar static ("situational") analogues.

Still, Bremond (1970: 247) goes so far as to widen the range to the entire genre—like his fellow Structuralists, except that he never despecifies the inherent pattern to suit. Bremond overreaches himself in generalizing his own revised Proppian model, symmetrical limits and all, into the common

---

62. He thus defines "a tale" as "any development proceeding from villainy ([function] A) or a lack (a), through intermediary functions to marriage (W*) or to other functions [in general, the liquidation of misfortune] employed as a dénouement" (ibid.: 92).

denominator of narrativity ("an outline applicable to all types of narrative"). Compare the recent adjustment for generality in Kafalenos (2006), as in various earlier Propp-like action models and cognitivist story grammars. Kafalenos abstracts ten "functions" from Propp's thirty-one and applies them beyond the folktale, too, yet in effect depolarizes the cutoffs, even below the threshold of visible analogy, positive or negative. The model's opening (with breach of stability) no longer exactly counterpoints the ending (with "success or failure"). This tips the Aristotelian structuring balance in favor of (con)sequential as against equivalence relations. Less cohesive and determinate, the storied minimum grows less restrictive, more accommodating to suit, though far from all-inclusive: the usual inverse proportion between the concept of narrativity's specificity and scope.

Compared with the unifying sequentiality-pluses (viii)–(ix), an assortment of other features more obviously extends beyond narrative and yet more widely enters into its definition. They include some of the very nonstarters I began with. Unpeculiar to the genre on their own, they nevertheless often count as extra must's that distinguish and restrict it further by its peculiar narrated object. Even language, apparently no more an object than a differential, but an all-purpose medium, alone enables some objectivities postulated as criterial, and so, given those postulates, itself turns (contingently) necessary.

   Thus, how else, if not through language, to represent inner life by way of quoting—direct, indirect, free indirect—so as to realize Cohn's (1978, 1999) thinking and Fludernik's (1996) best experiencing subject? Such interiorizing favors the novelistic practice of modernism and recalls its manifestos: Virginia Woolf's (1960 [1919]: 154) eloquent call for shifting the focus of value and interest from externals to "an ordinary mind on an ordinary day," or James's earlier compounding of the extraordinary mind with the extraordinary, unsettling occasion. In turn, this inside viewing through language entails and specifies a multiple point of view: not just the quotee's (thinker's, experiencer's) mental perspective but also that of the quoter, an omniscient mind-reader at that, and accordingly free to share the supernatural vantage point with us addressees vis-à-vis the unwitting and all too human minds quoted. From the narrative minimum upward, representing a subjective object thus entails language as an enabling condition and a distinctive perspectival interplay as a necessary concomitant.

   But then, most definitions of narrative/narrativity encountered in (i)–(ix) would regard both the interior object and its entailments as specialized, overrestrictive. Within their own, more inclusive limits, though, the entailment, or twofold condition, can occur on a wider scale yet. The verbal

medium then comes in to allow for the narrating speaker who is frequently demanded or assumed elsewhere—against Aristotle's epic/drama union as actional mimesis—or to offer the broadest possible range of mediacy, focalizing, voicing, transmission at large.

Examples abound, with assorted occasional variations. Scholes and Kellogg (1966: 240), with many others before as after, take for granted the entailment between language and narration. "By definition narrative art requires a story and a story-teller": they stipulate a nondramatic mode but also imply a definite semiotic medium whereby to perform the telling. How else, if not through words, can "the teller" encode "the tale"? And how else can Fludernik's yet wider, speech/thought range materialize? "*Viewing, experiencing, telling, reflecting,*" even agentive motive, "can only surface in specific anthropomorphic individuals" (Fludernik 1996: 355): hence also only in objects and/or subjects of linguistic discourse. Their implication of verbal discourse gets articulated in, say, Genette 1980: 30 on "a linguistic production undertaking to tell of one or several events"; or Smith 1980: 232 on "narrative discourse" as "verbal acts consisting of *someone telling someone else that something happened*"; or Bal 1985: 5 on a "*text*" being composed of "language signs" and a "*narrative text*" being one "in which an agent relates a narrative." The nonstarters of language and/or perspective thus come to play a definitional role in making for a subject-centered objectivism or joining it to the usual objective form of events.

Aristotle was the first to deny this role, in his medium-free concept of mimesis and with it of narrativity, as semiotic, hence cross-artistic rather than linguistic. Since the advent of narratology, his broad conception has gained more followers and parallels than ever. Examples other than myself would include Shklovsky (1990 [1929]), Metz (1974), Chatman (1978, 1990), Bordwell (1985), Steiner (1988), Branigan (1992), Yacobi (1995), Carroll (2001), Abbott (2002), Kafalenos (2006), or Ryan (2004, 2005) and Herman (2004) on "transmedial narratology." But this old-new widened range still falls well short of consensus, unlike the near-consensus about the likewise inherited representational definition of narrative/narrativity. "No narratologist would dispute the fact that narration is a cross-medial phenomenon" (Meister et al. 2005: xiii–xiv). Yet another misdescription, this, one more categorical and so stranger than most, since many obviously do or would dispute it in favor of verbal narrativity and narratology. As we have just seen, further, their dissent sometimes proves less (but only less) gratuitous than appears, better motivated than sheer linguistic bias or literary training or novel-centrism.

Lately, these medial stipulations have come under attack for excluding drama from narrativity, only to reappear in other problematic guises. Thus

Ansgar Nünning and Roy Sommers (2008: 337 ff.) oppose "diegetic" to "mimetic" narrativity:

> Mimetic narrativity could be defined as the representation of a temporal and/or causal sequence of events. . . . Diegetic narrativity, on the other hand, refers to verbal, as opposed to visual or performative, transmission of narrative content, to the representation of a speech act of telling a story by an agent called a narrator.

If "diegetic narrativity" consists in representing "a speech act of telling a story," then it logically presupposes "mimetic narrativity" as the extramedial domain of the story to be told. And not vice versa at that: a one-way dependency. How can a narrational subject help entailing a narrated object, to the loss of autonomous, parallel, contrastive existence and functioning? If no "mimetic" tale, then no "diegetic" telling.

Accordingly, the "mimetic" relates to the "diegetic," not as two independent "kinds of narrativity" (ibid.), but as whole and part, type and subtype, more and less general concept. "Mimetic" perforce includes "diegetic" narrativity, which merely adds narration or narrator to the constant, all-generic narrated object. The diegetic extra specifies the basic requirement of a tale ("temporal and/or causal sequence of events . . . story") into a "tale plus telling" variant, just as cinematic narrativity would specify a camera eye (and, in voice-over, may further specify another, audible telling of its own). Drama in turn does not so much combine the two narrativities as alternate between mimesis with and without (or with more and with less) diegetic narration.

But then, this is how the ancients defined epic itself. The line between these two subgenres therefore needs to be redrawn with care. Even according to their own lights, the new pro-dramatists had better restart by getting the generic priorities right—as Aristotle's mimesis-first did in its way—and tracing the subgeneric fork therefrom.[63]

Other all-discoursive features belong to any represented world. So they can immediately assimilate to the rest of the definitional narrated objects—from (i) upward—by way of added generic conditions bearing on the same world-like paradigm. Among them, three stand out:

(x) *Eventhood under a determinate ontology, especially fictional.* Unlike the mimesis-free (ix), any determinate ontology further specifies narrative representa-

---

63. For more on the relation between the narrativity of the told and of the speaking/viewing/hearing, see Sternberg 1985: 365–440, 1986, 1992: e.g. 530, 533, 2005, 2008a: esp. 41, 82 ff., 2009: 480 ff.; Yacobi 2000, 2002, 2004, 2007. See also note 59 above and 96 below. On why to avoid the mimesis/diegesis binarism itself, see Sternberg 1982a.

tion, newly constraining and confining it. Most often, this ontic require-ment of fictionality steals in unofficially, via the strong implications carried by other features.[64] Above all, it lurks in the reference to the author as cre-ator, inventor, omnipotent, omniscient—hence licensed fiction-maker of supernatural powers—and/or in the exclusive focus on "art" or "litera-ture" or the "novel."[65]

Such indirections at times betray wavering or inconsistency. Take Bruner (1991: 10): when reading "narratives," one "usually attributes them (following convention) to an omniscient narrator." Chatman (1990: 74–108, 119), having characterized the "implied author" as fictionist, defines "nar-rative as an invention, by an implied author, of events and characters and objects (the story) and of a modus (the discourse) by which these are com-municated." This looks like a deliberate reference of the entire genre to a freely creative author of its world as well as its telling.[66] Except that Chat-man neither reconciles nor replaces his inclusive definition of narrative as "existent plus event" (1978: 94, 67) with this ontology-limiting, in effect all-fictionalizing, concept. Nor does the equally cross-ontic "austere defi-nition," whereby "a narrative can purport to be either a fiction or a real account of events" (Amsterdam and Bruner 2000: 113), agree with the earlier fictionality-via-omniscience above. Which of the opposites is sup-posed to prevail, if any, remains in doubt.

As with wavering, so with slippage, which may betray itself even in formal generic typology as well as in passing reference. Like all theorists, Alan Palmer (2004: 5, 177) says, he has "a working definition of narrative," and "to make things easier" for readers, he wishes to spell it out: "Narra-tive fiction is, in essence, the presentation of fictional mental functioning." The definer's generic slippage—from "narrative" to "narrative fiction"—leaves us wondering again. Do the two terms indeed co-refer, as the pre-liminaries suggest? Is the (titular and now also defining) "fictional mind" interchangeable with, or at least paradigmatic of, the narrative mind? If not, why not? How do the two (terms, minds) really interrelate? And why has the one been replaced by the other in the very definition? What and who is the subject, in short?

Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan's *Narrative Fiction* (1983) does appear to

64. Or else just inadvertently. Even the title of my own first book (Sternberg 1978) lapsed into the automatism of "fiction," despite its narrative-wide range and argument.
65. On the traditional fallacy of package dealing narrative ontology (especially fact/fiction) with the (dis)privileges of the author or narrator or both, see Sternberg 2007, with earlier references.
66. More popularly, though as erroneously, fictional gets *divided* from historical narrative in terms of the author's omniscience, omnipotence, or most usual, both (as in Cohn 1999: 99). For details, see Sternberg 1985: 23–25, 58 ff., 2001b: esp. 199–203, 2007.

announce its subject formally as well as titularly. "By 'narrative fiction' I mean the narration of a succession of fictional events" (ibid.: 2). But not only is the definition circular, a nonstarter, as already indicated. We never learn what "narrative fiction" means, what explains its choice, and what the meaning plus choice imply for nonfictional narrative. Actually, the immediate sequel to that definition rather brings out narrative features shared across the ontic line: "*communication . . . verbal* nature . . . *succession of events*" and the like. It even proceeds to claim ontic affinity: a history is arguably as fictional as a novel and amenable to "some" of its analytic procedures. However, as such nonfictional "texts will also have characteristics specific to them, they are beyond the scope of this book" (ibid.: 2–3). But which "procedures" are co-applicable, and why? If the two narrative classes are equally fictional, as well as equally communicational and verbal and sequential, how can there possibly remain specific "characteristics" to keep one class outside "narrative fiction" and *Narrative Fiction*? The mystery only thickens.

Elsewhere, this ontic requirement finds unequivocal expression. According to David Lewis (1978: 39), the well-known possible-worlds philosopher, "A fiction is a story told by a storyteller on a particular occasion. . . . Different acts of storytelling, different fictions." Note that the equation here works both ways, so that the terms (fiction, story) officially coextend for once. Still, this doesn't yet resolve the ongoing question but compounds it in failing to explain either of the categorical (and erroneous) premises: why a fiction must be a story and why a story must be a fiction.

The same fictionalizing of the genre may come with an overt exclusionary antithesis to the factual. Doubly correlating ontology with typology—(non)fiction with (non)narrative—this renders the binarism more perceptible and vulnerable, yet does not necessarily motivate it, either. The question is then more visibly begged rather than answered. In Russian Formalism, witness Tomashevsky's (1965 [1925]: 68) emphasis that "plot" hinges on "artistic creation," not "real incidents"; or Bruner's (1986) truth-free story; or reconsider Fludernik's (1996: e.g., 38–40) virtual exclusion of historiography from the domain of "experientiality" and so of narrativity.

Inversely, postmodernist theorists like Hayden White (1989: 27) fictionalize historiography itself: "As for the notion of a 'true' story, this is virtually a contradiction in terms. *All* stories are fiction." Scholes (1982: 58) throws in (hi)storytelling that is less canonical and less well-formed, "including my dinnertime recital of the little events of my day." Recently, it has grown popular to say that we are all novelists. This is a matter of ideological fashion, doubtless, though one sympathetic account would rather trace it to the interdisciplinary ambitions of narrative theory: such

drives "have tended to conflate fictionality with a general notion of narrativity that encompasses nonfictional narrative" (Walsh 2007: 38). Whatever the reason, the conflating tendency promoted by White universalizes this imaginative ontology into narrativity by a category mistake. It brackets truth claim (persistent in history telling even at inventive, fiction-like gap-filling) and truth value (equally open to history-like fiction).[67]

Even on this mistaken ground, further, the ontic license would at best make a necessary but not sufficient condition of narrativity: everyone who equates "fiction" with "narrative"—as do, typically, most of those cited above—overlooks the co-availability of this license to fictionalize at the descriptive antipole. Nor will statistical correlations help: "Since the overwhelming majority of fictional texts are also narrative, the difference between these two terms is minimal" (Ryan 2008: 387). The quantitative hedging, "majority . . . minimal," only renders this claim somewhat less untenable than the absolute two-way equation in the quote from Lewis, Ryan's fellow possible-world theorist. Even so, her opening subordinate clause is doubly problematic. "The overwhelming majority" underrates the number and assortment of descriptive fictions (objects, people, spaces) in all forms of discourse, notably including the visual as well as the verbal media. Still more important, the converse is beyond doubt untrue— that the overwhelming majority of narrative texts is also fictional—and so therefore is Ryan's conclusion about the minimal difference between these two terms (Sternberg 1990b).[68] Indeed, Todorov (1971: 38) suggests "fiction" as "a generic term including both narrative and description": this all-fictional umbrella is even more overreaching and indiscriminate than the usual equations, but at least generically even-handed.

Finally, an influential minority reverses this fiction-privileging trend. For Labov (1972: 359–60), "narrative" deals with "a sequence of events which (it is inferred) actually occurred" in a subject's "past experience": a mirror image of the *de*historicizing "experientiality" sought by Fludernik decades later. Similarly, against the mainstream, even in cognitivist story analysis, Schank and Abelson (1995: 76) rule out "hypothetical" existence from storyness, because it has no "personal relevance" in a living context.

Aristotle himself wisely leaves the ontology of (epic, dramatic, "narrative") mimesis variable among fact, fiction, and tradition. "The poet," like all imitators, "must necessarily represent things . . . either as they were or are, or as they are said to be or to have been, or as they ought to be" (*Poetics*:

67. As argued in Sternberg 1985: 23–35 and accepted since by others in various disciplines. For another line of refutation, see Carroll 1990.
68. Nor does this conclusion accord with Ryan's (2005a: 345) own attack on the panfictional fallacy, which equates "narrative with fiction."

chap. 25). But his free variation among these possibilities hasn't escaped the later dominance of ontic reductionism (mixed with anachronism). Not only theorists (e.g., Boyd 2009: 369) but even classicists specializing in Aristotle have been misled by the current tendency to identify the literary and/or the narrative with the fictional. The desire to show Aristotle's continued relevance by updating him—instead of invoking him to challenge latter-day bias—has perhaps also been at work. J. L. Potts (1968) already simply retitled the *Poetics* into *Aristotle on the Art of Fiction*. Sic transit . . . .

The next two constraints imposed on the genre's representation as early and as centrally as the narrative minimum—whatever it's taken to be—are both again nonspecific to the genre, in truth, yet deemed necessary. Both are also more widespread still than the fictional requirement. One of them concerns modality, the other aspect. Though again neither peculiar nor integral to eventhood—hence to objective narrativity—they apparently look so self-evident, across disciplines as well as theories, as to go without saying, let alone motivating. But they do occasionally find expression:

(xi) *Eventhood categorical rather than modalized*. The rare antifictional claim brought above, "hypothetical, ergo nonstoried," serves to expose a dualism in the opposite, majority camp. They in effect reverse that negative claim in demanding fictionality, yet at the same time reintroduce that claim by disqualifying epistemic modality—any nuclear action/fiction short of absolute, history-like certitude. Possible worlds, yes, but no if's and maybe's about what reportedly transpires in them.

Thus David Lewis (1978: 40): "The story," just defined as fiction, "is told as known fact." Others spell out the requirement, whereby its dire consequences become more visible as well. "Narrativity" depends on the occurrence being "given as a fact (in a certain world) rather than a possibility or probability. The hallmark of narrative is assurance. It lives in certainty: this happened then that; this happened because of that" (Prince 1982: 149; cf. Steiner 1988: 9; Wolf 2004: 88). If the supposed rule were true, what would follow?

With such "assurance" joined to the ontic constraint (x), it would ensue that the fictional events, perforce modalized as imaginative ("hypothetical") suppose's, yet need to assume unqualified ("categorical") factuality within the fiction: above all, presumably, regarding the heart of the tale. "The king died" then alone qualifies, not "The king possibly (apparently, likely, reportedly, indubitably, . . .) died," or "may (must, cannot but, . . .) have died," or "died if he had eaten the cake," let alone the deontic "should die," and so forth.

The illustration from "this happened because of that," further, establishes that the alleged rule of fact-like certainty ("assurance") ranges from chronology to causality, which must accordingly be deterministic, not probabilistic. This isn't a technical issue, as it and the whole modal/categorical difference perhaps seems. Instead, the tacit constraint of deterministic (i.e., unqualified) enchainment for narrativity affects everything: from action to character to perspective to ideology to sense-making. With causality thus made simple and in effect transparent, on pain of uncertainty, the narrative becomes all too easy to understand, just as, on another level, the rule becomes easy to test and to dismiss. Once you think about it, the entire fiat proves to be out of this world, against the human condition of living, perceiving, experiencing, structuring, discoursing, responding in ignorance.

All this brings out the extent to which the demand for categorical eventhood lacks both empirical and, worse, psychological reality. So I have long been arguing, especially through a constructive and constructivist alternative, based on the Proteus Principle. The endless interplay between form and function builds uncertainty, permanent as well as temporary, into every encounter with discourse. We can never be sure how the two match in context, and ultimately reach at most a probable, "best" fit. Therefore, even apart from the variety of optional modalizing, discourse transactions are necessarily modalized as such, in the narrative process of gap-filling by trial and error, above all (e.g., Sternberg 2008a, with earlier references and debates). Here, I'll quickly generalize a few points, critical and constructive, with a direct bearing on narrativity.

Judged by the reality of discourse empirics, as just hinted, the demand for categorical eventhood ignores or forgets too much evidence to the contrary. Thus the repertoire of formal, verbal modalizers, illustrated in the qualifying choices open to "The king died" example and actually surfacing in all kinds, levels, magnitudes of narration. These range, for example, from a local "perhaps" to the novel-length scope of Calvino's titular conditional *If on a winter's night a traveler*.

Further counterevidence is as relativizing and widespread but more implicit, less on the surface, and accordingly eludes formalistic modal logic. It consists in modalized types of discourse, shorter or longer, autonomous or inset, with *or without* formal markers thrown in. Thus plans (associated with goal-driven narrative); or reconstructions (e.g., a detective's), iffy by nature and at most probable; or the contingencies of the law (in or out of the "if/then" form); or counterfactual ("Suppose . . .") history; or juxtaposed versions of happening, which rival, even mutually exclude, and so ambiguate one another out of certitude (as in Beckett, Fowles, or Kurosawa's *Rashômon*, or in a trial, or in any similar plot of repetition).

On a yet wider scale, modality as *qualified* representation is also built into perspectivity: the viewpoint of any speaker, narrator, reflector, self-communer, or any other mediator of the represented world. Each of them is always liable to mis- and/or dis-information, hence never quite trust-able, often suspect, falsified, in need of counterreading for adjustment to the real world or, in fiction, for alignment with the author behind the scenes. This tends to show most evidently in character mediacy, a drama-tized ("first-person," "homodiegetic") teller, say. So evidently as to make any statement to the contrary idiosyncratic, almost unbelievable today. "In fictional first-person narratives, the depiction of the fictional world is a constitutive act—whatever is said to exist thereby does exist" (Richard-son 2001: 172; also Alber et al. 2010: 125).[69] Instead, "first-person" narra-tors, and the narrated world with them, are most vulnerable to judgments of unreliability by inference. Such inference, then, again makes for work-length doubt: now about the two constructs at issue, the representer and the representation, the perspective and the plot, both kept short of cate-gorical factuality.[70]

However, modality goes still further and deeper than this rich, oft-actualized repertoire, because it attaches to how the (discursive and, above all, narrative) mind operates, processes, experiences in a state, and a fortiori a sequence, of partial knowledge. Inversely, the conception of unmodalized narrativity and narrative suffers not only from empirical holes but also from psychological unrealism. Like the demand in (iv) and (vi) for clear temporal relations along the sequence, at least the minimum sequence, this preconceived fiat betrays a desire to escape from the equivo-cal. It goes against the basic protean realities of discourse in transmis-sion and especially reception, as well as against the experience of certain modalized discourse parts (e.g., if's, maybe's, unlikely's) or kinds (e.g., scenarios, Rashomons, law codes) or viewpoints (fallible, suppressive, untruthful). Reading in the human condition entails a spectrum of possi-bilities, and often downright ambiguity, which narrative art has immemo-rially turned to account. How much more so with the reading *process*, as theorized and demonstrated throughout my work on it. I will return to this processuality in outlining my alternative to the age-old objectivist defini-tion. But directly and essentially related to our present concerns is the cast-ing of narrative as if-plot:

69. Even otherwise divergent views of world-creating, hence self-validating narration (e.g., Martinez-Bonati 1981; Culler 2004: 26–28; Sternberg 1985: 99–128, 2007: 689–705) agree that ordinary human characters, real or fictional, cannot perform it.
70. On (un)reliability as a perspectival mechanism of interpretation, always vying with other mechanisms, see Yacobi, e.g., 1981, 1987, 2000, 2001, 2005, now widely followed.

