Narrativity

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1 Definition

Though it has become a contested term, "narrativity" is still commonly used in two senses: in a fixed sense *as the "narrativeness" of narrative* and in a scalar sense as *the "narrativeness" of a narrative*, the one applied generally to the concept of narrative, the other applied comparatively to particular narratives. As such, it can be aligned with any number of modal pairings: e.g. the lyricism of the lyric/a lyric; the descriptiveness of description/a description. Depending on the context, these two uses of the term "narrativity" can serve their purposes effectively. But increasingly over the last three decades, the term has filled a growing and sometimes conflicting diversity of conceptual roles. In the process, other terms have, in varying ways, been drawn into the task of understanding narrativity, including "narrativeness" (used colloquially above), "narrativehood," "narratibility," "tellability," "eventfulness," "emplotment," and "narrative" itself. To define narrativity fully, then, requires a survey not only of its different conceptual uses, but also of the supporting roles these other terms have been sometimes called on to play.

2 Explication

This lively contestation has accompanied narrativity's rise as a central term, and in some cases *the* central term (Sternberg, Sturgess, Fludernik, Audet, Simon-Shoshan), in narrative analytics. This is in large part because of the way the term has leant itself to a general shift away from the formalist constraints of structuralist narratology (where the term is rarely found) as attention has turned increasingly to the transaction between narratives and the audiences that bring them to life. As such, it has helped open up the study of narrative to an array of approaches—phenomenological, discursive, cognitive, historical, cultural, evolutionary—that have transformed the field.

The term's advantage in this expansion of disciplinary applications is built into its grammatical status as a reference to a property or properties rather than to a thing or class. As what one might call an "adjectival" noun, narrativity suggests

connotatively a felt quality, something that may not be entirely definable or may be subject to gradations. Ryan's distinction between "being a narrative" and "possessing narrativity" (2005c: 347, 2006a: 10–1) brings out the difference: where a narrative is a "semiotic object," narrativity consists in "being able to inspire a narrative response" (2005c: 347). This flexibility and comparative freedom from restrictive categorizing (must a narrative have more than one event? [(Hühn → Event and Eventfulness [1])] must narrative events be causally connected? [(Toolan → Coherence [2])] must they involve human or humanlike entities? [(Jannidis → Character [3])]) also gives the term a certain user-friendliness. To adapt Ryan's language, if we ask: "Does *Finnegans Wake* have more or less narrativity than *Little Red Riding Hood*?" we will get much broader agreement than if we ask "Is *Finnegans Wake* a narrative?" (Ryan 2006a: 9, 2007: 30). In short, if narrative itself is a "fuzzy concept" (Ryan 2006b, 2007; Jannidis 2003), narrativity is a term more closely attuned to its fuzziness (Herman 2002). This practical advantage of the term has also abetted the development of a transgeneric and transmedial narratology (Wolf 2002; Ryan 2005c, 2006a; Hühn & Sommer → Narration in Poetry and Drama [4]; Ryan → Narration in Various Media [5]) that includes narrative in genres and media where words are no longer central to narration and where readers become viewers and even active participants. It has even facilitated consideration of narrativity in media that lack expectations of eventfulness (lyric poetry), sequentiality (painting), or even hetero-referentiality (referring to events outside the medial domain) that are the staple of narrative. Most controversial among the latter has been instrumental music, considered by many a purely self-referential artistic medium. Among those sketching a possible "narratology of music" (Kramer 1991; Newcomb 1987; McClary 1997; Micznik 2001; Wolf 2002, 2004; Meelberg 2006; Almén 2008; Grabócz 2009), it has been Micznik, Wolf and Almén who have explicitly capitalized on the finer calipers of the term "narrativity" to capture narrative effects achievable in a medium that cannot tell a