> Even when no modal operators surface in the language, or allow tidy nota-
> tion, our mind always can, and often cannot but, supply them in response to
> the uncertainties entailed by world-making as a process of sense-making under
> pressure: from human epistemic limits, (con)textual exigencies, artful licenses.
>
> The simplest, most categorical-looking representation ("A did B," "X hap-
> pened"), therefore, leaves why-when-where gaps, and unspoken forked futuri-
> ties that project ahead, for us to settle as best we can. . . . All, moreover, in
> keeping with my Proteus Principle, whereby the same function (e.g. modaliz-
> ing) lends itself to different forms (e.g. verbal *or* mental, explicit *or* implicit, uni-
> vocal *or* equivocal), as vice versa. And all along the line, narrative is the exem-
> plary case, because generically richest in the ends and means and interplays of
> troubled processuality.   (Sternberg 2008a: 35 and passim, with further argu-
> ments and references)

Inescapable and continuous, modality is a universal of discourse, nowhere
more salient, versatile, changeful than in the process of reading (hearing,
viewing) in sequence an event sequence. If narrative "lives in certainty,"
then narratives must all die or never come to life.

Against the same alleged rule of certainty, its very exemplar of his-
tory telling—factual discourse, as it were—rather compares with fiction's
modalizing. After all, faced with irreparably missing or conflicting evi-
dence, the earth-bound historian may even be driven to say in effect, "It
happened or it didn't happen"; the fictionist may choose to push the binary
either/or toward an impossible both/and, "It happened and it didn't hap-
pen," as some folktales actually open and as James's *The Turn of the Screw*
equivocates about the ghosts. Would you deny on this ground (with the
theoretical mainstream since Aristotle) the narrativity of the branching
history and the two-faced story, or of the respective definitional minimums
that underlie them in the respective ambiguous forms? In each case, all
it takes is a shared, ever-available resource, namely, a permanent gap,
experienced or invented, left by the (hi)storyteller for truth value or for
effect.

However, the modalizing-via-gapping needn't be carried to the limit
of the one narrative subgenre's polar forking or the other's contradictory
twinning. Think of lingering questions (e.g., what, how, why) other than
yes/no. In the human condition, again, even the chronology of events
sought or told by the historian is not always certain, and their chrono-logic
must be probabilistic, because inferred, rather than deterministic. If nar-
rative lives in certainty, then the fictional variety and its historical model
would alike have to assume the form of annals or chronicles, excluding
causal (hi)storytelling proper—necessarily modalized, at best likely—or
else take the consequences.

Even so, assuming that the *telling* would qualify within such outrageous limits, how to avoid the modality built into reading as progressive hypothesis construction by trial and error? Avoid it, that is, even when spared formal modalizers, modalizing discourse kinds, questionable speaking/ viewing/thinking perspectives? This unavoidable hypothesizing begins with the simplest minimum narrative, factual or fictional. Witness, for example, the ongoing, undecidable controversy about how "The king died and then the queen died" makes sense between chronology and chronologic. (On which more below.)

The alleged exemplary status of historiography as categorical telling, moreover, often includes the ontic and formal pastness of its reference. "When rendering a world whose attributes are 'pastness' and 'reality,' we lay claim to it as fully as we can to anything" (Partner 1986: 117), and some deem it a model for the rest of the genre. For Prince (1982: 172n4), indeed, "historical narrative," recounting "events from the past," explicitly counts as paradigmatic. Narrative at large, then, shares, or imitates, this orientation to the past and, on the discourse surface, the past tense.

For example, Labov (1972: 359–60) takes "narrative" to recapitulate "past experience" which "actually occurred." Suzanne Fleischman generalizes and formalizes this marker regardless of actuality. "Narration" offers "a verbal icon of experience" that

> is by definition "past" whether it occurred in some real world or not. Hypothetical or future experiences are also commonly narrated as if they were past, for this, I submit, is the only way one can *narrate*. The tenses appropriate . . . accordingly . . . include past time reference as part of their basic meaning.   (Fleischman 1990: 23–24)

Not many have so trenchantly insisted on the time/tense correlation, and fewer yet have so richly analyzed it. But what Fleischman implies here by her use of "narration" or "narrating" (rather than the umbrella "narrative") has elsewhere an overt counterpart in the linkage of the due generic temporal/tensed reference to the one who makes it, and so to the issue of point of view. Thus "the narrator" tells from "an *ex post* or hindsight position," with a view to informed selection and arrangement (Kvernbekk 2003: 273, after Carr 1986). Or language entails point of view and in turn (why? how?) "the recounting of a sequence of *past* events"; so discourses "that do not represent events retrospectively" fail to qualify (Ryan 2005b: 210). Or simply, narrative involves "*telling . . . that something happened*" (Smith 1980: 232; Phelan 2005: 217).

Again, what elsewhere comes to the fore is the antitheses and exclusions that result. Music has thus been denied narrativity on the ground that it

lacks the past tense (Abbate 1991; cf. Maus 2005: 467) or any tense system. Less expected denials rest on more complex, and questionable, oppositions in time and/or tense between discourse codes, forms, subgenres, oppositions that are perhaps most radicalized and multiplied by Scholes (1980).

Why should those event representations, which accordingly often count as narrative, suffer denarrativizing? Because they modalize the represented events out of history-like factuality, within or without fiction. As a fait accompli, the generic past stands opposed to the future, uncertain by nature: open, unrealized, hence also unknown, indeed humanly unknowable. So there is "no story of the future" (Mink 1970: 546). "To speak of events in the future tense is not to narrate them" but "to prophesy or predict or speculate." Appropriately, "science fiction novels are always told in the past tense" (Scholes 1980: 209–10).

Some also oppose pastness to the present, which has "contingency and even the possibility of sudden closure or cancellation built into it" (Sturgess 1992: 23–24; see also Abbott 2002: 32). Hence, for example, a reclassification of major semiotic systems, with drama totally excluded, because of its "presence in time and space" (Scholes 1980: 290; on cinematic time/tense, see Bordwell 2004: 212–17). For categorical narrativity, then, the telling would have to be retrospective, or at least simultaneous, not prospective.

In the bearing on the excluded future, however, *epistemic* intersects with *deontic* modality: events (im)possible to one's knowledge with events prescribed, prohibited, or permitted on someone's authority. The definitional core of narrative should allegedly avoid all prospection on acts yet to be performed, whether contingent maybe's (between will and won't) or mands (Do/Don't). Hence the mixed list of narratively undesirable prospectives in "recipes . . . advice, hypotheses, counterfactuals, and instructions" (Ryan 2007: 30). A recipe directs the addressee's activity, while "hypotheses" are a matter of certainty. The list thus conflates deontically and epistemically modalized utterances, as if they exerted a single force against narrativity. On the other hand, Fludernik (1996: 354–55) collocates the "hypothetical" fictive realm with lack of "specificity" as antinarrative. But the second minus actually involves besides (as does "recipes") a different parameter, aspectual rather than modal, and our last:

(xii) *One-off rather than deconcretized eventhood*. A matter of the "aspect" qualifying the time sequence, this last requirement has been as invariably assumed as the first and, where overt, more diversely put.

Like most of the previous definitional issues of narrative mimesis, it originates in the *Poetics*. "Poetry is something more philosophic and of graver

import than history" (*Poetics*: chap. 9). At the two extremes of this threefold range, "philosophy" deals with the general or universal (humanity at large, a type of event or character), "history" (i.e., chronicle) with the particular or singular (event, character). In between, "poetry" compounds the two extremes in that its particular or singular representation (e.g., of the Oedipus tale) looks to general models of event and character for its "probable or necessary sequence."

In subsequent approaches, causal (re)construction is no longer well understood, as seen in (vi), and narrativity often allegedly does without it, let alone its rationale of philosophy-like inference. The composite particularized generality or generalized particularity therefore flattens almost everywhere into Aristotle's sheer "historical" pole. So much so that the very heart of objectivist narrativity, change in the world itself (i.e., action dynamics, entailing causality), has been made conditional on history-like uniqueness (Ryan 2005b: 5–6). The dependency claim is easily enough refutable (e.g., "He made and lost three fortunes"), but its excess yet offers a measure of the overstrong, one-sided emphasis on the particular.[71]

In most versions of this focus, or imbalance, it has intrinsic definitional value across ontologies and terminologies. Here is a multi-disciplinary chorus:

> Narrative shies away from abstraction and thrives on concreteness, it concentrates on the particular and not the general . . . on tensed statements rather than untensed ones.   (Prince 1982: 149; cf., e.g., Steiner 1988: 8–10, 12; Ryan 1992: 386; Fludernik 1996: 354–55; Wolf 2003: 186; Herman 2009: 75 ff.)

> Narrative cannot be realized save through particular embodiment in a unique pattern of events over time.   (Bruner 1991: 6–7)

> Narratives . . . are distinctive [vis-à-vis other representations, e.g., character studies] in focusing on particulars in the particularity of their causal and temporal relations.   (Currie 2006: 309, 312; for a rare dissent, see Livingston 2009: 29–30.)

Concrete/abstract, particular/general, individualized/universalized, instance/rule, tensed/untensed, or elsewhere temporal/timeless: some vague, some dubious, all these pairings would oppose the narrated event, as unique in spacetime, to its extranarrative counterpart, habitual or recurrent.[72] "Concrete versus deconcretized" in my usage (Sternberg

---

71. More below. For how dynamics and concreteness interrelate within a larger set of "textual" features, see Sternberg 1978: esp. 23–34.

72. Not to be mixed up with "concreteness" or "specificity" or "particularity" as thorough (extensive, minute) representation, which few would demand of narrative, let alone narrativity. The exceptional case (Passmore 1987: 72–73) proves the rule.

1978: 23 ff.), or "singulative" versus "iterative," as Genette (1980: 114 ff.) calls them. Typological consequences supposedly follow: "As repetition relates narration to description, iterative events are excluded" (Yevseyev 2005: 116). One wonders what then becomes of the iterative, so frequent in narration, as of the singulative in description. Inversely, Ryan (2005b: 4, 5–6) demands "individual agents . . . and objects," since "there cannot be changes of state, and consequently history, without concrete [or 'individual'] entities that undergo metamorphoses." But this package-deals "concreteness" with dynamism, hence with narrativity as represented dynamics, and so exposes itself to conclusive refutation. What does the deconcretized statement "All past empires collapsed" represent, if not drastic "changes of state" iterated along history?

   Again, language-oriented analysts formalize the opposition in grammatical terms. According to Labov (1972: 361–62), for example, "Clauses containing *used to*, *would*, and the *general present* cannot support a narrative." For we must discount their reference to "general events that have occurred an indefinite number of times." Others generalize the aspectual difference into "punctual versus nonpunctual" and the like. By this wide consensus, narrative must in effect recount some "Once upon a time . . . ."[73]

But I don't think it must, or always does, and have so argued within a larger countertheory. Across representation, the three factors (x)–(xii) can go together in both their positive, allegedly genre-defining, and their negative, allegedly disqualifying, variants. *A categorical fictive description of a unique momentary state* would therefore best challenge the generic markedness (i.e., narrativity) and monopoly of (x)–(xii). Would narrative extend to any image, verbal or visual, that catches some imagined existent in a particular spacetime? Inversely, one may think, with statutory discourse. The law's event sequence not only gets enacted by the legislator in, and acts upon, real life, but also compounds epistemic (If . . . then) with deontic (Do/Don't) modality, futurity included, and governs a type of action (e.g., murder) for all time. So it apparently offers the paradigmatic antipole to narrativity by these criteria, validating them in the process. The appearances turn deceptive, though, and the negative showpiece of the law reverses into an exemplary test case: a symmetrical complement, as such, to the descriptive challenger instanced above (Sternberg 2008a on if-plots, with a case study in 1998: 471–638).

73. Along with humanity and agency, (x)–(xii) are most widely taken for granted as generic essentials. Truly minimal definitions like (i) therefore prove even rarer than appears from my earlier overview of them, and proportionally with the rest: more objective strings attach to narrativity, often unawares, than meet the eye.

5. Why Objectivism Must Fail and at What Price

But none of these objectivist conceptions of narrativity will pass muster, for reasons that cut across their diversity. They all fail several times over, often even in their own terms, as often already shown in passing on the way from (i) to (xii).

   The first of the paradigm-wide shortfalls is both the key problem and the major source of the rest:

(1) *How Two Make One: The generic whole reduced to a part*. All objectivist conceptions are fatally deficient as such, because of their partial frame of reference. Geared to the narrated sequence (eventhood, enchainment, experientiality) of the world-in-action, as the generic object, they officially refer narrativity to only one of the twinned sequences that constitute narrative, generally even according to the reductionists themselves.[74] This *two-make-one fallacy* is like defining a sign by its signified, exclusive of the signifier as correlative and manifest term. Worse, if anything, because in narrative, as in all discourse, even the correlation itself is not predetermined: rather than encoded in the language (or otherwise semiotic) system, which marries the signifying to the signified part, the match between narrative's two sequential parts (with the respective dynamic processes) hinges on their interplay in context.

   Or compare another present/absent twinship, involving an analogue that is yet closer in a way to objectivism's *single-track* definition of narrative, because it concerns language use rather than the language system. The polarity in theoretical practice also leaps to the eye accordingly. How would single-track defining, let alone analyzing, of narrative/narrativity—by appeal to the narrated sequence on its own—compare with that of figuration? It's like saying that a metaphor consists of two parts (e.g., "tenor" and "vehicle") and then proceeding to define it by reference to one of the terms alone. And which of the terms, moreover? The one that is absent—invisible on the discourse surface—and represented (as "tenor") by the other (as "vehicle"). The metaphorical component that is absent from the discourse is then alone present in the definition, and vice versa.

   The analogy would appear perfect, except that the likeness only heightens its actual contrastive force. No metaphor analyst would dream of per-

---

74. With the exception of those who carry the fallacy to its logical extreme by reducing narrative as well as narrativity to a single track, an event line in world time alone. They recognize only that event sequence as narrative, like Propp (discussed in Sternberg 1992: 485–98), or equalize movement with its mimesis, lived with represented experience (e.g., Ricoeur 1984, or various cognitivists surveyed in Sternberg 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2009, like Turner 1996).

602   Poetics Today 31:3

petrating the two-to-one, whole-to-part reduction that has become standard among narratologists.[75] To avoid the reductionist two-make-one fallacy, narratologists don't even have to reconceptualize narrative—the way I do, along with metaphor and other inferred patterns—as a construct that we readers make. They needn't agree, though I hope they will in time, that we always make narrative by assuming or inferring a distinctively narrative *relation* (e.g., chronology gapped for surprise) between the two sequential parts: a unique functional intersequence. All they would need to do would be to contrive some definition where those generically twinned parts would both somehow figure. As inevitably, since one of these twins is present, a given, as it were, and the other absent, and so perforce derivable from it—again, like the analogues in the sign or metaphor—the couple somehow need to figure there in these relational capacities. One can do, if only on pain of fallacy, a lot better, we will find, but that's the least one must do for sheer consistency, or for avoiding absurdity, at the very outset. And that least has been left conspicuously undone throughout the objectivist mainstream.[76]

Thus, having asked, "What are the necessary components—and those only—of narrative?" Chatman (1978: 19) answers that "each narrative has two parts": "story" (fabula, *histoire*) and "discourse" (sjuzhet, *discours*). But observe what next befalls these two independent yet correlated "necessary" sequences, each with its own time line and logic. Chatman proceeds to misequate "story" with "the content" (events, characters, setting) and "discourse" with "the expression" ("by which the content is communicated"), or "the what" and "the how" in narrative.

"The *histoire* is the what /and the *discours* is the how": so the science fictionist Ursula Le Guin (1980: 192) writes. Her French terms both allude to where the pair of misleading equations come from and, repeated by an outsider, testify to their currency. The "what/how" pair not only typifies Chatman's Structuralist mentors and their other followers (e.g., Prince 1987: 91; Herman 1999a: 223, 2002: 13, 211, 215; Ryan 2007: 34n25) but also echoes verbatim in assorted narrative theories (e.g., Hernadi 1980: 201; Phelan 1996: 216, 219; Palmer 2004: 10). A comparable binarism has been applied to tellability: "what makes a story worth telling" belongs to the realm of "plot" (fabula), while "how to tell a story well" belongs to "discourse," outside the tellable (Ryan 1991: 148–49; analyzed in Sternberg

75. On the possibly exceptional case of the "conceptual metaphor," popularized by cognitive linguists since Lakoff and Johnson (1980), see my counteranalysis in Sternberg 2009: esp. 514–16. On the crossing of narrative and metaphor, hence also of the respective paired components, see also Yacobi forthcoming.
76. As well as in the rarer, inversely single-track conception geared to the discourse or discourse sequence alone and exemplified among the nonstarters above (Sturgess 1992: 26).

2003b: 594 ff.). (To pursue our earlier analogy, they might also extend the binarism to figuration, e.g., metaphor, where the tenor would play "what" to the vehicle's "how.") This pairing now goes from bad to worse. The binary "content/expression" misnomers involve a misranking, whereby the original parity between the two component story/discourse sequences turns into a hierarchical polarity: the "story" comes to polarize with the "discourse" as generic matter versus manner, hence supposedly constant, even criterial *what* vs. variable *how*.

This incurs a non sequitur, no less insidious than invidious, because the so-called *how* is itself a sequence—complete with events, characters, setting, teleology—and this *how* sequence (sjuzhet, discourse) is as mandatory and omnipresent in narrative.[77] As mandatory and omnipresent, that is, as the *what* sequence, so to speak, or, by analogy, as the signifier within the sign and the vehicle within metaphor. In the absence of a *how* sequence, signifier, vehicle, the respective things—narrative, sign, figure—would disappear altogether, having become unrealized and so invisible, inexistent, even inconceivable: try imagining them regardless.

But don't the *how* sequence's instantiations vary from tale to tale? Yes, but so do those of the corresponding *what* sequence. And if the same *what* sequence (e.g., that underlying quest narrative or Franz Kafka's *The Castle*) can manifest itself in different *how* sequences (e.g., those viewpoints Kafka shifted between in the genesis), then the same *how* sequence (e.g., chronological, linguistic, omniscient) can manifest different *what* sequences (e.g., the Bible's grand history and Trollope's novelistic fiction). At the level of narrativity, both sequences must persist as general dynamics, freely specifiable and correlatable by narratives. In narratives, moreover, the "how" sequence even comes first, in more than one sense of priority, because it is alone given, so that the "what" sequence is willy-nilly (re)constructible from it, and ultimately from it alone, as well as inseparable. The "how" accordingly even subsumes the "what," which makes nonsense of the labels and should have precluded them.

A fundamental category mistake ensues, which in turn generates or reinforces anew the age-old objectivist conception of the genre—by appeal to the "storied" member, left uncorrelated and unreconstructible, yet somehow constant and unreduced and available in its whatness. No wonder that, of the two initial, equally "necessary" sequential "parts," the *what* alone remains thereafter: narrative fallaciously reduces to "existent plus event" (Chatman 1978: 94).

The wonder is rather that, in practice, Chatman nevertheless accords

---

77. Chatman (1999: 318) himself spells out the equal linearity as well as the necessity of the "two parts."

equal attention (witness his title, *Story and Discourse*) to the pair so incongruously thrown out of definitional equality, let alone unity. Ryan (1991: 148; cf. Sternberg 2003b: 594 ff.) would keep them apart altogether, even beyond the definition of narrativity: "Narrative poetics is traditionally divided into a poetics of discourse and a poetics of plot [i.e., fabula, or Chatman's 'story']." Few did or would (e.g., Bremond 1980 [1966]: 387) officially endorse such a divide, any more than they would uphold a poetics of the signifier apart from that of the signified or of the vehicle as opposed to the tenor (the way an extreme anti-referentialist like Jakobson associates poeticity with equivalence-ties among signifiers). Yet Ryan's bipartition does reflect a de facto truth about narratological performance as divided against itself. Some opt for "plot," more focus on "discourse," especially perspective, with a chasm in between, rather than a unified theory.[78]

Often, to compound the bipolarity, approaches will remain out of touch not only with those slanted otherwise but even with their own point of departure. Having defined narrative objectively, by its fabulaic "story" or "plot," they (e.g., Cohn 1999) shift focus to the other half, regardless, to discourse perspectivity, above all. Or, again, the focus may shift between the one and the other half. Thus, Phelan (2007) associates narrativity with two sequences, apparently analogous to mine, but we have seen in (vi$_2$) above, how his narrative "beginning-middle-end" can relate at will to the "textual" and/*or* the "readerly" one. An irreconcilable divergence, this, from the original concept's both/and. The more so because the option for the pure "readerly sequencing" incurs a "narrative" without narrativity (in the stipulated sense, or any other): having nothing to narrate, the text must accordingly change generic poles to description or argument.

A still more unbalanced and popular variant of the same divide between sequences issues from the Russian Formalists' value-laden opposition of (lifelike, automatized) *fabula* to (poetic, defamiliarized) *sjuzhet*. The bias, with the results, leap to the eye in Genette (1980: 30; 1988 [1983]: 14–15, 19). He typically defines "minimal narrative" by its narrated sequence ("one or several events," "an action or event, even a single event") yet concentrates on the narrational, discourse sequence and, moreover, privileges its deforming of the narrated event-chronology into anachrony (or uneven duration or focalized undertelling), hence supposedly into artistic worth. Defining feature located here, operative anchorage, notice, value there, with the separation carried to polarity.

So much so that the double standard carries over in Genette to the

---

78. An example would be the contrast drawn above between Ryan and Cohn or Fludernik. For more on this chronic divide and how to repair it through an integral account of "motivation," see Sternberg 1978: esp. 236 ff.; 1983b: esp. 172 ff.; 2005; see also notes 59, 63 above.

respective analytic concerns, including their very entitlement to the disciplinary name. Ryan's binary poetics sounds moderate by comparison. "There is room for two narratologies," Genette asserts, "one thematic in the broad sense (analysis of the story or the narrative content), the other formal or, rather, modal (analysis of narrative as a mode of 'representation' of stories, in contrast to nonnarrative modes like the dramatic)." But it seems to him "legitimate" to restrict "the term *narratology*" to the analysis of discourse mode, "since the sole specificity of narrative" lies there, "and not in its content" (Genette 1988 [1983]: 16). Sole specificity? Contrast his own iterated definition of "minimal narrative," three pages later, by its story-specific content, as "an action or an event" (ibid.: 18–19). Further, that contentual, objectivist definition is even reinforced here—and the contrast accordingly sharpens—in the absence of its rival: the linguistic telling posited by Genette earlier (e.g., 1980: 30) doesn't now figure as definitional alongside eventhood. To crown the incoherence, then, the genre's "specificity" itself wavers, now declared formal/modal, now contentual.[79] Not to mention the yet deeper absurdity of how Structuralist narratology regresses here to form or "mode" versus "content" binarism, against the very idea of structure as a network of differential part/whole relations.[80]

Reducing the defined genre to its objective part (narrativity as event nucleus) accordingly incurs multiple self-division. This divorce between the told and the telling sequence goes not only with that between the genre's single-track minimum and all its twofold manifestations, as always in objectivism, by the old-new paradigm's very (il)logic. It also goes with further theoretical incoherencies, now shared, now avoided by other objectivists. Thus the divorce between generic premise and analytic priority, between what happens and what matters or pleases, between represented

79. Therefore, the opposing accounts of Genette—a champion of the approach to narrative as "a mode of (verbal) representation" (Prince 1997) and of "story-oriented definitions of narrative and narrativity" (Nünning and Sommers 2008: 334)—are each right and wrong.
80. Though just illustrated from Structuralist narratology, this whole-to-part reduction typifies the variety of objectivisms since Aristotle. Only, sometimes it extends further or shifts elsewhere. One strange case involves the divorce, not of the told from the telling sequence, but of the language act (not even posited as sequential in the uttering or the happening) that allegedly defines *narrative* from the alleged double (or doublable) telling/told sequence of *narrativity*. This self-division-cum-reduction may sound too odd to imagine but, you'll recall, exactly materializes in Phelan's (e.g., 2005: 217) unequal sequencing of the respective concepts: "Narrative: In rhetorical terms, the act of somebody telling somebody else on a particular occasion for some purpose that something happened," as against "Narrativity: That which makes a text a narrative. The rhetorical approach identifies two aspects of narrativity, a textual and a readerly dynamics." The former echoes back to Smith's (1980: 232) definition of narrative as a verbal act; the latter to my own reconception of narrativity as a twofold dynamic play. But how can these run together? Not a representative split, this, particularly compared with that of Chatman et al. See also notes 59, 63, and 78 above, and note 98 below.

forms and discursive forces or functions, like the estrangement value privileged by Genette et al., as earlier, since Russian Formalism (Sternberg 2006). Check this rule against the variety of narrativity concepts in (i)–(xii) above, and you'll see for yourself that the two-sequence-but-one-definitional narratologies concerned must all fall apart, inescapably and irreparably; the question is only in how many ways or into how many pieces.

Moreover, being partial or one-sided, all objectivist approaches capture less and less of the twofold sequence on the way from the minimum of narrativity to the manifest narrative. The internal breaches within objectivism most ramify and deepen when it comes to the largest, necessarily (and indeed admittedly) two-track, semiotic, syncretic ("impure") whole presented by any finished work. What becomes of the all-discursive, non-narrative parts (e.g., medial, perspectival, thematic), let alone the anti-narrative parts (because spatial, i.e., descriptive, or even compositionally suprasequential, like analogy) incorporated there? How do these extra-generic parts relate, if at all, to the uniquely, definitionally generic ones—here, the objects existing and evolving on another level altogether? What tells such extras apart from their mates in extranarrative discourse, outside the genre? Even if the questions were raised, answering them would be inconceivable on the fallacious premise, whereby the genre's definitional and actual sequencing fail to match even in number (one vs. two). No line of continuity, much less advance, then possibly runs from narrativity to narrative discourse: from narrative in its narrativity to narrative in its textuality.

Divisive, single-track reduction thus foredooms the entire objectivist approach as basically misconceived. But it also has concomitants well worth observing, and not just to make doubly sure of its misconception. On scrutiny, they prove to be inescapable corollaries, or at least telltale symptoms of it, rather than just added weaknesses; as such, they newly bring out on a paradigm-wide front how deep the trouble of objectivist reductionism goes. Constructively, by the same token, they further help to point the way to a viable alternative, as well as to test and measure it.

(2) *Arbitrariness with Circularity*. All objectivist conceptions of narrative/narrativity are hopelessly arbitrary, incurring a circularity reminiscent of that for which theories of tragedy or comedy are notorious. With the difference that the circularity is endemic there and so unavoidable—in the absence of a common, or commonly agreed, generic hallmark—but gratuitous here, in narrative land, even on the definitional premise itself.

Why gratuitous? Because of the principled difference of narrative/nar-

rativity from sheer cultural artifacts like most discourse types and sub-groupings. These artifacts are found here, absent there—the way tragedy polarizes among cultures, Hellenic versus Hebraic, say—with boundless variation to suit. By contrast, narrative is a rare natural category, indispensable to the real-life existence and activity of humankind, with distinctive universal constants to match.[81] For a proper definition of narrative/narrativity, we must therefore look to that basic mental activity, not to any of the changing material objects it happens to work on or with.

Moreover, regarding narrative, the assorted circular definitions are also gratuitous by their own objectivist logic, in view of the wide agreement about (i) as key and bedrock. That is, a change (mobility, development) in the represented world always informs narrative, and narrative alone among genres or text types. And given the further agreement that an event must in turn involve change, why not settle for (i) as the genre's hallmark?

The answer that (i) is just not good (e.g., specific, differential, sharp) enough predictably lacks any ground. "An impression of a steady increase in precision emerges as we observe the formulas advanced by narratologists over the years—from a view of narrative as based on single events (*I walk*) to notions hinging on two events or more, or non-contradictory events, or temporal succession, sequence, causality, change, human agency, and so on" (Tammi 2006: 22). This steady progress, from one event to two and so on, doesn't hold in theory, any more than it happened in fact "over the years." (Nor does the list even mark an ascending order all along.) Quite the reverse, as already explained,[82] but the principle involved is worth developing vis-à-vis the actual analytic practice.

In Russian Formalism, consider how the set of terms progressively defined by Tomashevsky (1965 [1925]: 69–70) never lead him to the obvious conclusion about this definitional minimum of narrativity. If a "*situation*" is an "interrelationship" among existents "at any given moment," and if "a story [*fabula*] may be thought of as a journey from one situation to another," and if "*dynamic motifs*" operate to "change the situation"—that is, to effect the journey—then why wouldn't one such motif be enough

---

81. Operationally, as I will argue, the natural universality informs the three master dynamics of narrative, prospective, retrospective, recognitive, which generate suspense, curiosity, and surprise, respectively. This naturalness, ultimately grounded in the ongoing survival value of observing, plotting, telling, foretelling, inferring event lines, is worth contrasting with Pratt's (1977) or Fludernik's (1996) "'natural' as conversational narrative/narratology," where "nature" is itself already culture-bound. As with the positive, so a fortiori with the negative usages of "natural" (or of "mimetic," in the sense of "realistic"). This negation shows among antinarrativists and zealots for "unnatural," "literary," or postmodern narratology, as exemplified above from, say, Alber et al. 2010.

82. For example, the various descents and/or ascents from Aristotle's original threefold wholeness over the last decades, as shown in (vi$_3$) above.

for a story? Doesn't this sufficiency follow logically from the chain of definitions? Instead, Tomashevsky not only designates the force for situation change as "dynamic motifs," in the plural, but also encodes that plurality by requiring them to form a causal "story line" or "sequence of events" (ibid.: 66). One dynamic motif isn't enough for dynamics, as it were, nor one event for eventhood, nor their coincidence for narrativity.

This non sequitur accordingly invites generalization to a host of later approaches. Given (i) as a near-consensual distinctive feature, necessary and uniquely so, why doesn't it suffice? Why stipulate any *particular* change for narrativity, beyond the minimum of one world-changing event? Why limit the generic range to some circle of event change-plus members?

You would expect an answer to such basic and pressing questions—with an equally principled reason—but you'll find none given, or worse than none. Aristotle's reason-giving (in terms of unity, magnitude, recall, pleasure, generality) to the different aspects of his "whole" (vi_1–vi_5, ix) has seldom been followed, let alone surpassed. The various pluses specified in objectivism as definitional—events humanized, actionalized, multiplied, organized, chrono-logized, intentionalized, interiorized, experientialized, problematized, fictionalized, and so forth—all remain essentially unmotivated, born of critical rather than generic fiat. Their rationale only weakens as the demands mount and the privileged circle of narrativity/narrative keeps narrowing to suit. It further worsens in the few actual references to the question.

Recall, for example, the equation of a one-event text with eventlessness or changelessness (Steiner 1988: 13, Fludernik 1996: 323) as a supposed ground for its insufficiency. But how does plus turn into minus, the dynamic into the static? By Fludernik's own definition, moreover, wouldn't a single event like "His pain found relief" mark a change in terms of her own "experientiality"? The weak ground implicit in the equation therefore only underlines the oddity of ruling out the one-event minimum. This oddity joins with the usual silence on reasons to suggest a (pre)conceptual arbitrariness: nothing in theory, it would appear, motivates the assorted event-plus demands.

As one rises above (i), the circularities entail in turn the genre's increasing shrinkage and, conversely, exclusiveness: the more ascending (numerous, diverse, specific) the requirements, the lesser the approved range. This inverse proportion ensues so obviously that we needn't list it separately; nor need we spell out how it ever more impoverishes and depopulates narrative. Just a few reminders.

On Aristotle's model of wholeness, the demand for continuous enchainment alone would rule out entire subgenres as "episodic," like the chronicle,

the knight-errant romance, the family saga, the picaresque, the TV series, the (auto)biography, the diary, the social panorama, the stream of consciousness novel, the nouveau roman. Nor would chains that are permanently gapped anywhere (and so ambiguated) qualify, either. The stable ending would exclude all unresolved tales to boot, even if otherwise duly enchained. And among the resolved narratives themselves, outsidership would still befall candidates other than likely, unilinear, agency-centered, polarized between extremes of fortune . . . . The consequences for narrative and narrative inquiry as we know them are evidently staggering, yet latecomers keep raising the threshold. Literary narratologists giving rein to the bad good old novel-centrism, cognitivists fixed on agentive goal-directedness, linguists blind to discourse codes and semiotics, some prejudices shared, others thrown in from various quarters grinding their own axes: among the lot, the narrative field shrinks apace, almost to the vanishing point. Out with all natural processes, because nonhuman; out with history telling, as with our daily factual storytelling, because nonimaginative—a mere record of events—or nonexperiential; out with mind-telling—though it is the forte of fiction, even its putative signpost, and the focus of modernism's inward turn—because nonpurposive; out with fiction itself, because "hypothetical" events offer no interest in living context; out with drama, because nonnarrated, and with it all nonlinguistic, hence voiceless, action encoding;[83] out with all nonsingulative, or nonretrospective, or noncategorical as well as all (basically) ambiguous discourse, and a fortiori if the negatives combine; so out with the law code, because its statutes tell a story omnitemporal and multiply modalized, being future-oriented and conditional and deontic, rather than one-off and categorical.

Even so, as will emerge in (3) below, while the respective circles rule out undesirables with a genuine claim to narrativity and membership, they are too weak to keep out a host of genuine outsiders, extrageneric by all common standards, notably objectivism's own.

But then, (i) itself, though the most accommodating and reasonable-seeming of definitions, shares this last family weakness, and in an aggravated form too. Exactly because its one-event representation demands least for narrativity, it can least rule out false pretenders to narrative (e.g., a description or an argument with a passing reference to an event) and stands out as the least discriminating, most overinclusive concept of all. Its very uttermost minimalism proves at best double-edged, if not self-defeating, in other regards too.

83. Contrast Bordwell 1985, devoted to "narration" in the allegedly narratorless "fiction film."

Thus, dispensing with criterial extras, so as to leave the single-event minimum (i) unreinforced and the membership unrestricted by fiat, would only confront objectivism with the inverse problem. On (i)'s premise, if one world-changing event suffices for narrativity, how to explain why finished narratives humanize, actionalize, multiply, organize, concatenate (and so forth) their events? Are all such actual change-pluses unrelated to narrativity? And since few actual narratives make do with one event, the (i) conception has most (i.e., most actual pluses beyond its minimum narrativity) to explain. Further, why do some (works, authors, subgenres, traditions) opt for this plus or complex of pluses, some for that, some for a lower and some for a higher rise above the minimum? Another arbitrary choice, this time imputed to narrative practitioners? Another split of the generic field into an assortment of more or less narrow circles, each drawn according to its own preconception of narrative in its textuality, even if not in its narrativity, and a fortiori in both? For that matter, why represent events at all, down to a single one? Why not draw a portrait, say, or argue a thesis instead of enacting it?

The questions remain unanswered—indeed even unposed—and not only unanswered but unanswerable in this framework. They resist settlement not only on the ground of (i) but also on its common paradigmatic ground with (ii)–(xii). As a representational definition, (i)'s inadequacy is representative of its fellows.

No sense of the narrative system, least of all in its narrativity, as a force unifying and ramifiable at once, sui generis. Throughout, the trouble is again both inevitable and unresolvable by objectivist logic, which essentially has no reference to why's and no answers to why-queries: no explanatory power whatever. (Indeed, this in turn compromises its descriptive adequacy: there is no typology without teleology.) The explanation for the variables of the narrated event-line, as well as for the underlying constant, must reside in the interplay with the twinned communicative sequence, which is here divorced from narrativity. With the sequential twinship broken and the genre's mimesis out of reference to the poesis, all the why's on all levels have nowhere to look for an answer, the definitional postulate and the differential practices nowhere to turn for their motivation—except by ad hoc, inconsistent cross references between the two dynamics. And if anything, a single-event minimum narrativity, precisely because it encompasses more of the narrative field than any other objectivist concept and matches fewer actual instances, also leaves more of (and about) narrative unexplained, failing a discourse twin.

Therefore, the arbitrariness-cum-circularity not only joins negative forces with the self-division-cum-reduction of (1) but ultimately traces back

to it. The two-make-one fallacy strikes again. In turn, further shortfalls and penalties ensue:

(3) *What's What? In and/or out?* All objectivist definitions lack a generic cutting edge. By their logic, the very presence of any represented object deemed criterial (from a single event upward) would qualify a text as narrative, regardless of its evident (e.g., cumulative, patterned, felt) overall descriptivity or expositoriness. Such local presence is a common thing in discourse, and so would be the discourse's absurd generic (re)grouping as narrative on the strength of an isolated or incidental defining element.

The absurdity would equal the inverse (re)grouping of narrative as non-narrative on such a flimsy ground. Analysts at times reluctantly admit "that there are many elements other than narrative ones in a narrative text (e.g., pathos, philosophical force, psychological insight)" (Prince 1997). But they do not proceed to explain how those "other" elements, whether widely shared (e.g., medial, cross-generic) or strictly alien (e.g., descriptive, expository), relate, let alone assimilate to the "narrative text." How would an objectivist (or anyone else equipped with a typological marker) handle the objective coexistence of, and with, such nonnarrative others? Still, whatever their fortunes, at least the "narrative text" then remains a narrative text. However, what if text and element change roles? Fewer narratologists yet admit, much less integrate, this converse otherness— that (i)–(xii) abound in small compass outside narrative—not even when directly challenged by opponents. "Almost all verbal utterance" is "laced with minimal narratives," Smith (1980: 228) observes; and so, it follows, the entire lot would objectively count as narrative along with the minimum eventhood (by some definition) embedded in it. *Pars pro toto*, as it were, by logical extension. After all, the whole discourse concerned meets, in and through its part, the alleged requirements for narrative/narrativity.

Even if Smith exaggerates, her statement and its consequence do widely apply. Familiar examples would be a character sketch interspersed with passing biographical retrospects on the character's life, or an argument pointed or enlivened by an anecdote. Given the form of eventhood required, you can't pick and choose among manifestations of that form, all being objective tokens of the same type. A marker is a marker, however wide of the (here, narrative) mark. Antipolar genres, or text types, would then flock together on the ground marked out by some composite of (i)–(xii).

Worse for (i)–(xii), if possible, the inverse to such conflation of narrative with nonnarrative outsiders will also ensue. Texts based throughout (not just locally drawing) on eventhood of another form, less elaborate or just

different than the posited concept or composite, would suffer exclusion from this multigenre mishmash, as well as a priori from narrative itself. And having been excluded, what would become of them? Would each allegedly ill-formed type of eventhood "count as a defective specimen, a poor relation, a member of another event-based family, a homeless alien, no matter how numerous and effective its instances?" (Sternberg 2003b: 585).

All these escape routes materialize. Sometimes, for example, the misfits get consigned to a pigeonhole outside (or an umbrella above) the genre. Such out-groups include "annals," "chronicle," "report," "action [or event] description," "process statement," "metaphor," "pre-narrative," nonnarrative (because, e.g., noncausal) "story" (or, in cognitivism, vice versa), nonnarrative (because narratorless) "drama" or "film"—as if a different habitation and name could erase the peculiar family resemblance among event-driven variants. It remains unerasable since the favored "narrative" member among those variants remains not only event-driven but even defined by it. In other words, given their peculiar common denominator of eventhood, hence world dynamics, the question of their identity amid variance is then merely pushed one level up: there, they nevertheless group together as subgenres of the same distinctive kinetic genre, regardless of label.

No play with words can hide or replace whatever co- and sub-grouping follows from the objective definition involved. Which perhaps explains the appeal of other escape routes. Most often, whatever doesn't suit is conveniently forgotten. So, in exclusion, the undesirables fall between vacuous label and populous limbo, nominal otherness and sheer nothingness.

(4) *Mixed Gradations*. As regards taxonomic power, then, defining narrative and classifying texts by the presence or absence of a certain event form thus incurs, inter alia, two symmetrical disabilities: outsiders to world dynamism in and insiders out, under- and over-discriminateness, adding up to indiscriminateness. The worst of possible worlds for a definition, with the related typology.

Acknowledging the trouble while evading a response to it, Carroll (2001: 21–22) thus refuses to "speculate on what proportion of narrative connectives a narrative must possess or what degree of salience" they "must exhibit for a large-scale discourse to be called a narrative." However, the language of "proportion" used here in refusal does suggest a possible line of response, one increasingly taken by others. They attempt to meet these taxonomic problems by postulating *degrees of narrativity*. Given such degrees, a nonnarrative text with a passing reference to an event would quantita-

tively differ from a narrative proper based on this eventhood, as it were, and narratives based on different event forms might likewise differ in narrativity value without forfeiting their claim to it.

A move in the right direction, it would appear, to judge by the only true measure: felt, or reliably documented, effect. In the plainest language, some discourses read (i.e., have shown themselves readable) as more narrative than others, and we can all think of examples from our own experience and expertise. But how to account for the demonstrable, at times widely shared, effect of more and less? The hopelessness of the usual comparative and explanatory scalar attempts is as provable as the scalar effect that eludes their formalisms. Understanding why the two—form and effect of more/less—have kept out of touch can also point the way to the necessary alignment, via the paradigm shift argued in the next section.

These attempts at quantifying never succeed, and not just because they share the other ills of objectivism. Viable gradation depends on the application of a homogeneous and motivated criterion on the whole generic front—which will accordingly range itself gradatim from less to more, from least to halfway to most. But no such criterion has been found, or can be found, along the existing objectivist lines.

As shown in the above overview, the criteria postulated for narrativity (e.g., eventhood, humanity, enchainment, closure, planning, categorical-ness, experientiality) are obviously just too heterogeneous and autonomous to reduce to any single gradable feature-cum-range. Indeed, (i)–(xii) form an ascending order, but one of miscellaneous accumulation rather than uniform progression of demands, let alone one of narrativity itself. Overall homogeneity, and with it discriminate inclusiveness, must elude the would-be quantifier. A pity, let me emphasize, because such homogeneity, if achievable, would help.[84]

But nor can any of the assorted criteria be applied on its own without recoiling beyond a certain degree. Pick whichever criterion you like, and you'll see how other ("nonhomogeneous") variables must sooner or later intervene to complicate or even reverse the grading.

Suppose you grade narrativity, as Sturgess (1992: 7–9, 15–18) does, by the number of events narrated: sequence extension or length, Aristotle's desirable "magnitude." Yes, as we go from "The king died" to "The king died and then the queen died" to "The king died and then the queen died and then chaos broke out," narrativity arguably rises to match. Beyond a certain point, however, the multiplicity inevitably turns into a liability, the

84. It therefore hardly makes sense to dismiss the idea of scaling without trial or reason, like Carroll (2001: 21–22, 33–34).

quantitative more into a perceptual less: too much of a good thing. Too many events, as Aristotle already realized, would put an impossible burden on our memory, to the detriment of the work's coherence and effect. Also, if we isolate this factor of extension, shorter generic kinds would become narratively inferior a priori to longer ones, regardless. Nor could we isolate its working and quantifying even if we tried. Sequentiality-plus forces that bear on length itself (e.g., enchainment as an aid to memory, hence extendibility) would enter to relativize or polarize the grading in un(ac)countable ways.

Or consider measuring degrees of narrativity by the tightness (likelihood, followability) of the event chain. This criterion might work in theory, as the range modulates from the nonlinkage or non sequitur of the impossible enchainment, through the looseness of the possible, to the firmness of the probable; but thereafter probability would gradually approach necessity, and with it redundancy, which militates *against* narrativity, in inverse fashion to the outrageous rupture exhibited by the impossible "a → b" sequence at the opposite pole. Along this spectrum, the self-evident "He ate and therefore digested" makes a narrative even poorer than the antipolar (yet surprising, intriguing) self-contradiction "He ate and therefore went hungry," relative to the gradations in between.

Wherever you turn, whatever you postulate to quantify narrativity, the same measure cuts both ways, for and against the chosen property, because subject to the law of diminishing returns, then self-defeating returns. How, then, to draw a lower and an upper limit along a one-value hierarchy?

Indeed, as if in response to this pressure, would-be gradationists mix and shift objective criteria, at best to the loss of consistency, and yet to no avail. The assortment may even creep in against the scale-maker's intention. Giora and Shen (1994) thus correlate degrees of narrativity with three different "organizational principles" that allegedly form a univalent (homogeneous) ascending order. Their scale advances from the minimum of Temporality, through the intermediate Causality, to the upper limit of (goal-oriented, problem-solving) Action Structure, our (iv), (vi₁), and (vii), respectively. Such gradual advance, the authors claim, rises from the least to the midway to the most "prototypical" narrative. To their credit, they aspire to a steady threefold progression by one standard—the "degree" or "amount" of connectivity.[85] But the gradations never really modulate into one another along any single range, because the graders unknowingly both *mix and shift* operative criteria.

85. As Fludernik (1996) would grade by "experientiality," to similar mixed effect in practice: see note 87.

The *mixture* reveals itself in the silent, illicit attachment of closure (our [vi$_4$]), with extra connectivity, to Action Structure and to it alone: the agent's Attempt at solving the Problem there leads to an Outcome. (As is the rule in cognitivist story analysis: see Sternberg 2003b: 519 ff.) But Action Structure hardly enjoys an exclusive claim to a resolved end, nor any guarantee against open-endedness. We have seen the closure given to an episodic time sequence (e.g., the hero's death, the war's end) and, insistently, to the enchained "whole" (likely reversal of fortune). Both stable endpoints can even range between (e.g., Aristotelian, neoclassical, cognitivist) positive and (e.g., modernist) negative value as well. Inversely, of course, an Action Structure may be left unresolved, for better or worse, again parallel to Temporality and Causality. So an autonomous variable of integration, available to all three "principles" in either its open-ended or its closed form, gratuitously turns in Giora and Shen (1994) into an extra integrating resource and monopoly of the last, "highest" one.

The *shift* reveals itself at the same high point. According to Giora and Shen (ibid.: 450–51), just as Causality outdoes Temporality in linkage, so Action Structure outlinks Causality in turn: it "connects not only adjacent events" (like its two inferiors) "but also events that are remote from each other" along the given discourse sequence. Actually, I would argue, all three principles share this power to link nonadjacent items. In processing a narrative, we constantly reconstruct distributed events, however far removed on the sequence we encounter, into their Temporal or Causal, chronological or chrono-logical, order of happening.

Any surprise ending illustrates such reconstruction of the nonsequent into continuity ("connectivity") across distance. Take Forster's (1962 [1927]: 87) second minimal "plot": "The queen died, no one knew why, until it was discovered that it was through grief at the death of the king." Whether taken as problem-solving (Action Structure) *or* otherwise (Causality), the linkages made or newly made in reshuffling and the distances they bridge remain the same. As befits a mystery, the given narrative end doesn't just reposition itself as the narrated beginning, with the other events shifting places accordingly. They all interconnect along a chrono-logic that is newly energized by the discovery, whatever the (non)adjacency of their positions in the telling before and/or in current retrospective understanding. "The king died, then the queen grieved, then she died, but no one knew why, until the grievous cause was discovered."

Like the option for or against closure, then, so with that between immediate and long-distance connectivity: it is equally given in principle to all three event arrangements, rather than being a monopoly, far less an invariant, of the allegedly topmost, Action Structural narrativity.

Again, a resource co-available means a range ungradable by its presence or absence. No difference for the better here. *If* Action Structure involves any advance at all, it must be on some other scale than connectivity, and so at the expense of consistent univalent gradation, because the reference point must shift with the scale. Thus, first a rise in the event line's *tightness*, from chronology to the chrono-logic shared by the other two patterns, and then a wordless rise in *semantic markedness*, from chrono-logic at large to a favored, "quest" teleo-logic.

So this betrays a shift of narrativity gauges as well as a mixture (like that with closure). But the threefold hierarchy also suffers, as typically, from the inverse weakness. It oversimplifies by failing to mix and substitute a host of relevant (even inescapable) criteria, which would multiply complicate, if not disable, the grading of narrativity.

Reconsider this tripartition on its own erroneous, connective scalar premise. Why keep out omnipresent variables that may affect the tripartite connectivity scale to the point of reversal? Thus left out is the variable of magnitude, whereby an overlong quest Action Structure will overstrain memory and by degrees weaken, eventually elude, interlinkage, to the loss of narrativity; or causal likelihood, which at its highest incurs redundancy, to the same damaging effect; or equivalence structure, whose network of analogies can make up, in connectivity itself, for a chronology's sequential looseness.

More evidently excluded here are lower criteria for narrativity, such as (i)–(iii), with the corpora answering to them. Why rule them out, or inversely, why begin the admission and the ranking as high as Temporality, that is, the event series of (iv)? Again, no apparent answer or even reference to the problem.

The arbitrariness that we have found to inhere in the paradigm of objectivist definitions as such now extends to quantification—and to its very premise, at that. What motivates the correlation of the three "principles" with ascending degrees of narrativity in the first instance, as though connectivity were a generic universal of measurement? It demonstrably isn't, to judge from both narrative practice and theory, as indicated by our overview of (i)–(xii). (If anything, Hayden White frowns on the overconnectedness of "narrative" history relative to annals and chronicle.) So why rank cognitivism's favorite problem-solving above Aristotle's favorite enchainment, which in turn allegedly outranks Benjamin's (say), and the Bible's, favorite causeless parataxis—or vice versa—instead of relativizing the three connections to context?

At the alleged polar extremes themselves, does Action Structure always

outrank Temporality? Intuitively, Julius Caesar's terse and elliptic and rhyming chronology of his victorious battle, *veni, vidi, vici*, claims a higher narrativity (and, for good measure, poeticity) than any ordinary well-formed problem solving. The turn that this series miniatures in the course of a fateful civil war—at stake is the Roman way and world together—profitably dispenses with how's and why's. Kept short and unadorned, the three verbs encapsulate the swiftness of his triumph over this and, by implication, any future enemy. The rhyming equivalence adds a sense of irresistible power, as if, for Caesar, arriving and/or seeing equal triumphing. The Senate of Rome, his unfriendly addressees, would be quick to take the point.

The miscellany yet redoubles, and with it the unworkability, in Ryan (2007: 28–31).[86] She yokes together no fewer than four criterial "dimensions," most of which branch out further, namely: Spatial (a world populated by individuals), Temporal (time frame, change, nonhabituality), Mental (intelligent agents, purposeful actions), Formal and Pragmatic (enchainment, closure, factuality, meaningfulness). The four aspects, and generally their branches, are little related to one another. Far less do their relations amount to (e.g., whole/part) entailment, so as to form a scale on which each entailer outranks (because it subsumes) the respective entailed aspect(s) or feature(s). The four aspects are also said to vary (in necessity, sufficiency, or both) among readers, whereby readerly subjectivity both compounds with the difficulties already illustrated and requires an open-ended manifold of criteria (or "dimensions") to suit the endlessly variable narrativity judgments. Yet "degree of narrativity depends on how many of the conditions are fulfilled" (ibid.: 30).

   This last claim (and its likes) is an obvious non sequitur, and its implementation would accordingly multiply quarrels among narrativity scales as well as scalers. How else, considering the numerous, even opposed, sets of criteria and orders of priority that result? Not to mention again scalar features (e.g., connectivity, here as above) that range between positive and negative value, depending on the scale(r). As obviously, moreover, the sheer number of criterial features exhibited ("how many") cannot quantify "degree of narrativity," because some criteria (e.g., change) outweigh others (e.g., closure, a fortiori the generically nondistinctive factuality, meaningfulness, world of individuals, all sharable by description). For the ultimate inconsistence, perhaps in the face of these holes, observe

---

86. Cf. also the variants in Steiner 1988: 2, 9 ff.; Wolf 2003, 2004.

the sudden reversal of ground from numerous scales and numerical deci-
sion toward unanimity about fundamentals: people "basically agree about
what requirements are relevant to narrativity and about their importance
relative to each other" (ibid.: 30). So the breaches in the rationale and
the implementation of the criteria grow even more assorted, glaring, dis-
abling than encountered thus far. To this proposal and its likes, you need
only apply the objection Ryan herself directs, a few pages earlier, against
"unsystematic" typologies, which "arbitrarily" mix criteria (ibid.: 26–27).[87]

Even less felicitous is the mixture and shift not only of scalar criteria but
also of definitional logics—between quantitative and qualitative, scaling
and partitioning. You would think the logics were both unmistakable and
unmixable, yet they are proof against neither confusion.

Having posed the question, "Is narrativity a matter of kind, or of
degree?" Brian McHale (2001: 165) thus finds no convincing argument for
either approach. Instead, he tentatively proposes a third concept, "weak
narrativity," exemplified by Lyn Hejinian's *Oxata*. On scrutiny, though, it
proves to be just another, double-edged low quantity. It even sounds like
a variant of the "weak plot" often attributed to the picaresque or mod-
ernist novel. "Weak narrativity involves, precisely, telling stories 'poorly,'
distractedly, with much irrelevance and indeterminacy, in such a way as
to *evoke* narrative coherence while at the same time withholding commit-
ment to it and undermining confidence in it; in short, having one's cake
and eating it too" (ibid.). Just another metaphor, this weakness, for the
genre's "less" (or "least") pole, even including connectivity ("coherence")
as measure. "Weak" (low, poor) entails the antipole of "strong" (high, well-
formed) or maybe strongest narrativity, with an intermediate range: one
modulating toward less and less distraction, irrelevance, indeterminacy,
two-edgedness, or the positive way round, toward more and more straight
continuity, with final closure.

---

87. In terms of mixture alone, the same objection applies, for example, to the heterogeneous
criteria of narrativity in Prince 1982: 145–61, 2004 [1999], which, moreover, waver between
polar limits of textual existence and subjective readerly experience. Both mixtures are visibly
encapsulated in the summary of what the "narrativity of a text depends on" (see Prince 1982:
160). Likewise with a marker so different as a character's "experientiality," which Fluder-
nik (1996: e.g., 355–56) links to a unique spacetime, on the one hand, and a "fictional" but
"non-hypothetical" world, on the other. So mixed, the alleged "*grading* of narrativity" (ibid.:
328 ff.) runs into trouble again. For instance, why relegate history telling to "zero-degree of
narrativity" when its anchorage in a one-off represented world polarizes with the general-
ized representations of fictions like the parable or Woolf's internalized version of Everyman,
"an ordinary mind on an ordinary day"? Or when even this telling's modalized inside views
("Napoleon probably intended . . .") are less "hypothetical" than the secret life that we need
to infer ourselves from a novel of exteriors by Hammett (e.g., *The Glass Key*) or from Heming-
way's "The Killers"? And so forth.

Most unhappy of all is the actual mixing of the two definitional logics. Thus Prince (2004 [1999]: 11–12; 2008; already implicit in 1987: 64) and Herman (2002) postulate both "narrativehood" (either/or, yes/no, present or absent, according to definite necessary and sufficient conditions) and "narrativity" (more or less, rangeable along a scale)—as if binarism were compatible with gradationism. Indeed, the approaches surveyed above, like Giora and Shen (1994) or Ryan (2007), avoid such an inconsistent mix.[88] It's like saying both that narrators are omniscient *or* restricted and that some are more omniscient than others.

To thicken the mixture, and its logical unreason, Herman (2002: e.g., 90–92, 100 ff.) relates the concepts yoked together to criteria that differ not just in substance but even in level. Narrativehood hinges on the enactment of a goal-directed sequence (Giora and Shen's Action Structure), while narrativity varies with the balance of the stereotypical and the unprecedented (Bruner's "canonicity and breach"). Even concerning the respective levels or modes of existence, then, narrativehood is objectified in the story-world, narrativity internalized in our mental response: narrated domain versus narrative discourse, so that the components of the mixture pull still further apart, and how they compose, let alone cooperate in or beyond the genre's definition, is only harder to imagine.

On top of it, Herman associates both concepts with a third, narratability ("tellability"), which is of course a matter of degree (like his "narrativity"), not of kind (like "narrativehood"), and so unassociable with the second. This third notion depends on the sequence's enacting "remarkable *conflict* . . . . . . *riskiness* . . . . . . obstacles overcome and not overcome . . . . . . actions thwarted as well as actions achieved" (ibid.: 76), "unpredicted events" (ibid.: 83), troublesome "goal-directed plans" (ibid.: 90) to arouse high interest. Against reason, however, sometimes the narratability, allegedly inherent in these narrated objects, determines narrativehood—its presence or absence establishing whether or not an event sequence can "properly be called a narrative"—and sometimes it measures narrativity. (For example, contrast ibid.: 76, 83–91 and 84, 86, 90–92, 100 ff.) At the limit of inconsistence, absolute narrativehood is disclaimed in favor of gradable narrativity, and then immediately reaffirmed, by the usual misappeal to gradable narratability. "Narrative itself is a fuzzy predicate, with particular stories being only more or less, never absolutely amenable to processing as stories. Yet a minimal condition for narrative can

---

88. Even McHale's (2005: 165) "having one's cake and eating it too" refers to joint effects of (in)coherence, which typify "weak narrativity," not to joining the mutually exclusive lines of definition.

be defined as the thwarting of intended actions by unplanned, sometimes unplannable events" (ibid.: 84). The thing is never (because fuzzy) and yet always (because valorizing agentive mischance) reducible to an absolute condition.

But then, this "minimal condition" itself comes and goes in turn during the argument. It repeatedly emerges that narratability (in the form of "thwarting") does not perforce govern either narrativehood or narrativity. It would appear dispensable altogether, giving place to various other criteria, none of them interest-bound. Thus a mere event series is only "less recognizably narrative" than a "beginning-middle-end" one, instead of being categorically nonnarrative (ibid.: 44). It is not lacking in narrativehood, though unequal to the alleged "minimal condition," but low in narrativity and/or narratability. Again, an unremarkable, unconflictual, riskless chronology is yet enough to make "a story of a birthday party" (ibid.: 99; cf. 101). Or narrativity is said to co-vary, not with the narrated object at all but with the tempo and/or lucidity of its narration (ibid.: 100–102). With inconsistency (logical, conceptual, applicational) so piled on inconsistency, the mixture runs to a height that no theory can survive. Instructively, though, the collapse foregrounds anew the unresolvable dilemmas built into the very attempt at objectivist gradation.

(5) *Negative Strength.* Even so, strictly, these compounded failures (1)–(4) would disable, but not yet refute, the entire line of defining narrative/narrativity by the narrated world. Not yet, by themselves, since another of this line's weaknesses is its very *irrefutability except from within*. Being circular, the objectivist definition of narrative/narrativity is also logically proof against any outside challenge: beyond testing and comparison, unfalsifiable either theoretically or empirically. Negative strength, negative value.

In the absence of a definite common point of reference, either a set of criteria or a body of texts, never mind generic paradigms, objectivists can easily dismiss, no less than adduce, features and examples of narrative as they think fit: easily, because safely, with logical impunity ensured by the circle. Approaches that aspire to empirical and/or psychological realism, a fortiori to scientific rigor, like cognitivist story analysis, may naturally believe otherwise, as if rules of evidence for or against, especially hard evidence, applied here. Thus Black and Wilensky (1979: 220) in their examination of story grammars: "If we find a story [i.e., an event form] that the grammar does not generate, that is empirical evidence against the grammar." But no empirics will have such evidentiary weight if the grammar (or any other objectivist theory) can always freely deny the counterevidence's

very storyness/storyhood, as Jean Mandler (1984: 57–58) indeed does in her response. She just excludes and includes what and as she (dis)likes.[89]

This dubious negative strength relegates the objectivist (pre)conception to the domain of the metaphysical a priori, the otherworldly Platonic Idea. Like approaches to tragedy, this *a priorism* can (and sometimes overtly will) dismiss any counterargument and counterevidence as beside the point, irrelevant to narrativity or "genuine" narrativity.[90]

Even by its own circular logic, fortunately, this a priorism isn't proof against the exposure of internal breakdown, along the lines I've been arguing and will develop below, especially inconsistency, up to objectivism's single-track defining of narrative/narrativity by one of its two mandatory and peculiar sequences; nor is it proof against general standards of judgment, like range, economy, fruitfulness, explanatory power, balance of discriminateness and inclusiveness, or falsifiability itself, by appeal to experience, above all. But otherwise, take it or leave it.

(6) The more so, if possible, because preconceived, reified objective form goes with subjective bias. The circularity of the definition is axiological as well as typological, ineluctably and sometimes openly value-driven, to clinch the likeness to Platonic idealism. *Narrativity then mixes with narratability* ("interest," "point," "tellability," "reportability," "eventfulness"), even where the two are officially kept apart.

Definitional "forms" that are particularized beyond "an action or an event," Genette (1988 [1983]: 19) argues, aim for "the *interesting* story. But a story need not be interesting to be a story. Besides, interesting to whom?"[91] Very true; except that Genette's own minimum incurs the same objections—"for Beckett," he himself adds, "it would already be too much to narrate"—as does his taste for rupture and novelty in the finished product (see Sternberg 1992: 494–99, 2006: 169–75). He goes on to particularize the told action/event into categorical as against modalized occurrence, and preferably fictional and anthropocentric too, as well as into language and deformity in the telling. His objectivist conditions, though modest

89. For more on the problematics of definition and typology within cognitivist scientism, see Sternberg 2003a: 380 ff.
90. On the problematics of "unacceptability" judgments generally, in relation to various issues and disciplines, see Sternberg 2001b: 139 ff.
91. Cf. Smith 1980: 232 on narrative discourse, including "bare and banal utterances"; van Dijk 1983: 599, "good stories and bad stories are both stories, just as elegant and inelegant sentences are sentences"; also Labov 1972 on "minimal narrative" vs. "point" or "tellability"; Morson 2003 on how narratives, failing the valued sense of contingency, lack "narrativeness"; Schmid 2003 and Hühn 2008 on "event" vs. "eventfulness."

enough relative to others and therefore even less visibly loaded, prove as subjective as any. "Interesting to whom?"

What further makes the Genette example particularly instructive is that it typifies the unfeasibility of Structuralism's declared bid for keeping out of the theory such unscientific variables as the narrative's appeal, interest, affectivity, narratability, in short, along with the mind and humanism at large. Even a shrewd observer like Kermode (2009: 112) has been taken in by these antinormative professions: "Being a science, narratology is value-free." He means, and mistakes, Structuralist narratology, yet the inevitable truth extends to any narrative theory similarly based on a mimetic concept of narrativity. For that matter, the concept needn't get particularized beyond "an action or an event."

Whatever the purely analytic façade of such concepts, as though objectivism guaranteed objectivity, a prescriptive, preconceptual bias always lurks behind it. However officially separated, doing and desire, enactment and judgment, narrativity and normativity must interpenetrate there, by the logic of the objectivist paradigm. Given the indissoluble nexus between representation and evaluation, no objectivist demand can stay value-free; and the more strings attached to narrativity, the clearer and heavier the preloading with whatever is deemed narratable. Reconsider even the ascent from the mere event of (i) to the event anchored in human agency of (ii)—with a tacit bid for interest, connectivity, significance. No innocent mimetic minimums.

Against the would-be separatists, further, some concepts of narrative geared to the same paradigm doctrinally bracket the two issues. This starts with Aristotle, as a matter of principle. His philosophy wouldn't endorse the modern contrast between describing and prescribing. Expectedly, therefore, the *Poetics* assumes and at times articulates the value-ladenness of mimetic, including criterial, features.

Among these, take first the one so basic and obvious-looking that you wouldn't think of questioning its definitional attachment to narrative; and yet Aristotle provides a normative ground for it, thus motivating typology via teleology. Why represent a *change* of fortune? Because "change" is "pleasant," whereas "invariable repetition of anything causes the excessive prolongation of a settled [static, descriptive] condition: therefore, says the poet, 'change is in all things sweet'" (*Rhetoric* I: 11). Why, next, a change of fortune *between extremes*? Because polarity aids our memory, and therefore enables the work's extension to optimum magnitude, with the resulting aesthetic complexity. Even so, why a change of fortune *enchained* between the extremes? Because causal unity throughout balances the value of complexity. Also, because causal linkage redoubles memorability, so as

to enable even further and safer extension, magnitude, complexity. Again, such enchainment recommends itself because causal inference keeps us moving between the particular and the general, and thus we keep "learning," which is "the greatest of pleasures not only to the philosopher but also to the rest of mankind, however small their capacity for it" (*Poetics*: chap. 4). And so on, to the rest of the motivations supplied or implied there for the objective components and composition legislated.

In the millennia since, the charged reality-items have often varied in their nature, number, scaling, patterning, in the value or interest they allegedly carry, but also in the explicitness and the rationale of the normative charging. Even Aristotle's motivations, rational, systematic, cumulative, are vulnerable to challenge from theoretical and empirical alternatives, such as have arisen in modernism and since. But the same questionable, even reversible, value-ladenness attaches, of course, to the alternatives themselves. Obviously so with an overreaching, overexclusive, and almost groundless miscellany of requirements like:

> Not every sequence of events recounted constitutes a narrative, even when it is diachronic, particular, and organized around intentional states. Some happenings do not warrant telling about and accounts of them are said to be "pointless" rather than storylike. A Schank-Abelson script is one such case . . . . Narratives require such scripts as necessary background, but they do not constitute narrativity itself. For to be worth telling, a tale must be about how an implicit canonical script has been breached, violated, or deviated from in a manner to do violence to what Hayden White calls the "legitimacy" of the canonical script.   (Bruner 1991: 11)

The requirements here begin at a height that most generic definitions never reach, that is, with (vii) plus. Nor do they begin there, and ascend therefrom, on any visible ground, except the debatable need for a "point"; and even so, why impose this particular one, which still fewer definers (including the term's inventor, Labov) would encode as a supreme, universal value?

Observe the mandatory ascent to a very specific ideological point—in the double sense of theme and impact—as if every narrative went against the sociopolitical order. At the same time, the incongruous yoking together of Hayden White's "(il)legitimacy" and Schank and Abelson's "script" disables the "point" from within. Bruner apparently forgets how little charged, indeed trivial, a script may be, how little it takes to deviate from it, and to what little effect, poles apart from ideological violence.

This may look an extreme case, but it has been followed in various cognitivisms (e.g., Dautenham 2001: 254; Herman 2002: 7, 85 ff.). Its very

extremity also serves to bring out the arbitrariness endemic to the tell-
ing/tellability mixture, and so as detectable in other fiats of "point" or
"interest" or "liking" or "tellability" or "eventfulness" (e.g., Labov 1972;
Wilensky 1983; Ryan 1991: 148 ff.; Schmid 2003; Hühn 2008). In an earlier
overview (Sternberg 2003b: 572–626, esp. 581–94), I already detailed this
point—the questionable values always lurking behind features or concepts
of narrative—and on a large scale, which specifically includes most of our
(i)–(xii). For our immediate purpose, therefore, let me proceed to a couple
of final remarks that have a more general bearing on the loading of narra-
tivities with supposed tellables.

Observe that the correlation between narrativity and tellability may be
deemed negative as well as positive. Lamarque (2004: 393–94) already goes
further than the ordinary separatist in pronouncing the genre's defining
traits not just value-free but valueless. "There is little intrinsic interest in
narrative *per se*," counter to what "many narratologists" say. "Some narra-
tives are boring, rambling, disorganized, lacking coherence, and on a sub-
ject of little significance. Narratives have to earn the right to engage our
interest." In other words, narrative can and should work for the narratabil-
ity (value, interest) missing in narrativity.

More often, "can and should" are categorically denied on principle,
thus radicalizing negation to the limit. "Better not tell stories," the radi-
cals judge, where Lamarque calls for telling better stories. Such a nega-
tive package deal of narrativity with narratability envisages the undoing
of both, and generally of representation with them, in favor of another
discourse type (or hierarchy) and another normative criterion. Whoever
preaches or practices antinarrative evidently deems its canonical opposite
a negative value, "an opiate to be renounced in the name of improvements
to come" (Scholes 1980: 211–12).

In (post)modern historiography, for example, storytelling has come
under attack from different "philosophical" quarters: advocates of analytic
history, the Annales School, bent on the slow movement of long *durée*, as
opposed to customary event-centered runs, the ideological antinarrativ-
ism of Hayden White and poststructuralist fashion. Yet all this resistance,
refocusing, revaluing hasn't much affected practicing historians. If any-
thing, a "resurgent interest in narrativity" has been eroding the opposition
(Fogelson 1989: 140).

Similarly with literary, cinematic, aesthetic, sociopolitical counterthe-
orizing (like the antinarrativisms outlined in Argyros 1992: 659–61). As a
poststructuralist, Barthes (1974 [1970]) thus opposes "classical" narrative
to "modern" text. He would break temporality, causality, even discourse
sequentiality, and so narrativity itself, as the worst ideoartistic evil, com-

pounding the banal with the bourgeois. Making them "reversible," instead, is to make the text "writable," in the service of the infinite play of meaning. Again, an extreme case—Barthes admits that his denarrativized counter-value has never been actualized,[92] while the old polar value goes strong—but nonetheless influential and revealing. What can so expose the relativity of either correlation as the double plus of narrativity/narratability inverted into a double minus?

Like anything desired, the only constant thing about (un-, anti-)narrati-bility is its boundless variability, including its protean reflex in the narrated objects of desire. The narratable being essentially contingent, rather than universal and theorizable, its wishful preconception must therefore infect any idea of narrative associated with it. There is no disputing about taste.

The mimetic (pre)conception's self-enclosure accordingly redoubles. This is also why the occasional disputes on narrativity among objectivists are so unreasoned, so inconclusive, so fruitless, except in mutual weak-ening. Each disputant goes his own way, and those ways will never meet, short of a change of mind, or heart, about the definitional represented features. Objectivist circularity therefore presents a major obstacle to an advance toward (inter)disciplinary consensus on the genre's fundamentals and the common pursuit of narrative knowledge on a wide generic front: toward an integrated comprehensive theory, in short.

(7) In the way of this advance also stand the frequent *zigzags* detectable within objectivism, whether they reflect lapses, or changes of mind, heart, taste, vogue, or just irresolution. They both newly compromise the respec-tive circles from within and newly highlight the root of the trouble.

The criterial object being arbitrary, and often a matter of degree (more or less events or linkages or features) at that, it all too easily shifts even within a single theory or theorist's work, as well as among different objec-tivists. Moreover, the shifts in the defining object become yet easier and less visible, since, as we'll find next, objectivists do willy-nilly (if in silence or unawares) refer to the discourse sequence officially left out of the defi-nition. That covert reference facilitates and covers up objective variance, zigzags, slippage, because the narrated world is itself really a product of discourse workings, not a producer of narrativity on its own.

Little wonder instability, even inconsistency, is so rife. Nothing enjoys immunity from slippage: conditions, gradations, or even the choice between them, as in Herman 2002 on narrativehood/narrativity and whether, or

92. It has been actualized since in the form of hypertext, which has significantly proved marginal despite the fanfare greeting its advent.

how, they relate to tellability. During this overview itself, beginning with the nonstarters in section 3, the reader will already have noticed a diversity of such zigzagging. Indeed, analysts who have extensively or frequently written on the topic, such as Chatman, Prince, Ryan, or Herman, are most liable to it. Or most visibly liable, because they only foreground the widespread rule of inconstancy.

Given all this, a pair of extreme instances will do for now. Ryan 1991, a book of high and novel interest on the various matters addressed, cries out for conceptual unity at the heart of the matter. But its argument shuttles among no fewer than five alternative concepts of narrativity (traced in Sternberg 2003b: 581–94 and some instances above). If sorted out and listed in an ascending order, familiar by now, these alternatives require: (1) a sequence of events, (2) a closed chain of events, (3) enchainment by human agency, (4) goal-directed human agency on an overall plan, (5) planned agentive goal-directedness in a conflict, hence also allegedly involving a problem-to-resolution trajectory. Over the years, by contrast, Prince has gone the other, minimizing way: down from "three conjoined events" (1973: 31) to "*at least two*" (1982: 4) to "one or more" (1987: 58), with subsequent occasional regressions (e.g., 2008: 19). Whether ascending or descending, however, the criterial requirements all belong to the objectivist paradigm of narrativity/narrative, hence also of narratology in general, and so easily, imperceptibly modulate either way, up or down.

A fortiori with lesser modulations along (i)-(xii), of course. Larger or lesser, they do not yet include, accordingly, zigzags from or to nonstarters like those already exemplified, or the most principled changes of ground, between the opposed definitional logics themselves. These consist in the increasing but, regrettably, often halfway shifts in, no longer within, the very conceptual paradigm, from (i)-(xii) objectivism toward my functional alternative: with and/or without its generic intersequence relations, mentalism, dynamics, universals, even sense of purpose. Hence "toward," rather than always *to*, as will appear in section 6.

But then, nor has Ryan's own wavering, as already exemplified in the (dis)association about narrativity, come to a rest since: witness the turn from hard demands (Ryan 1991) toward fuzziness, gradationism, even half-mentalism (Ryan 2005b, 2007), with its own shifts. Indeed, perhaps it is being unequal to so much as definitional constancy that has lately driven Ryan to belittle the very attempt at generic definition, on a ground demonstrably untrue and, for a professional, strange. "These differences of opinion [on narrativity] do not carry significant cognitive consequences," so that the question hardly arises, "unless of course we are narratologists"

(Ryan 2007: 31; recall Hastie and Pennington 1995). Even among common readers, or viewers, or for that matter tellers, can the internalized sense of narrative (however labeled) they bring to the reading (however performed) fail to have such consequences? How else, if not by appeal to that mental generic idea, would one perceive and process a given discourse in narrative terms (e.g., of eventhood, world change, actionality, chrono-logic . . . . . .) rather than those of (immobile, space-oriented) description, or vice versa? Why else, if not by force of different ideas, would one comer make sense of a text relative to this generic type, or even to this event form within it, and another to that? (For example, a minimalist's narrative painting, or dynamic "happening," is a maximalist's still life, or nonaction.) Again, historically speaking, where else have all the attested popular and otherwise traditionalist resistances to novelty sprung from, denials of storyness included? Not to rehearse the multiple losses suffered by a profession that leaves narrativity so divergently conceptualized—if at all—as outlined in my beginning and demonstrated since. Ryan's abrupt relegation of the concept to insignificance outside specialized pigeonholing, therefore, looks like a counsel of despair.

(8) The "significant cognitive consequences" of viewpoints and disagreements on narrativity, traced throughout this overview, culminate in the *inapplicability* endemic to objectivism. All along its (i)–(xii) line, the abstract (actional or otherwise reality-like) generic types postulated are simply, and fatally, unmatchable on their own with corresponding (discursive) generic tokens. Tested on their own, in their own terms, these generic types again show themselves to be Platonic Ideas, out of the empirical reality of discourse. Narrativity remains out of touch with narratives, the alleged minimum with its manifest instances, if any, the concept with corpora, theory with practice, in short.

   Objectivist definitions do not even map themselves on their own arbitrary favorites: each circle remains in the air—its makings purely notional, its membership indiscernible as well as undelimited, its gradations, if any, untraceable—for *want of a generic rationale whereby to determine type/token, narrativity/narrative identity*. Without such a rationale, how else to match narrative in its alleged narrativity with narrative (or any specific instance thereof) in its actual textuality, by methodically projecting the one's abstract distinctive features onto the other's diverse surface givens? From the side of reading, that is, including the analyst/definer as reader, all the above theoretical failures, (1)–(7), have operational, diagnostic, interpretive counterparts and consequences in the multifold lack of applicability.

Take a reader who endorses some objective circular formula, oblivious or indifferent to its taxonomic exclusions, conflations, limbos. Would the formula by itself enable so much as a delimitation of the texts that actualize its criterial forms of narrativity, in passing or in strength, from texts that don't? Equipped with its objective form of eventhood alone, would this reader *identify* a member of the privileged narrative circle (and correspondingly screen out the disprivileged) when he sees one, and process it accordingly as a movement in time? Never, in principle, because all this identification of the token cannot proceed on the objective basis that defines the type: it (with the entire reading operation at issue) hinges on the discourse sequence and experience that is missing, often officially omitted, from the definition.

Without explaining or repairing the failure, some have pinpointed it apropos cognitivist story grammars: "A real difficulty . . . . . . is to know what counts as an instance of such categories as *setting*, *event*, *reaction* [all objectivist, of course]. No story grammarian has ever formulated an effective procedure for determining the membership of such categories" (Johnson-Laird 1983: 362; cf. Sternberg 1978: 23 ff., 1981a, 1992: e.g., 484–91 on Propp, 2003b, 2008a, 2009: esp. 480 ff.). Nor has any narratologist, or any fellow objectivist elsewhere, come up with the missing formulation, simply because the "procedure" is not to be found in such categories. The mapping of such narrated categories requires a narrative discourse to map them on *and* a discourse frame (authorial and/or readerly) to guide the mapping. In narrative, as already shown, it is the discourse sequence that comes first, in every sense of priority, because alone given: the event sequence is (re)constructible from and by it. "What counts as . . . *setting, event*" and the like, or as "setting" versus "event," isn't given on the surface of the discourse, either, but inferred from its operative goals, premises, coordinates, regularities, workings, processing. For this (sub)category to apply rather than that, our top-down must dovetail with bottom-up operations into a generic fit that instantiates this (sub)category in some particular shape. All, of course, along the sequence (and where narrativized, intersequence) of the mind's progressive, always uncertain, often tortuous encounter with the discourse.

A false impression to the contrary may be produced (and has been, even on some who've adopted my functional alternative) by transparent-looking examples, which dispense, as it were, with reading, constructing, narrativizing in and through an inferential process. I mean examples (of, say, "a minimal narrative") where the definitional form appears to surface, unit by unit, along the discourse givens: as (iv), "a two-event sequence at least,"

may appear to do in "The king died and then the queen died," by a one-to-one (i.e., two-to-two) formal correspondence. This impression, however, is false in theory and in demonstrable fact alike.

In theory, because it runs counter to the endless systemic variability that I call the Proteus Principle. As a master law of discourse, the Principle establishes a many-to-many correspondence between form and function, notably including the generation of multiple senses, patterns, representational effects. Given this many-to-many interplay, all discourse is ambiguous, willy-nilly, resolvable ad hoc alone, and even so, irreducible to any single categorical (certain, unmodalized) image of objective (e.g., narrated, dynamic) reality, among other meanings. Inversely, every abstract *mental* image of objective reality, such as the cores of narrativity in (i)–(xii), depends for its *manifest* existence, a fortiori its characteristics, upon the given discourse and how one resolves it (or not) by inference. The concept of narrative in our mind becomes a specific ad hoc mental construct in our encounter with a possibly narrative text, so that the concept's manifestation can change form, or even come and go, from one discourse encounter to another, or indeed from one point to another during any single encounter. The narrative type, in short, will find an actual discursive token if and as the reading disambiguates the givens *into* narrativity, hence into type/token identity.

In this "protean" light, reconsider the Forster example, with the wrong impression of automatic, one-to-one identity it may generate. The apparent formal correspondence there between the postulated generic type and the putative generic token—between a twofold event series and a twofold death series—only means, at best, that the former is in practice easily inferable from (readable into, mappable onto, matchable with) the latter; or the latter easily narrativizable as an instance of the former. And the empirical record of how this example fared among readers does not even concede so much as "is in practice easily inferable . . . or easily narrativizable. . . ." Its attested divergent readings, to the point of unresolvability, bring out a latent ambiguity that triggers and explains them, in keeping with the Proteus Principle.

Forster himself constructs, and explicitly construes, "The king died and then the queen died" as an event series, one bare, loose, yet sufficient to make a "story." This double authorial choice—interpretive and (sub)generic—is most likely to find adherents among those who conceptualize the narrative minimum as (iv), "A, then B." However, quite a few theorists do, or would, quarrel with Forster's construction (according to how they disambiguate the series between chronology and chrono-logic)

or with his "storying" of the construct (depending on their idea of narra-
tivity) or with both.[93] Thus, some (e.g., Branigan 1992: 11) would endorse
the mere serial-chronological reading, but dispute its sufficiency for nar-
rative ("story") or, on the contrary, its necessity (Genette 1988 [1983]: 20:
"My minimal narrative is undoubtedly even poorer . . . . . . nothing more
than 'The king died'"). Others would dispute this minimal, Forsterian
reading itself as too loose, because literal. They would rather tighten the
given "story" into a "plot"—the serial "and then" into the causal seriality-
plus "and therefore"—by appeal to ad hoc inference or to a general "*post
hoc → propter hoc*" law.[94] But they may (like Ryan 1991: 262–63; 2005b:
10) or may not (like Chatman 1978: 45–46; Abbott 2002: 38) proceed to
dispute its narrativity. Amid shared causal reading, this typological split
depends on how those readers view causality: as a stipulation too low in
turn for the genre—insufficiently distinctive—and too high, more than suf-
ficient, or just enough, respectively. Still others will vacillate, or equivo-
cate, or keep silent on either issue or both.

The example's multiple resolutions and referrals testify to the built-in
ambiguity that invites, or allows, the undecidable rival constructs. The
many-to-many correspondence generalized by the Proteus Principle thus
visibly translates into, and radicalizes the dependence of the type/token
matching on, the given discourse. In plain language, no objectivist defi-
nition of narrative/narrativity can ever map itself onto anything on its
own, without a discursive frame and sequence (as well as mind) to enable,
launch, regulate the mapping. Which also means that this all-important
frame-and-sequence (as well as mind) should enter into any viable defini-
tion in the first instance.

For a complementary measure of this discourse dependence, look at
one tiny variation in the classic "The king died and then the queen died"
example. Omit so much as the "then" from it, and you'll have a twofold
conjunction that is equally readable as a simultaneity—unsequenced
except in language, or at best in scalar rather than temporal order—or
as a single two-part event of royal demise. The king-and-the-queen died,
as it were. (Compare Sternberg 1981a: 80–81 on the demises of Sarah and
Abraham in Gen. 23 as against Gen. 25:10.) Thus ambiguated anew, by a
local change in the "A, and then B," the "A + B" ramifies in grouping along

93. Pier 2008: 120–22 suggests a few less common interpretive variants. They notably widen
the example's range of ambiguity, hence reinforce the general point of unresolvability and
unmappability on objective grounds, out of inferred functional context—the Proteus Prin-
ciple, in brief.
94. As a rule, they credit Chatman (1978) with the idea, though Palmer (2004: 180) solemnly
reinvents this firmer connective, in disregard for the long ongoing debate.

different lines: it will possibly form another, less superficial (because minus "then") token of the same (event-serial and/or generically "story") type, possibly a misfit belonging to another (nonserial and/or extranarrative) type, yet either way, certainly a matter of (re)construction again. Besides, the same local change—no "then"—makes yet another difference to the overall (re)construction of the objective occurrence. Negatively speaking, the tighter, causal reading now grows improbable—because the "post hoc → propter hoc" inference loses its ground and trigger in "and then."

The large and distinct effects produced by such tiny variations on the reading, mapping, branching, (de)narrativizing go to show, not just the discourse dependence of objective concepts of narrativity in practice and, at root, in theory, but also their remarkable discourse sensitivity. So not even the indisputable two-verb, two-event linear constant ("died . . . died") on the surface of the example(s) is enough to ensure type/token uniformity or automatism. Throughout, instead, the application of the definitional form of events multiply varies (in target, process, product, certitude, hence genre) with how the text reads in context and why, always ad hoc, according to the best fit achievable or desired.

How much more so in cases at the opposite extreme: that of opaque textuality and difficult inference, as when the text manifests no verbs for the definitional form of events, or any eventhood, to actualize (and so narrativize) itself with relative ease. Art specializes in these difficult (re)constructions, transforming the ostensible unpromising data, axis, even medium or genre into a more or less probable narrative gestalt, a better fit. Nothing, in or out of the text, can block the possibility, or the practice, of such a narrativizing readerly operation in some context. Consider a verbless surface like Humbert's noun sequence: "A shipwreck. An atoll. Alone with a drowned passenger's shivering child" (Nabokov 1959: 21). Or take one unverbalized and unsequenced altogether, like the visual artwork's, where apparently simultaneous existence or arrested movement somehow express unrest, hence change, nonetheless. In each instance, against the formal givens, we do (or always can) map a process onto a picture: time onto space, event dynamics onto static world-items, narrative flux onto a descriptive-looking fixture. In context, Humbert's noun sequence reads better as an imagined sexcapade; the discrete simultaneous groupings of figures on canvas invite alignment into a time-ordered series of group actions (e.g., Sternberg 1981a: 74 on Nicolas Poussin's *The Fall of Manna in the Desert*); the visual "pregnant moment" triggers a before and an after, with the Now on view mediating between a past and a future left invisible, except to the experiencing mind's eye.

But no objectivist definition could identify any of these as such, far less

explain the (inferential, mind-driven) transformation of signs, world axes, genres in the (re)construction process. It couldn't do so, and when applied, actually doesn't, without basic inconsistency, refuting itself by silently appealing to its discursive antipole. Objectivism then mixes with constructivism, properties with probabilities, formal with functional analysis, one-to-one correspondence (or two-make-one fallacy) with many-to-many interplay between surface and depth, given and role. All incoherent as well as illicit mixtures, because they yoke together opposed conceptual paradigms. It makes nonsense to theorize narrativity as fulfilling certain conditions in the narrated domain *and* apply those conditions to obtain a certain (un)likelihood of fulfillment, depending on the actual narrative as variably, disputably, hypothetically, processually understood. Given the former's essentialism, nothing will count as narrative or otherwise on the latter's probabilistic ground, reasoning, and judgment. A logician might as well double as a relativist in the same breath.

Yet such impossible mixture is forced on objectivists whenever they approach any instance, whether simple or tricky. They necessarily and demonstrably contextualize, interpret, manipulate it into (or out of) the wanted token/type likeness, so that it will become (in)eligible for whatever event formation-and-fellowship has been encircled under the generic name. This illicit, self-betraying appeal to the discourse sequence, as correlative and prior to the event sequence, newly (here, negatively) establishes the indivisibility and power hierarchy of the two, starting from the definition of narrative/narrativity. The mimetic, single-track a priorism itself is otherwise untranslatable into practice.

At any rate, inconsistency in objectivist definitions (by the narrated sequence) compounds with inconsistency in their application (via the extra-definitional narrative sequence) to expose the basic trouble: the absence of a functional generic reference point whereby to spot, assemble, explain, compare, and test the event forms (or, better yet, the multiform eventhood) postulated for narrativity.

6. Shifting the Paradigm toward a Functionalist Reconception: Narrative/Narrativity as Intersequence Dynamics, with Three Universals

Though eluding definition thus far, narrative/narrativity is demonstrably a law unto itself, but still worth considering from a higher vantage point as well. In both its negative and its constructive (or constructivist) thrusts, this argument follows the general theory of discourse that informs my work as a whole, even outside narrative, and particularly recalls the (counter) analysis of certain issues there. What one might call "the objective nar-

rativity fallacy" ("objectivist fallacy," for short) is thus as old as another representation-bound misconception, "the direct speech fallacy." The belief that direct quoting copies the original speech/thought/writing was first refuted in Sternberg 1981b, 1982a, 1982b and replaced by a functional, inference-driven theory of quotation, which has gained wide acceptance since in the disciplines concerned. Even so, various objectivists in narratology still adhere to the direct speech fallacy (e.g., Rimmon-Kenan 1983: 110–13, Stanzel 1984, Bal 1985: 50–51, Prince 1987: 20–21, Ryan 2005b: 11, Herman 2009: 184) that has been outgrown elsewhere. Why the continued linkage of a quoting pattern (e.g., direct) to a purpose (e.g., reproductive)? But then, such persistence in the one-to-one dogma of re-presentation is, from our higher ground, less strange than may otherwise appear; and it should heighten the awareness that, for better or worse, the entire issue of quoting inseparably joins with narratology. Thus, the authorial fictionist quotes the narrator to us, who in turn quotes the characters, in dialogue or monologue, as part of the narrated action, and so forth. More exactly, the represented action itself arises in and through this multiphase, multilevel, multivoice quotation of discourse (speech, writing, thought) as re-presentation, and vice versa: to make sense, we need to engage all along in a two-way inferential movement between first-order reality and its discoursive reflexes, between authorial ("objective") and creaturely (hence always quoted, manipulable, possibly unreliable) imaging of the world. As regards the latter's direct form, moreover, historiography can alone dispense with it. In fiction, this entire cross reference between re(-)presentations necessarily starts with the direct quoting of a narrator, at will modulating (as frequently happens) into his own (mis)quoting of others in all forms, and then into that done by his quotees: the chain of transmission marks an ever-growing remove from what counts as the authorial point of vantage and reference.[95]

Along the ensuing chain of discourse, each quoting frame contextualizes, subordinates, and at will modifies its inset(s) for its own purpose, clean against the reproductive (inset=original) dogma or any other re-presentational fixture. This age-old dogma is also as opposed to the

95. See, e.g., Sternberg 1982a, 1983b: esp. 172–88, 1985: 365–440, 2001b, 2005, 2007, 2009; Yacobi 2000, 2001, 2007. I therefore wonder what leads Fludernik (1996: 325) to "suspect" that I "might tend to exclude direct speech and thought representation from the realm of narrative proper"—as Ryan et al. do interior monologue—when I have so often argued the exact contrary, and, at that, with a view to unifying the field by interrelating the two domains. The wonder even grows, considering that Fludernik (1993) vigorously takes up the opposition to the direct speech fallacy, and should therefore appreciate how this quoting pattern, like all others, variously integrates with the enclosing frame of "narrative proper." See also note 63 above.

same iron law of protean form/function, means/end interplay that perforce governs narrativity/narrative, along with the rest of discourse in all semiotic systems.

The "objectivist fallacy" having now been traced and exposed in turn, the need for a corresponding paradigm shift asserts itself with special emphasis against this negative background. So let me newly argue in brief for the functional reconception of narrative/narrativity as a protean construct, along the lines developed on a broad front in my narratological work and progressively emergent in what has gone before.

The supreme test of applying the objectivist definition to any manifest text clinches what the entire overview goes to establish: not only about the failure of this Aristotelian ("mimetic") line, (i)–(xii), but also about the wanted radical alternative. The definer must choose between two irreconcilable logics, and with them between two paradigms of narratology and narrative study at large, from the foundations upward. Everything hangs in the balance: theory, history, reading, sense-making, practical analysis, the way to intergenre, intersemiotic, interdisciplinary traffic, as well as to broader consensus within the field.

The choice ultimately turns on whether, or how well, the definition accommodates and brings into play the genre's very condition of possibility, unmatched elsewhere: its double temporality of happening along with telling/reading. The one logic has proved illogical in betraying a double standard vis-à-vis this indivisible double temporal sequence. It formally predicates narrativity on some event sequence, while silently, illicitly, unsystematically cross-referring it to a discourse sequence never acknowledged there as criterial and correlative, much less as a higher point or frame of reference: all in the old-new objectivist way. Single-track definition belied by its own two-track application.[96] The other logic would conceptualize within narrativity itself the dynamic *intersequence relation* unique to the narrative genre, as I've proposed since the 1970s.[97]

---

96. The same holds, of course, for a single track geared to the discourse alone, and a fortiori to neither sequence, like some nonstarters cited.

97. Abbott 2009: 315 rightly notes that the term *narrativity* did not appear in the early book (Sternberg 1978, compared with, say, 1990b, 1992) where I first theorized the narrative universals and dynamics. But the concept of narrativity itself already goes to the heart of the matter there, and in effect centrally runs through the 1978 argument, along intersecting "protean" lines. One line relates to the argument's focus on the interplay between narrated action and narrative communication, as a set of three dynamic processes; the other traces the shifting balance, amid coexistence, between the narrative and the expositional or generally descriptive function, that is, narrativity and descriptivity (later taken up in Sternberg 1981a, 1985: esp. 321–64, 1992, and elsewhere). The term *narrativity* itself then helped to bring out the reconception of narratology involved in this joint line, vis-à-vis the Structuralist mainstream at the time and other nonfunctional approaches. So did, in fact, the still

The italicized phrase already encapsulates the Protean master prin-ciple at work here. Just as direct quotation at large, or any particular direct quote, is not a copy of the (mis)quoted "original" but a matter of how the quoted "original" relates to the quoting discourse that images and frames it for a purpose—how the re-presented object stands to the re-presenting (con)text, as two mobile variables—so in Protean Principle with the flex-ible ("many-to-many") relationality of all other quotational forms, even all other mimetic patterns or genres. The Principle extends from a subject's re-presentation, direct or otherwise, to an object's representation, generic or otherwise.

Narrative/narrativity accordingly hinges not on any fixed mimesis but on a flexible relation of its own, one likewise concerned with representa-tional object/image and likewise governing this twofold's variability, only now holding between sequences in time.

Intersequence, intertemporality, interdynamics, interprocess: always "*inter*," because this generic relation entails not just two sequences (times, dynamics, processes) but a Siamese twinship, whereby narrative/narra-tivity lives in between, or more exactly yet, in our inescapable restless movement between, the two, from start to finish. That "between" relation, with the peculiar effects that universally arise from it,

> holds the key to narrativity—not the Aristotelian [mimetic] imbalance *or* its [discoursive] reversal. To be sure, communication by way of sequenced dis-course is all that we actually encounter and progressively experience. Yet this would be equally true of whatever presents itself in time, including the least nar-rativized description that unfolds a static object piecemeal or, for that matter, the least "objective" music. What distinguishes narrative effects as such from all others is less their play over time than their interplay between times. For it is the interplay of the represented and the presented dynamics, whether in "iconic" concordance or "arbitrary" tension, that sets narrative apart as a discourse with a double time-pattern.   (Sternberg 1992: 518–19)

This is why even merely acknowledging that the genre requires two sequences means little, as witnessed by the two-make-one fallacy. The fal-lacy may even involve a claim or practice of alternative sequential focus-ing. We have encountered such either/or sequentialities in Genette's (1988 [1983]) or Ryan's (1991) binary "thematic/modal" or "plot/discourse" nar-ratologies. Compare also Phelan's (2007) reference of the "beginning-middle-end" to the mimetic, actional ("textual") *or* to the discoursive

---

broader, discourse-wide Proteus Principle, likewise integral to the early work and likewise operating namelessly there until 1982b. In both regards, then, it's not the (re)conception that changed but its pinpoint explicitness, via the respective terms.

("readerly") line *or* to both, to "instabilities" *and/or* to "tensions." Of the two dynamics, "those of instability are essential to narrative, but those of tension are not" (2005: 161). It also follows, of course, that Phelan's narrativity ultimately reduces to the common denominator of (i)-(xii): it, like Ryan's, say, traditionally defines itself by single-track, objectivist logic— alone "essential"—without any necessary communicative ("rhetorical," "readerly," discoursive) mate. This, in turn, brings out that even when the "readerly" line of "tensions" does co-occur, the genre's key variables of chronological ordering, disordering, reordering, processing, or (re)construction at large, still needn't play any role in the theory of Phelan—and actually count for little there—because they hinge on narrative's unique intersequence: on the event/discourse lines definitionally running in parallel, with cross references all along. A single dynamics, at either pole, never suffices, whether leaving the other pole out or optional.

Throughout these polarities, moreover, which term denotes which sequence, whether favored or otherwise? Even an expert may get the respective polar alternatives wrong. They typically involve misleading as well as divergent and opaque labels for Aristotle's "whole/plot," or the Formalists' "*fabula/sjuzhet*," or my own self-explanatory pairs, like actional vs. presentational or rhetorical, mimetic vs. communicative, narrated vs. narrative, told vs. telling/reading dynamics (or sequences, temporalities, processes, motivations).[98]

---

98. Thus, Ryan's "plot," unlike Aristotle's, Forster's, or most others, designates the underlying represented action, not its given representation. Nor, in "thematic/modal," does either of Genette's terms, if pertinent-looking at all, clearly identify its referent and its antipolarity. With the latter identified, they only compound with other alleged binarisms: drama/epic, world/word, plot/perspective. More unhappy yet, what I call *mimetic (actional) as against communicative (rhetorical) dynamics* assumes in Phelan's hands the misnomers "textual" and "readerly," respectively. With an entire set of lucid pairings ready to hand, this bid for novelty incurs much gratuitous trouble.

In brief, the "textual" is itself "readerly," as an event-sequential (re)construction figured out in context, not a given. Inversely, "textual" suggests at least a far wider—and to most, a very different—range of components than belong to an action. In normal usage, indeed, the "textual" equals the "readerly": some have even applied this very term to my "presentational, rhetorical, communicative, telling/reading" dynamics. (For example, Pavel 1990: 350–51 on how Tel-Aviv narratologists "were probably the only ones to take textual movement into account," when Structuralism "too often excluded the reader's activity, and with it, a variety of temporal games that cross and flex the text.") Further, within a professedly "rhetorical" approach, Phelan's "readerly" is in turn a misnomer for "communicative dynamics." For "rhetoric" entails a two-party, sender/receiver transaction, where the one communicates to or with the other for some end: in narrative, this means the author's constructing an event-sequence that the reader reconstructs along the discourse-sequence, not a free "readerly" construction and sense-making at large, in disregard or outright denial of any implied author as creator, partner, guide. (Hence also my "(re)construct" below, or "telling/reading," designed to encompass the models of communicative affair and interpretive

All too often, then, have theorists paid lip service to the genre's duality, yet oriented themselves to one of the two sequences—or generally to the narrated one for definition and to either or both for analysis—or just left it at that and gone about their particular business. By itself, the acknowledgment of the double sequentiality may lead nowhere, or worse, without the understanding that narrativity is willy-nilly a matter of relation between the sequences, and a processual (or, better again, interprocessing) relation at that: it constantly changes en route from beginning to end, under the pressure of the joint action/narration, told/telling (or /reading) dynamics. The intersequence, that is, entails an interplay between the one sequence's flow of developments and the other's flow of disclosures—between the two great sources of narrative change, in the world itself and in our knowledge about it, respectively—so as to keep the reader's mind on the move all along, in an attempt to make the best sense possible at the time.

Nor need either time sequence assume sequential form,[99] or not except in the mind at mobile narrative-constructing work on the given surface: voice, page, canvas, screen. Instead, for a discourse to represent an event, or event line, it must trigger a (con)textual processing of the givens *into* some mimetic, enacted, event-driven process: a telling/reading sequence mapped (or mappable) onto a sequence told/read about, a disclosure in experiential time (though often at odds with chrono-logical time) of a development within the world. There arises a sequential change indeed, but a double and correlated one, whereby our mind, at progressive work on the message, generates an objective mimesis of progression in this or that form of eventhood, happening, action, and the like. From the sense-maker's changeful dealings with the text, in short, there emerges a changing world as the best fit.[100] Inversely, the underlying enacted, fabulaic,

---

freedom within a unified narrative theory.) Both of Phelan's substitute terms are therefore misnamed, if not misconceived, in themselves and in their relation alike, even according to his own lights. This occurs on top of related problems, already found above, beginning with the discontinuity in Phelan between "narrativity" and "narrative," as if these key concepts were themselves alternative, not just the "textual" and the "readerly" lines within the former. See also notes 49 and 80 above.

99. Against the paraphrase of the defining concept as "a sequential representation of a sequence of events" (Kafalenos 2006: 2).

100. *Pace* Hühn (2008: 142), who describes my theory as focused on "a change in the temporality of reader perception," as if it didn't concurrently evolve in that of the reality perceived. As to author-versus-reader-oriented sense-making ("motivation") of discourse, in and beyond its ordering, see Sternberg 1983b: esp. 172 ff.; 2005; 2009: 480 ff. Carried to an extreme, the two orientations stand opposed as a *productive* (e.g., Shklovskyan) versus an *interpretive* (e.g., "reader response," deconstructionist) model: the one focuses the transmitter's, and the other licenses the receiver's, construction of the text. Unlike either extreme, a *communicative* model balances the two—the authorial and the readerly—in having the discourse mediate between them: one party to the transaction reconstructs what and as it takes the

chrono(-)logical process is (re)constructed, by trial and error, in and from and throughout the discourse process, as it unfolds, at will twists, moment by moment.

But what for? This all-important definitional step comes next and must not just follow but follow from what has gone before.[101] Relationality entails functionality—and vice versa—how much more so when it is itself boundlessly changeable and its choice perceptibly goal-driven, frame-governed, explicable to suit. The Proteus Principle indeed establishes a many-to-many *relation* between form and *function*. Thus, as just noted, quotation relates the inset to the frame, adapts the quoted to the quoting discourse, "for a purpose," which, we infer, governs and explains it all. (For example, the direct misquoting serves to malign the quotee.) By the same token, you can't bring narrative's sequences into relation, far less keep shifting that relation from one work or reading or moment to another, except in a purposive light.

"The *histoire* is the what /and the *discours* is the how / but what I want to know, Brigham / is *le pourquoi*. / *Why* are we sitting here around the campfire?" (Le Guin 1980: 192). A laudable desire for knowledge, and rare too, because why's, as we found throughout, have been in little demand and yet shorter supply over the millennia, least of all regarding the genre's essentials. Aristotle himself, the great reason-giver, never offers a distinctive strategic motivation for actional (as against, say, pictorial) mimesis: anything like a narrativity-specific effect or end (Sternberg 1992: 474 ff.). He generalizes no explanatory power that might account for, say, the cross-generic (epic, dramatic, tragic, comic) "whole" *as a whole*, rather than for aspects or components ($iv_{1–5}$) or subgroups thereof (tragedy, above all). This is probably why this strategic hole has been left, not even glaring, but out of mind ever since, and the quest for a rationale behind narrativity/narrative, as for the intersequence relation it should explain, must start elsewhere than the objectivist orthodoxy.

Much the same trouble shows in some halfway advances beyond Aristotle's or, later, Structuralism's objectivist fallacy. Genuine advance turns on the recognition that we make narrative as we make a narrator or a quotation or an equivalence or a metaphor or a scalar order or any other inferred pattern: always within some definite frame, with a definite end

---

other to have constructed, by a mirror-image process. Below, the neutral, inclusive usage "(re)construct" will highlight that (despite my own allegiance to a communicative, as well as mental, processual, and of course functional notion of discourse) the argument obtains regardless.

101. That is, in the order of reasoning and demonstration, but, teleologically speaking, the end comes first, because it determines everything.

in view, *for* which we (re)construct those patterns the way we do. No form without a matching function to inform it; no typology, generic or otherwise, without teleology.

Thus, Monika Fludernik (1996) adopts the constructivist, indeed protean idea of "narrativization," in the sense familiar to us by now: making something a narrative by the sheer act of imposing narrativity on it (ibid.: 34). But, clean against the Proteus Principle, she applies the idea only in part, and in a manner arbitrary-looking rather than systematic, because uninformed by any genre-specific effect, drive, motivation, purpose. For example, why single out for narrativizing "texts that are radically inconsistent" (ibid.)? Isn't the same generic mechanism applicable—all too freely and widely applied, if anything—to texts that are meaningful but, for some reader(s), ostensibly descriptive or otherwise lacking in sufficient eventhood? Just recall how "The king died and then the queen died" has been narrativized into causality (or, if you like, enchained into narrative) by analysts who regard a mere event-series as nonnarrative. Again, why exclude from narrative the equally narrativizable discourse of history? Moreover, can't narrativizings "impose" on the text any feature (e.g., enchainment) associated with narrativity, as freely as (hence also to the disproof of) Fludernik's favorite "experientiality"? Even so, can't history telling itself and her other exclusions be "experientialized" into the genre? And so forth. In short, we always (de)narrativize for a reason—if only the wish to read for, or against, narrativity/narrative in a certain shape and context.[102] So the principle of boundless form/function interplay remains indivisible.

Take another attempt at advance, again short of the decisive functional turn. Phelan's (1996: 218) Genette-like or Smith-like definition of "narrative" (as "telling" about what "happened") comes to juxtapose in Phelan 2005: 217 or 2007: 15 ff. with an effect*less*, indeed objectivist, single-track variant ("textual" but not perforce "readerly" dynamics) of my reconceived, intersequence narrativity (perforce twice dynamized). The old formalism dies hard, but, one must hope, better late than never. Or observe the shift from the objectivism of Chatman 1978 ("event plus existent") toward a functionalism without teeth in Chatman 1990: there, the narrative ostensibly polarizes with the descriptive "function," yet both functions, alas, are left unspecified, hence inapplicable, except on the applier's say-so. Either "function" thus bears the name without boasting or performing any distinctive operation vis-à-vis its antipole: one can't tell narrative/narrativity

---

102. The reasons for (de)narrativizing can be scholarly, inter alia, like those traced to definitional conceptions all along here or to historical, interpretive, and ideological drives in Sternberg 1998 (see Index under "Narrative, and narrativicide" as against "Narrative, and narrativizing the non-narrative").

apart from description/descriptivity in theory or practice, and Chatman's own generic judgments (e.g., "here the narrative serves the descriptive") remain unmotivated, intuitive at best, if not circular. Comparable halfway houses manifest themselves elsewhere, as they do on other fronts and levels than narrativity: for example, in self-styled "reader-oriented" or "narrativizing" or "cognitive" or "postclassical" approaches to point of view (e.g., quoted, omniscient, reliable) that yet stop short of the Proteus Principle with its infinite means/end, form/function versatility.

By contrast, the shift of ground to narrative's unique relationality as the key also makes all the difference, in turn, for appreciating and identifying the effects, or sense of purpose, that are as uniquely associated with it.

The next definitional step, from the generic condition of possibility to the resultant means/end workings between the sequences, thus follows necessarily. This discourse processing of and into a mimetic process (teleo)logically entails three narrative (inter)dynamics: of prospection, retrospection, and recognition or, in narrative experiential shorthand, of suspense, curiosity, and surprise. In them, the definitional interplay between temporalities all along not only assumes operative (and, because multifold, cooperative) shape but also further defines itself as tense, discordant, gappy, hence pressing for closure in (re)construction, which may never materialize. The times in narrative play unroll out of step with each other, so that the *prospector* looks ahead to some contingency and the *retrospector/recognizer* looks backward on some mystery, with a view to closing gaps opened on the move between them. In either case, the driving force of interest, ignorance, instability, inference, uncertainty entails the felt absence of information along one time-line (narrational, gappily given) about another time-line (narrated, hypothetically made out).

Far from located in the chronology, or chrono-logic, narrativity thus requires chronological deformation and deficiency: whether temporary (i.e., ultimately *re*chronologized into event order) or permanent (left disordered to the end), whether mental (any doubtful "and then?" being enough for suspense in unforeknowing humans) or also textualized (into a late-before-early discourse, necessary to produce curiosity and surprise, in the face of accomplished but still undivulged facts). All three master effects/interests/subdynamics arise from discontinuities (gaps, hence multiple, ambiguous closures) between the telling/reading and the told sequence, yet each pursues its own gapping-to-gap-filling teleology in countless forms.

Suspense arises from rival scenarios envisaged about the future: from the perceptible discrepancy between what the telling lets us readers know about the happening (e.g., a conflict) at any moment and what still lies ahead,

ambiguous because yet unresolved in the told world, or not to our knowl-
edge. This is how even the straightest chronology disorders and dynamizes
the prospective mind, uncertain (e.g., both hopeful and fearful) regard-
ing the outcome suspended and restlessly shuttling between the imagined
(e.g., hopeful/fearful) outcomes. The fellow universals of suspense rather
involve manipulations of the past, which the tale communicates, and we
gap-fillers (re)construct, in a sequence divergent from the happening. Per-
ceptibly divergent for *curiosity*: knowing that we do not know, we then go
forward with our mind lingering on the gapped antecedents, trying to infer
(bridge, compose) them in retrospect. Why does Hamlet procrastinate?
Who killed Roger Ackroyd? Like the suspenseful gap-filler, only with the
felt uncertainty reversing time directions, the curiosity-driven processor
expects ultimate stable closure of the fragmentary, disorderly data, but
meanwhile needs to supply it as best one can when left under-informed,
via tentative, multiple, often incompatible, always revisable gap-filling
hypotheses. For *surprise*, however, we must be lured into false certainty for
a time about time past. So, and only so, a hypothesis established beyond
doubt (fact-like in our eyes, rather than uneasily forked, as in prospec-
tion and retrospection) will collapse with a vengeance thereafter and give
place to some other (if a true re-cognitive certainty) or others (if doubtful
makeshift alternatives). The narrative first unobtrusively gaps or twists its
chronology, then unexpectedly discloses to us our misreading in ignorance
and enforces a corrective rereading in late re-cognition, with the benefit of
sharpened hindsight. Just think of the twisting process whereby Fielding
springs on us Tom's real parentage.

   The three universals accordingly cover among them the workings that
distinguish narrative from everything else, because they exhaust the pos-
sibilities of communicating, or (re)constructing, action: of aligning ("twin-
ning") its natural early-to-late development toward a humanly unknow-
able future with its openness to untimely, crooked disclosure. Nor could
the three universals be or do otherwise—and we proceed otherwise than
with and through their interplays—judging by reason as well as experi-
ence. For them to ensue in the role of master forces, you need only start
from the genre's double condition of being and think it through in the
operational terms of the double movement that informs (or mis-, dis-,
under-informs) the encounter with the genre as a result. If *this* felt effect
(suspense, curiosity, surprise) as premise-cum-product, then *this* (prospec-
tive, retrospective, recognitive) process must operate, and if this process,
then this subtype of (time-gapped) interdynamics. In short, given *this* read-
ing experience as function, then this formal means of intersequencing
will generate (launch, propel, conclude) it, with the appropriate twists en

route, and thereby make the best, purposive sense. Also inversely, given *this* intersequencing, then this reading experience will ensue and explain. In terms of Le Guin's desired knowledge, the genre-specific why's not only emerge at long last but, for good measure, emerge from the "what/how" relation—as, by functional, end-to-means reasoning, vice versa.

I therefore define *narrativity* as the play of suspense/curiosity/surprise between represented and communicative time (in whatever combination, whatever medium, whatever manifest or latent form). Along the same functional lines, I define *narrative* as a discourse where such play dominates: narrativity then ascends from a possibly marginal or secondary role (e.g., as a temporal force governed by the space-making, descriptive function that always coexists with it [Sternberg 1978, 1981, 1983a]) to the status of regulating principle, first among the priorities of telling/reading.[103]

So narrativity is what it uniquely does, or has us do, or becomes of what we do, in the twofold process thrice compounded by suspense/curiosity/surprise; and narrative makes the most (as description makes the least) of narrativity's doings, sui generis. This paradigm shift toward a functionalist reconception would appear to capture both the genre's immense variety and our intuitive knowledge of its unity as no other definition has done. The very liabilities of objectivism do not just vanish here but (again comparably to those of "the direct speech fallacy") turn into strengths. In a nutshell:

(a) Arbitrariness-cum-circularity gives place to anchorage in attested, traceable, inevitable generic patterns of readerly experience, as the ana-

103. Cited from Sternberg 1992: 529. For details, see the listed references to my work. Uses and follow-ups by others since the 1970s, in several disciplines, are too numerous and miscellaneous to outline, assess, or even cite here. For some notable extensions in this line over the decades, though, see, e.g., Bordwell 1985, 2002, 2008 on film; Yacobi 1995, 2000 on image-to-word ekphrasis; Jahn 1997 on protean describing and narrating; Kafalenos 2006 on causality; Segal 2007, 2010 on endings; Gray and Mittel 2007 on spoilers; Pier 2008 on post hoc/propter hoc; Werdiger 2008 on surprise. More corpus-based analyses in similar terms include Toker 1982 on *Emma*, Maglavera 1994 on Dickens, Lachman 2001 on Emily Dickinson, Sonnet 2010 on God's narrative identity. For attempts to have it both ways, see the overview in Sternberg 2003a, 2003b, 2004 of some cognitivists, starting with Brewer and Lichtenstein (1981, 1982), who would formalize the play of suspense/curiosity/surprise, or Kafalenos 2008 on Baroni 2007. But Kafalenos herself (2006: 2–3, 158–59, 203n2) tries to reconcile my definition with Prince's objectivism and, more generally, with Proppian morphology. Not to mention the host of inquiries where the three narrative universals figure but have yet to assume the due leading role and/or where the emphasis falls more on the telling/ reading in narrative sequence than on its generic drives and effects. If Pavel (1990: 350–51) finds "textual movement . . . the reader's activity, and with it, a variety of temporal games" in narrative ignored outside Tel Aviv narratology, then twenty years later (Abbott 2009: 309) as cogently describes a sea change: "attention has turned increasingly to the transaction between narratives and the audiences that bring them to life." Amid the ongoing babel regarding narrativity, then, a paradigm shift would appear in progress.

lyst's baseline and guideline rolled into one. From the highest-level theory downward, analysis comes to enjoy a psychological realism found nowhere else among definitions. It all begins with the three universals of processing (prospective, retrospective, recognitive) forced on the mind when caught between sequences. If narrative/narrativity is what it does to the experiencer in the discoursing, then what it does willy-nilly branches into this well-defined set of responses to mental pressure exerted by the intersequence: to a gapped gestalt in time, to a broken event line, to perceptibly missing and dechronologized information, to epistemic uncertainty and disequilibrium. "Caught on the move between past and future, between knowledge and incomprehension of the events told, how can the reader help wondering about the opaque developments ahead, or wanting to settle mysteries left behind, or bumping against unexpected disclosures?" (Sternberg 2008a: 51). Moreover, amid their family likeness, each of these troubled responses to narrative intersequencing boasts its own sense of absence, gappiness, ambiguity, instability about the world in motion, which presses for an equally definite attempt at closure, if only via multiple, pro tem, changeful hypothesizing.

In turn, the felt master effects ("why's") point the analyst toward their operative formal sources ("what's/how's") in the discourse. Guided by those experienced universals, as I've often shown, we can match the three forces with the assorted, "protean" (con)textual forms (the event line's narrative deformations, which open and/or settle gaps) appropriate as means to the respective teleologies within the frame concerned. Protean, because the same universal generic force ranges over different (con)textual forms, equally serviceable to it, and vice versa:

> We thus map suspense (i.e., our felt uncertainty about the narrated future) onto an impending conflict, or the narrator's wink ahead, or the hero's fear, or a proleptic epithet, or a traditional happy/unhappy closure in doubt, for example; we map curiosity about antecedents onto an ambiguous backreference, or a motive perceptibly absent, or a related outcome-before-cause disordering; and we map surprise onto any gap in our knowledge of the action concealed thus far and sprung on us after the event that we now belatedly re-cognize (Sternberg 2009: 501).

All this branches out from the general rule whereby narrative force (function, interest, effect) as such involves, hence signals and explains, the discontinuity of the telling/reading with the told. As the composite generic force does regarding temporal (de)form(ation) at large, the three component universal ends pinpoint, motivate, integrate the particular (de)formative means suitable and referable to each.

(b) Ambiguity about the world in time reverses all the way from disqualifying minus to definitional must and plus. What theorists since Aristotle (e.g., cognitivists, poeticians, philosophers) have regarded as a narrative threat, or threat to narrativity, hence excluded at any cost, turns into the genre's very hallmark, inherent rich appeal, manifold driving force, and the highway to ends other than itself as well. Born of gapping, temporary or permanent, such dynamic ambiguity thus generates, energizes, and signals narrativity—and if dominant, narrative—from rise to possible resolution: all in the mind's experience of discourse. Likewise with how modality, especially epistemic, reverses from a surface don't into a strategic must of narrative as a suppose game or if-plot, based on progressive hypothesis-making. In view of the rage against the ambiguous/modalized in various approaches and disciplines—at the narrative core, above all—these joint reversals are another striking measure of the paradigm shift I advocate.

(c) The resultant balance sheet is therefore diametrically opposed to objectivism's. The uniqueness of the suspense/curiosity/surprise forces working along the constitutive intersequence, their psychological realism, their explanatory power, their genre-wide coverage, with modular, scalar discourse-wide extension, and their subgrouping by that very functional rationale: together, these advantages would appear to settle the problem of narrativity, so as to lay the missing disciplinary foundations. On them, we can build a reasoned, powerful, versatile approach to narrative, along with related phenomena, on the broadest front (e.g., identifying, organizing, sense-making, historicizing, or, perhaps most vexed, reclassifying on a well-defined generis basis, and revisiting on this basis extradefinitional, cross-generic, all-discursive elements incorporated in the genre, like speech, analogy, or perspective). The long divorce between narrative in its narrativity (as abstract type) and narrative in its textuality (as manifest token) reverses into close alignment by functional definition.

(d) The line running straight between narrativity and narrative grades all texts: by the motivated (because sui generis) and homogeneous and applicable criterion of their intersequential processing, from negligible or neutralized to dominant prospection, retrospection, recognition. The range in between includes a focus divided, unstable, alternating with some other and otherwise processing teleology. Yet whatever the balance of power there, the rivalry may be inherent, systemic, even generic—because encodable into a mixed discourse form—as well as contingent. As every representation images an object located in spacetime, narrative always coexists and competes there with descriptive force, each geared to its own criterial world-axis (Sternberg 1978; 1981a: esp. 72 ff.; 1985: esp. 321–64). The priorities between these competing representational functions widely

vary in world making. Widely, yet gradably and in inverse ratio: the more narrativity—as above, ascending toward control in narrative proper—the less descriptivity, and vice versa.

(e) Discourses, or their readings, further vary and converge by the narrative universal most operative in them. Thus suspense dominates in the picaresque and the Western, curiosity in the detective story and the ordeal of memory, surprise in Fielding and Austen: ostensibly ill-sorted pairs are alike in the narrative sense they make, as vice versa. Either way, the deep functional (un)likeness outweighs the appearances to the contrary (e.g., in terms of subject matter or canonicity).

(f) As with freely variable dominance along all these lines, so with extension. Together or apart, the three generic processual mechanisms can range in magnitude from micro- to macro-narrative, and along axes no less various. Thus their extendibility all the way from a single gap to an entire ambiguous plot; from one sign or sentence to a scene (dialogic, monologic, visual, cinematic) to Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* length; or subgenerically, from a joke, cartoon, news flash, short story, one-act play to an epic, saga, chronicle, (auto)biography, novel, performance, regular film. Just compare the shout "A bomb!" with a drama of terrorism in any medium. Inversely, contrast that one-noun shorthand, generating in the hearer the narrativity of surprise/curiosity (why? who? where?) as well as suspense (hope, fear), with Humbert's equally nominalized but future-directed miniature daydream, "A shipwreck. An atoll. Alone with a drowned passenger's shivering child."

Akin to these axes of magnitude is the crosscutting variable of how long the gap keeps running in its forked uncertainty and, what's more, whether it ever finds stable disambiguation. Here, temporary opposes permanent gapping: a conflict left unresolved ("suspended"), a mystery unsolved, a surprising disclosure of a breach in chronology and knowledge, yet without late remedial closure. Throughout, the genre's protean flexibility reappears once again, including the double typological gain of coverage with cutting edge.

(g) So it does regarding other generic variations, even those often mistaken for criterial, like material and mental differences among our (i)–(xii). The old/new tendency to privilege, in effect reify, some such variant at times also compounds with nominal prejudice against the genre's operative invariants as "low thrills." All, again, distinctions without a difference at this basic what's-what level.

As suspense, curiosity, and surprise function in the (re)constructive mind, they can map themselves on any surface form, not even necessarily an objective one, still less objective-looking, to produce the co-definitional

objective time sequence. Formally, the very world-objects that serve as the correlates, reflexes, or triggers of these universals in the discourse cut across all lines: between external and internal reality; between fiction and history; between openly modal (iffy, deontic) and categorical-seeming reference to the world; between any shape of eventhood listed in (i)–(xii) and any other; between event and state, with its own subdivisions (e.g., among character, thing, arena, milieu, reality model); or between plot and perspective. There's no limiting narrativity (or, as already shown, tellability) a priori to any determinate mimesis whatsoever.

    This runs against the prevalent bias in favor of humanity, *ethos*, character, intention, experientiality, as traced in the objectivisms of (i)-(xii) above, especially (ii) and (vii). Thus, my "narrative universals of curiosity, suspense, and surprise" do *not* depend, as Herman (2009: 84) believes, on the transposal of our spacetime to "orienting characters within mentally prospected storyworlds." In other words, the universals are not limited to (vii) above, or even to (ii)—and what would then become of the rest?—since they equally and inevitably apply to sheer "happenings" (nonethical, nonagentive, nonhuman) as encountered by the narrative mind between the sequences. But he (ibid.: 139 ff.) at least requires action alongside existence and outlook. The restrictive anthropocentric bias grows still more doctrinal and definitional in Phelan's (effectless) variant of two-level narrativity. Apart from other problems, like those outlined above, he confines the world-wide narrated, actional level to the "dynamics of instability" enacted "within, between, or among characters," or possibly narrower yet, "experienced by the characters" (2005: 161–62). This echoes, in turn, Fludernik's (1996) "experientiality," as Herman overtly does. But she herself, we recall, funnily "suspects" myself of ruling (the experiencer's?) direct quotation out of narrative. We recall also how she confines "narrativizing" otherwise, along discursive as well as mimetic lines: to "texts that are radically inconsistent," that is, strategically threatened by what I call permanent gapping, ambiguity, incoherence. The string thereby attached to the narrativizable grows far more exclusionary—just a handful of texts would qualify—but even less defensible in theory and practice; least of all by a self-declared constructivist (ibid.: 12).

    If mimetic at all, however weakly or obliquely, then a discourse becomes eligible (in someone's eyes at least) for containing, signaling, releasing the necessary processual energy. Just reconsider the sexcapade latent in Humbert's series of imagined stills ("shipwreck . . . atoll . . . alone . . .") or the kinetic force of Lessing's visual "pregnant moment." But then, the discourse triggers of narrativity further stretch beyond the mimesis itself to forms of poesis, equally assorted and equally associable with intersequential

dynamics: conventions, (dis)orderings, analogies, montages, allusions, figu-
rations, repetitions, musical overtones, visual imbalances, verbal choices,
narratorial addresses. (For example, the array of devices extrapolated from
Homer alone in Sternberg 1978: 105–6.) Throughout, it's the victory of the
protean mind, processing, shaping, adjusting, inferring, comparing, dif-
ferentiating, transforming to some well-defined narrative effect, over the
boundless appearances of matter.

So there is no limit to what forms, by what incentives, through what stages,
into what product, with what effect, under what rules, desires, licenses, or
exigencies, the narrative mind temporalizes, actionalizes, intersequences.
Nor is there a limit to the checks and balances, public, pragmatic, poetic,
private, operating to control, and so restrict, its application of the bound-
less Proteus Principle, if only for communicativeness. Inversely, as the trig-
gers change forms and (dis)join forces in the process, they bring into play
different aspects or faculties of the protean mind itself at narrativizing work:
cognitive, emotive, logical (e.g., inferential), psychological, ideological,
ontic, epistemic, ludic, aesthetic, gestalt-making, world-making, discourse-
making, all again richly interpenetrating under the suspense/curiosity/sur-
prise umbrella.

Taken together, all these protean variations also undercut the long-
standing bias of aesthetic puritanism against sheer ("low") narrative inter-
est, especially suspense. (Recall how Forster and Barthes in S/Z devaluate
it into a primitive appeal, geared to external action and best outgrown,
resisted, displaced with antilinear value or violence. Henry James knew
better, and not just in intuitive practice, like his fellow artists, but even in elo-
quent theorizing: witness the quotes discussed in Sternberg 1978: 296–303,
which at times sound like an Alfred Hitchcock.) If, however, the univer-
sal trio functions on any scale and object, in any subgenre, by any device,
to any composite or hierarchical effect, then it will belie its reputation as
cheap thrills unworthy of high art, lifelike or playful. (Anyone troubled by
the low associations of these experiential shorthands, even so, is welcome to
switch terms to "prospective, retrospective, recognitive dynamics" instead.)

(h) The three master forces of narrativity narrativize everything in the
narrative discourse by assimilating it willy-nilly to their dynamics of lifelike
development and/or artful disclosure. Even components and structures
that narrative shares with nonnarrative texts or with textuality at large,
such as spatialities, characters, viewpoints, themes, ideology, semiotic
code (e.g., language), and time of communication itself, assume a distinc-
tive reference and energy once controlled and mobilized by the dynamics
of narrative. However far from genre-specific, let alone energetic per se,
those components, or structures, become so when leading a double life in

time: between what happens and what we learn (unlearn, relearn) from moment to moment.

Thus, on the move between the sequences, any word is liable to conceal, darken, fork, reveal, change, invert its initial meaning and patterning, just like an event, indeed along with it. The narrated world's unfolding, with its disclosures and developments, its epistemic gaps and ontic fortunes, carries over to the word. Similar adventures must befall a portrait, an idea, a place, a perspective, an analogy, a reality key, an artistic device, under the twofold pressure of uncertainty and instability on the way, possibly all the way, to the end. Their drama can even steal the show from the intrinsic plottables of Aristotelian action. Narrativity does not then automatically weaken, much less vanish—as often claimed of (post)modernism—but shifts the operative arena and center of its workings: toward the internal life or toward spatiotemporal art, for example. Everything in narrative must accordingly go through the twin process of happening-cum-telling/reading—hence through the dynamics of suspense, curiosity, surprise—and influence it in turn. Nothing in narrative escapes, or forfeits, the universal workings of narrativity between times.

References

Abbate, Carolyn
   1991 *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).
Abbott, H. Porter
   2000a "The Evolutionary Origins of the Storied Mind: Modeling the Prehistory of Narrative Consciousness and Its Discontents," *Narrative* 8: 247–56.
   2000b "What Do We Mean When We Say 'Narrative Literature'? Looking for Answers across Disciplinary Borders," *Style* 34: 260–73.
   2002 *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
   2009 "Narrativity," in Jon Pier et al. 2009: 309–28.
Adams, Jon K.
   2009 "Causality and Narrative," *Journal of Literary Semantics* 18: 146–62.
Alber, Jan, Stefan Iverson, Henrik Skov Nielson, and Brian Richardson
   2010 "Unnatural Narrative, Unnatural Narratology: Beyond Mimetic Models," *Narrative* 18: 113–36.
Amsterdam, Anthony G., and Jerome Bruner
   2000 *Minding the Law* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).
Argyros, Alex
   1992 "Narrative and Chaos," *New Literary History* 23: 659–73.
Aristotle
   1909 *On the Art of Poetry: A Revised Text with Critical Introduction*, translated by Ingram Bywater. (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
   1954 *Rhetoric*, translated by W. Rhys Roberts. (New York: Modern Library).
   2006 *Physics*, translated by R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gaye. (Stilwell, KS: DigiReads.com Publishing).

Bakhtin, M. Mikhail
    1981 The Dialogic Imagination, translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist
        (Austin: University of Text Press).
Bal, Mieke
    2004 Narrative Theory, vol. 1 (London: Routledge).
Bal, Mieke, ed.
    1985 Narratology, translated by Christine van Boheemen (Toronto: University of Toronto
        Press).
Barnes, Harry Elmer
    1963 [1937] A History of Historical Writing (New York: Dover).
Baroni, Raphael
    2007 La tension narrative: Suspense, curiosité et surprise (Paris: Seuil).
Barthes, Roland
    1974 [1970] S/Z, translated by Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang).
    1988a [1966] "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives," in Barthes 1988b:
        95–135.
    1988b [1969] The Semiotic Challenge, translated by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and
        Wang).
Barwell, Ismay
    2009 "Understanding Narrative and Narrative Understanding," Journal of Aesthetics and Art
        Criticism 67: 49–59.
Belfiore, Elizabeth
    1992a "Aristotle and Iphygenia," in Rorty 1992: 359–77.
    1992b Tragic Pleasures: Aristotle on Plot and Emotion (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University
        Press).
    2000 "Narratological Plots and Aristotle's Mythos," Arethusa 33: 37–70.
Benjamin, Walter
    1955 [1936] Illuminations, translated by Harry Zohn (New York: Harcourt).
Benyon, M., C. L. Nehaniv, and K. Dautenham, eds.
    2001 Cognitive Technology: Instruments of Mind (Berlin: Springer).
Black, John B., and Gordon H. Bower
    1980 "Story Understanding as Problem-Solving," Poetics 9: 223–50.
Black, John B., and Robert Wilensky
    1979 "An Evaluation of Story Grammars," Cognitive Science 3: 213–30.
Bordwell, David
    1985 Narration in the Fiction Film (Madison: Wisconsin University Press).
    2002 "Film Futures," SubStance 31: 88–104.
    2004 "Neo-Structuralist Narratology and the Functions of Filmic Storytelling," in Ryan
        2004: 203–19.
    2008 Poetics of Cinema (New York: Routledge).
Boyd, Brian
    2009 On the Origin of Stories: Evolution, Cognition, and Fiction (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Uni-
        versity Press).
Branigan, Edward
    1992 Narrative Comprehension and Film (London: Routledge).
Bremond, Claude
    1970 "Morphology of the French Folktale," Semiotica 2: 247–76.
    1973 Logique du récit (Paris: Seuil).
    1980 [1966] "The Logic of Narrative Possibilities," translated by Elaine D. Cancalon, New
        Literary History 11: 387–411.
Brewer, William F.
    1995 "To Assert That Essentially All Human Knowledge and Memory Is Represented in
        Terms of Stories Is Certainly Wrong," in Wyer 1995: 109–19.

Brewer, William F., and Edward H. Lichtenstein
    1981 "Event Schemas, Story Schemas, and Story Grammars," in *Attention and Performance*,
        vol. 9, edited by J. Long and A. Baddeley, 363–79 (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum).
    1982 "Stories Are to Entertain: A Structural-Affect Theory of Stories," *Journal of Pragmatics*
        6: 473–86.
Brône, Geert, and Jeroen Vandaele, eds.
    2009 *Cognitive Poetics: Goals, Gains, and Gaps* (Berlin: De Gruyter).
Bruner, Jerome
    1986 *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).
    1991 "The Narrative Construction of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 18: 1–21.
    2004 "Life as Narrative," *Social Research* 71: 691–710.
Burke, Kenneth.
    1969 [1945] *The Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
Calvino, Italo
    1988 *Six Memos for the Next Millennium* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).
Carr, David
    1986 *Time, Narrative, and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press).
Carroll, Noël
    1990 "Interpretation, History, Narrative," *Monist* 73: 134–67.
    2001 "On the Narrative Connection," in van Peer and Chatman 2001: 21–41.
    2007 "Narrative Closure," *Philosophical Studies* 135: 1–15.
    2009 "Introduction." Special issue, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 67: 1–3.
Caserio, Robert L.
    1979 *Plot, Story, and the Novel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).
Chambers, Ross
    1984 *Story and Situation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).
Chase, Cynthia
    1978 "The Decomposition of the Elephants: Double-Reading *Daniel Deronda*," *PMLA* 93:
        215–27.
Chatman, Seymour
    1978 *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univer-
        sity Press).
    1990 *Coming to Terms* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).
    1999 "New Directions in Voice-Narrated Cinema," in Herman 1999b: 315–39.
Cobley, Paul
    2003 *Narrative* (London: Routledge).
Cohn, Dorrit
    1978 *Transparent Minds* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).
    1999 *The Distinction of Fiction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press).
Cole, Peter, and Jerry L. Morgan
    1975 *Syntax and Semantics: Speech Acts* (New York: Academic).
Crane, R. S., ed.
    1952 *Critics and Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
Culler, Jonathan
    1975 *Structuralist Poetics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).
    1981 *The Pursuit of Signs* (London: Routledge).
    2004 "Omniscience," *Narrative* 12: 22–34.
Currie, Gregory
    2006 "Narrative Representations of Causes," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 64:
        309–16.
    2007 "Both Sides of the Story: Explaining Events in a Narrative," *Philosophical Studies* 135:
        49–63.

Dautenham, Kerstin
  2001 "The Narrative Intelligence Hypothesis: In Search of the Transactional Format of Narratives in Humans and Other Social Animals," in Benyon et al. 2001: 248–66.
Feagin, Susan L.
  2007 "On Nöel Carroll on Narrative Closure," *Philosophical Studies* 135: 17–25.
Fleischman, Suzanne
  1990 *Tense and Narrativity* (London: Routledge).
Fludernik, Monika
  1993 *The Fictions of Language and the Languages of Fiction* (London: Routledge).
  1996 *Towards a "Natural" Narratology* (London and New York: Routledge).
  2008 "Narrative and Drama," in Pier and Garcia Landa 2008: 355–83.
Fogelson, Raymond D.
  1989 "The Ethnology of Events and Nonevents," *Ethnohistory* 36: 133–48.
Forster, E. M.
  1962 [1927] *Aspects of the Novel* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin).
Frawley, William
  1992 *Linguistic Semantics* (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum).
Friedman, Norman
  1958 "What Makes a Short Story Short?" *Modern Fiction Studies* 4: 103–15.
Garcia Landa, José Ángel
  2008 "Narrating Narrating: Twisting the Trice-Told Tale," in Pier and Garcia Landa 2008: 419–52.
Genette, Gérard
  1980 *Narrative Discourse*, translated by Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).
  1982a *Figures of Literary Discourse*, translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: Columbia University Press).
  1982b [1966] "Frontiers of Narrative," in Genette 1982a: 127–44.
  1988 [1983] *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, translated by Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).
  1992 *The Architext*, translated by Jane E. Lewin (Berkeley: University of California Press).
Giora, Rachel, and Yeshayahu Shen
  1994 "Degrees of Narrativity and Strategies of Semantic Reduction," *Poetics* 22: 447–58.
Goodman, Nelson
  1980 "Twisted Tales; or, Story, Study, and Symphony," *Critical Inquiry* 7: 103–19.
Gratton, Johnnie
  1995 "Towards Narrativity: Nathalie Sarraute's *Enfance*," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 31: 300–311.
Gray, Jonathan and Jason Mittel
  2007 "Speculation on Spoilers: *Lost Fandom*, Narrative Consumption and Rethinking Textuality," *Particip@tions* 4: 1–23.
Greimas, Algirdas Julien
  1970 [1969] *Du sens: Essais sémiotiques* (Paris: Seuil).
  1989 [1973] "Description and Narrativity: 'The Piece of String,'" *New Literary History* 20: 615–26.
Grice, H. Paul
  1975 "Logic and Conversation," in Cole and Morgan 1975: 41–58.
Groden, Michael, Martin Kreiswirth, and Imre Szeman, eds.
  1997 *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press).
Habel, Christopher
  1986 "Stories: An Artificial Intelligence Perspective," *Poetics* 15: 111–25.

Halliday, M. A. K.
   1994 *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (London: Edward Arnold).
Halliwell, Stephen
   1986 *Aristotle's "Poetics"* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press).
Hastie, Reid, and Nancy Pennington
   1995 "The Big Picture: Is It a Story?" in Wyer 1995: 133–38.
Heath, Malcolm
   1989a *Unity in Greek Poetics* (Oxford: Clarendon).
   1989b "Aristotle's *Poetics*," *Classical Philology* 84: 151–59.
   1991 "The Universality of Poetry in Aristotle's Poetics," *The Classical Quarterly* 41: 389–402.
Heller, Joseph
   1975 [1966] *Something Happened* (New York: Ballantine).
Herman, David
   1999a "Toward a Socionarratology: New Ways of Analyzing National-Language Narratives," in Herman 1999b: 218–46.
   2002 *Story Logic* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press).
   2004 "Toward a Transmedial Narratology," in Ryan 2004: 47–75.
   2009 *Basic Elements of Narrative* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell).
Herman, David, ed.
   1999b *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press).
   2007 *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
Herman, David, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan, eds.
   2005 *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* (London: Routledge).
Hernadi, Paul
   1980 "On the How, What, and Why of Narrative," *Critical Inquiry* 7: 201–3.
Hogan, Patrick C.
   2003 *Cognitive Science, Literature, and the Arts* (London: Routledge).
Holloway, John
   1979 *Narrative and Structure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
Hühn, Peter
   2008 "Functions and Forms of Eventfulness in Narrative Fiction," in Pier and Garcia Landa 2008: 141–63.
Hume, David
   1957 [1757] *The Natural History of Religion* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press).
Jahn, Manfred
   1997 "Frames, Preferences, and the Reading of Third-Person Narratives: Toward a Cognitive Narratology," *Poetics Today* 18: 441–68.
Johnson, B. S.
   1999 "Introduction to Aren't You Rather Young to Be Writing Your Memoirs," *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 19: 64–77.
Johnson-Laird, Philip
   1983 *Mental Models* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).
Kafalenos, Emma
   2006 *Narrative Causalities* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press).
   2008 "Emotions Induced by Narratives," *Poetics Today* 29: 377–84.
Kellner, Hans
   1987 "Narrativity in History: Post-Structuralism and Science," *History and Theory* 26: 1–29.
Kermode, Frank
   1967 *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press).
   1978 "Sensing Endings," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 33: 144–58.
   2009 "E. M. Forster and the Art and Science of the Novel," *New England Review* 30: 106–15.

Kintsch, Walter
   2000 *Comprehension: A Paradigm for Cognition* (New York: Cambridge University Press).
Kreiswirth, Martin
   1992 "Trusting the Tale: The Narrativist Turn in the Human Sciences," *New Literary History* 23: 629–57.
Kvernbekk, Jone
   2003 "On Identifying Narratives," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 22: 267–79.
Labov, William
   1972 "The Transformation of Experience in Narrative Syntax," in *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular*, 354–96 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press).
Lachman, Lilach
   2001 "Time, Fear, and Audience in Dickinson's Gothic Drama," *Gothic Studies*, 3: 61–73.
Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson
   1980 *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
Lamarque, Peter
   2004 "On Not Expecting Too Much from Narrative," *Mind and Language* 19: 393–408.
Le Guin, Ursula
   1980 "It Was a Dark and Stormy Night; or, Why Are We Huddling about the Campfire?" *Critical Inquiry* 7: 191–99.
Lemon, Lee T., and Marion J. Reis, eds.
   1965 *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press).
Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim
   1963 [1766] *The Laocoon: An Essay upon the Limits of Painting and Poetry*, translated by Ellen Frothingham (New York: Noonday).
Levinson, Jerrold
   2004 "Music as Narrative and Music as Drama," *Mind and Language* 19: 428–41.
Lewis, David
   1978 "Truth in Fiction," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 15: 37–46.
Livingston, Paisley
   2009 "Narrativity and Knowledge," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 67: 25–36.
Lotte, Jakob
   2000 *Narrative in Fiction and Film* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
Lubbock, Percy
   1963 [1921] *The Craft of Fiction* (New York: Viking).
MacIntyre, Alasdair
   1981 *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press).
Maglavera, Soultana K.
   1994 *Time Patterns in Later Dickens* (Amsterdam: Rodopi).
Mandler, Jean M.
   1982 "Another Story of Grammars," *Journal of Pragmatics* 6: 433–40.
   1984 *Stories, Scripts, and Scenes: Aspects of Schema Theory* (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum).
Martin, Wallace
   1986 *Recent Theories of Narrative* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).
Martinez-Bonati, Félix
   1981 *Fictive Discourse and the Structures of Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).
Mateas, Michael, and Phoebe Sengers
   1999 *Narrative Intelligence Symposium* (Menlo Park, CA: Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence).
Maus, Fred Everett
   2005 "Classical Instrumental Music and Narrative," in Phelan and Rabinowitz 2005: 466–83.

McHale, Brian
    1987 *Postmodernist Fiction* (London: Methuen).
    2001 "Weak Narrativity: The Case of Avant-Garde Narrative Poetry," *Narrative* 9: 61–67.
McQuillan, Martin, ed.
    2000 *The Narrative Reader* (London: Routledge).
Meister, Jan Christoph, Tom Kindt, and Wilhelm Schernus
    2005 *Narratology beyond Literary Criticism: Mediality, Disciplinarity* (Berlin: De Gruyter).
Metz, Christian
    1974 *Film Language*, translated by Michael Taylor (New York: Oxford University Press).
Mink, Louis O.
    1970 "History and Fiction as Modes of Comprehension," *New Literary History* 1: 541–58.
Morson, Gary Saul
    2003 "Narrativeness," *New Literary History* 34: 59–73.
Nabokov, Vladimir
    1959 *Lolita* (New York: Fawcett).
Nanay, Bence
    2009 "Narrative Pictures," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 67: 119–29.
Nietzsche, Friedrich
    1989 [1887] *On the Genealogy of Morals*, translated by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Holling-
        dale (New York: Vintage).
Norvig, Peter
    1992 "Story Analysis," in Shapiro 1992: 1–117.
Nünning, Ansgar, and Roy Sommers
    2008 "Diegetic and Mimetic Narrativity: Some Further Steps towards a Narratology of
        Drama," in Pier and Garcia Landa 2008: 331–54.
Palmer, Alan
    2004 *Fictional Minds* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press).
Partner, Nancy F.
    1986 "Making Up Lost Time: Writing on the Writing of History," *Speculum* 61: 90–117.
Pasco, Allan H.
    1991 "On Defining Short Stories," *New Literary History* 22: 407–22.
Passmore, John
    1987 "Narratives and Events," *History and Theory* 26: 68–74.
Pavel, Thomas G.
    1985 *The Poetics of Plot: The Case of English Renaissance Drama* (Minneapolis: University of
        Minnesota Press).
    1990 "Narrative Tectonics," *Poetics Today* 11: 49–64.
Phelan, James
    1996 *Narrative as Rhetoric* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press).
    2005 *Living to Tell about It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narrative* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell
        University Press).
    2007 *Experiencing Fiction: Judgments, Progressions, and the Rhetorical Theory of Narrative* (Colum-
        bus: Ohio State University Press).
Phelan, James, and Peter J. Rabinowitz, eds.
    2005 *A Companion to Narrative Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell).
Pier, John
    2008 "After This, Therefore because of This," in Pier and Garcia Landa 2008: 109–40.
Pier, John, and José Ángel Garcia Landa, eds.
    2008 *Theorizing Narrativity* (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton).
Pier, John, Peter Hühn, Jorg Schönert, and Wolf Schmid, eds.
    2009 *Handbook of Narratology* (Berlin: De Gruyter).
Potts, J. L.
    1968 *Aristotle on the Art of Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Pratt, Mary Louise
   1977 *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press).
Prince, Gerald
   1973 *A Grammar of Stories* (The Hague: Mouton).
   1982 *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative* (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton).
   1987 *A Dictionary of Narratology* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press).
   1997 "Narratology," in Groden and Kreiswirth 1997
   2004 [1999] "Revisiting Narrativity," in Bal 2004: 11–19.
   2005 "Narrativity," in Herman et al. 2005: 387–88.
   2008 "Narrativehood, Narrativeness, Narrativity, Narratability," in Pier and Garcia Landa 2008: 19–27.
Propp, Vladimir
   1968 [1928] *Morphology of the Folktale*, translated by Laurence Scott (Austin: University of Texas Press).
Rabinowitz, Peter J.
   1987 *Before Reading* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press).
Richardson, Brian
   1997 *Unlikely Stories* (Newark: University of Delaware Press).
   2000 "Recent Concepts of Narrative and the Narratives of Narrative Theory," *Style* 34: 168–75.
   2001 "Denarration in Fiction: Erasing the Story in Beckett and Others," *Narrative* 9: 168–75.
Ricoeur, Paul
   1984 *Time and Narrative*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
Rigney, Ann
   1991 "Narrativity and Historical Representation," *Poetics Today* 12: 591–605.
Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith
   1983 *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (New York: Methuen).
Rorty, Amélie Oksenberg, ed.
   1992 *Essays on Aristotle's "Poetics"* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).
Rubin, David
   1995 "Stories about Stories," in Wyer 1995: 153–64.
Rudrum, David
   2005 "From Narrative Representation to Narrative Use: Towards the Limit of Definition," *Narrative* 13: 195–204.
   2006 "On the Very Idea of a Definition of Narrative," *Narrative* 14: 197–204.
Rumelhart, David E.
   1977 "Understanding and Summarizing Brief Stories," in *Basic Processes in Reading: Perception and Comprehension*, edited by David LaBerge and Jay Samuels, 265–304 (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum).
   1980 "On Evaluating Story Grammars: A Reply to Black and Wilensky," *Cognitive Science* 4: 313–16.
Ryan, Marie-Laure
   1991 *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press).
   2005a "The Modes of Narrativity and their Visual Metaphors," *Style* 26: 368–87.
   2005b "Narrative," in Herman et al. 2005: 344–48.
   2005c "On the Theoretical Foundations of Transmedial Narratology," in Meister et al. 2005: 1–23.
   2006 "Semantics, Pragmatics, and Narrativity: A Response to David Rudrum," *Narrative* 14: 188–96.

2007 "Toward a Definition of Narrative," in Herman 2007: 22–38

2008 "Transfictionality across Media," in Pier and Garcia Landa 2008: 385–417.

Ryan, Marie-Laure, ed.

2004 *Narrative across Media* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press).

Sacks, Oliver

1998 *The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat* (New York: Touchstone).

Schank, Roger C.

1980 "Language and Memory," *Cognitive Science* 4: 243–84.

Schank, Roger C., and Robert P. Abelson

1977 *Scripts, Plans, Goals, and Understanding: An Inquiry into Human Knowledge Structure* (Hillsday, NJ: Erlbaum).

1995 "Knowledge and Memory: The Real Story," in Wyer 1995: 1–85.

Schmid, Wolf

2003 "Narrativity and Eventfulness," in *What Is Narratology?* edited by Tom Kindt and Hans-Harald Müller, 17–33 (Berlin: De Gruyter).

Scholes, Robert

1980 "Language, Narrative, and Anti-Narrative," *Critical Inquiry* 7: 204–12.

1982 *Semiotics and Interpretation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press).

Scholes, Robert, and Robert Kellogg

1966 *The Nature of Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press).

Searle, John R.

1983 *Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Sebeok, Thomas A., ed.

1960 *Style in Language* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press).

Segal, Eyal

2007 "The Problem of Narrative Closure: How Stories Are (Not) Finished." PhD diss., Tel Aviv University.

2010 "Closure in Detective Fiction," *Poetics Today* 31: 153–215.

Shapiro, Stuart C., ed.

1992 *Encyclopedia of Artificial Intelligence* (New York: Wiley).

Shklovsky, Viktor

1990 [1929] *Theory of Prose*, translated by Benjamin Sher (Elmwood Park, IL: Dalkey Archive).

Smarr, Janet Levarie

1979 "Some Considerations on the Nature of Plot," *Poetics* 8: 339–349.

Smith, Barbara Herrnstein

1980 "Narrative Versions, Narrative Theories," *Critical Inquiry* 7: 213–36.

Sonnet, Jean-Pierre

2010 "Eheyeh asher eheyeh (Exodus 3:14): God's 'Narrative Identity' among Suspense, Curiosity, and Surprise," *Poetics Today* 31: 331–51.

Spolsky, Ellen, ed.

1990 *The Uses of Adversity: Failure and Accommodation in Reader Response* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press).

Stanzel, Franz Karl

1984 *A Theory of Narrative*, translated by Charlotte Goedsche (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Stavans, Ilan

1996 "On Brevity: A Conversation with Augusto Monterroso," *Massachusetts Review* 37: 393–406.

Stein, Nancy L.

1982 "The Definition of a Story," *Journal of Pragmatics* 6: 487–507.

Steiner, Wendy
    1988 *Pictures of Romance: Form against Context in Painting and Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
Sternberg, Meir
    1978 *Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press).
    1981a "Ordering the Unordered: Time, Space, and Descriptive Coherence," *Yale French Studies* 61: 60–88.
    1981b "Polylingualism as Reality and Translation as Mimesis," *Poetics Today* 2: 221–39.
    1982a "Proteus in Quotation-Land: Mimesis and the Forms of Reported Discourse," *Poetics Today* 3: 107–56.
    1982b "Point of View and the Indirections of Direct Speech," *Language and Style* 15: 67–117.
    1983a "Deictic Sequence: World, Language, and Convention," in *Essays on Deixis*, edited by Gisa Rauh, 277–316 (Tübingen, Germany: Gunter Narr).
    1983b "Mimesis and Motivation: The Two Faces of Fictional Coherence," in *Literary Criticism and Philosophy*, edited by Joseph Strelka, 145–88 (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press).
    1983c "Knight Meets Dragon in the James Bond Saga: Realism and Reality Models," *Style* 17: 142–80.
    1984 "Spatiotemporal Art and the Other Henry James: The Case of *The Tragic Muse*," *Poetics Today* 5: 775–830.
    1985 *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press).
    1986 "The World from the Addressee's Viewpoint: Reception as Representation, Dialogue as Monologue," *Style* 20: 295–318.
    1990a "Time and Reader," in Spolsky 1990: 49–89.
    1990b "Telling in Time (I): Chronology and Narrative Theory," *Poetics Today* 11: 901–48.
    1990c "Time and Space in Biblical (Hi)story Telling: The Grand Chronology," in *The Book and the Text: The Bible and Literary Theory*, edited by Regina Schwartz, 81–145 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell).
    1992 "Telling in Time (II): Chronology, Teleology, Narrativity," *Poetics Today* 13: 463–541.
    1998 *Hebrews between Cultures: Group Portraits and National Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press).
    2001a "Why Narrativity Makes a Difference," *Narrative* 9: 115–22.
    2001b "Factives and Perspectives: Making Sense of Presupposition as Exemplary Inference," *Poetics Today* 22: 129–244.
    2003a "Universals of Narrative and Their Cognitivist Fortunes (I)," *Poetics Today* 24: 297–395.
    2003b "Universals of Narrative and Their Cognitivist Fortunes (II)," *Poetics Today* 24: 517–638.
    2004 "Narrative Universals, Cognitivist Story Analysis, and Interdisciplinary Pursuit of Knowledge: An Omnibus Rejoinder," www.arts.ualberta.ca/igel/igel12004/debate.
    2005 "Self-Consciousness as a Narrative Feature and Force: Tellers vs. Informants in Generic Design," in Phelan and Rabinowitz 2005: 232–52.
    2006 "Telling in Time (III): Chronology, Estrangement, and Stories of Literary History," *Poetics Today* 27: 125–335.
    2007 "Omniscience in Narrative Construction: Old Challenges and New," *Poetics Today* 28: 683–794.
    2008a "If-Plots: Narrativity and the Law-Code," in Pier and Garcia Landa 2008: 29–107.
    2008b *La grande chronologie*, translated by Christine Leroy (Brussels: Lessius).
    2009 "How (Not) to Move toward the Narrative Mind," in Brône and Vandaele 2009: 455–532.

Strawson, Galen
    2004 "Against Narrativity," *Ratio* 17: 428–52.
Sturgess, Philip J. M.
    1992 *Narrativity: Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Clarendon).
Tammi, Pekka
    2006 "Against Narrative: A Boring Story," *Partial Answers* 4: 19–40.
Todorov, Tzvetan
    1969 "Structural Analysis of Narrative," *Novel* 3: 70–76.
    1971 "The Two Principles of Narrative," *Diacritics* 1: 37–44.
    1977 *The Poetics of Prose*, trans. Richard Howard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).
Toker, Leona
    1982 "*Emma*: The Handling of a Surprise Gap," *Hebrew University Studies in Literature* 10:
        57–74.
Tomashevsky, Boris
    1965 [1925] "Thematics," in Lemon and Reis 1965: 61–95.
Toolan, Michael
    2001 *Narrative: A Critical Linguistic Introduction* (London: Routledge).
Trabasso, Tom, and Nancy L. Stein
    1997 "Narrating, Representing, and Remembering Event Sequences," in van den Broeck
        et al. 1997: 238–70.
Turner, Mark
    1996 *The Literary Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press).
Tversky, Barbara
    2004 "Narratives of Space, Time, and Life," *Mind and Language* 4: 380–92.
Tversky, Barbara, Jeffrey M. Zacks, and Paul Lee
    2004 "Events by Hands and Feet," *Spatial Cognition and Computation* 4: 5–14.
Van den Broeck, Paul W., Patricia J. Bauer, and Tammy Bourg, eds.
    1997 *Developmental Spans in Event Comprehension and Representation: Bridging Fictional and Actual
        Events* (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum).
Van Dijk, Teun A.
    1980 "Story Comprehension: An Introduction," *Poetics* 9: 1–21.
    1983 "A Pointless Approach to Stories," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 6: 598–99.
Van Peer, Willie, and Seymour Chatman, eds.
    2001 *New Perspectives on Narrative Perspective* (New York: State University of New York Press).
Velleman, J. David
    2003 "Narrative Explanation," *Philosophical Review* 112: 1–25.
von Wright, George Henrik
    1966 "The Logic of Action–A Sketch," in *The Logic of Decision and Action*, edited by Nicholas
        Rescher, 121–36 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press).
Walsh, Richard
    2007 *The Rhetoric of Fictionality: Narrative Theory and the Idea of Fiction* (Columbus: Ohio State
        University Press).
Waugh, Patricia
    1984 *Metafiction* (London: Methuen).
Werdiger, Tamar
    2008 "Surprise in Narrative." PhD diss., Tel Aviv University.
White, Hayden
    1980 "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 7: 5–27.
    1989 "Figuring the Nature of Times Deceased," in *Future Literary Theory*, edited by Ralph
        Cohen, 19–43 (New York: Routledge).
White, Morton
    1965 *Foundations of Historical Knowledge* (New York: Harper).

Wilensky, Robert
    1982a "Story Grammars Revisited," *Journal of Pragmatics* 6: 423–31.
    1982b "Points: A Theory of the Structure of Stories in Memory," in *Strategies for Natural Language Processing*, edited by Wendy G. Lehnert and Martin H. Ringle, 345–74 (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum).
    1983 "Story Grammars versus Story Points," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 6: 579–623.
Wolf, Werner
    2003 "Narrative and Narrativity: A Narratological Reconceptualization and Its Applicability to the Visual Arts," *Word & Image* 19: 180–97.
    2004 "'Cross the Border–Close that Gap': Towards an Intermedial Narratology," *European Journal of English Studies* 8: 81–103.
Woolf, Virginia
    1960 [1919] "Modern Fiction," in *The Common Reader: First Series*, 150–58 (New York: Harcourt).
Worth, Sarah
    2008 "Storytelling and Narrative Knowing: An Examination of the Epistemic Benefits of Well-Told Stories," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 42: 42–56.
Wyer, Robert S., ed.
    1995 *Knowledge and Memory: The Real Story* (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum).
Yacobi, Tamar
    1981 "Fictional Reliability as a Communicative Problem," *Poetics Today* 2: 113–26.
    1987 "Narrative and Normative Pattern: On Interpreting Fiction," *Journal of Literary Studies* 3: 18–41.
    1988 "Time Denatured into Meaning: New Worlds and Renewed Themes in the Poetry of Dan Pagis," *Style* 22: 93–115.
    1991 "Plots of Space: World and Story in Isak Dinesen," *Poetics Today* 12: 447–93.
    1995 "Pictorial Models and Narrative Ekphrasis," *Poetics Today* 16: 599–649.
    2000 "Interart Narrative: (Un)Reliability and Ekphrasis," *Poetics Today* 21: 708–47.
    2001 "Package Deals: The Narrator's (Un)Reliability," *Narrative* 9: 223–29.
    2002 "Ekphrasis and Perspectival Structure," in *Cultural Functions of Intermedial Exploration*, edited by Erik Hedling and Ulla-Britta Lagerroth, 189–202 (Amsterdam: Rodopi).
    2004 "Ekphrasis from the Perspective of Fictive Beholders: How Literature Dramatizes Visual Art," in *Iconotropism*, edited by Ellen Spolsky, 69–87 (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press).
    2005 "Authorial Rhetoric, Narratorial (Un)Reliability, Divergent Readings: Tolstoy's *Kreutzer Sonana*," in Phelan and Rabinowitz 2005: 108–123.
    2007 "Intermedial Narrative: Ekphrasis and Perspectival Montage, or Sorting out the Gaze of Narrative Agents," in *Seeing Perception*, edited by Silke Horstkotte and Karin Leonhard, 166–96 (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing).
    Forthcoming 2011 "Metaphors in Context: The Communicative Structure of Figurative Language," in *Beyond Cognitive Metaphor Theory*, edited by Monika Fludernik (London: Routledge).
Yevseyev, Vyacheslav
    2005 "Measuring Narrativity in Literary Texts," in Meister et al. 2005: 109–24.
Young, Katharine
    1999 "Narratives of Indeterminacy," in Herman 1999b: 197–217.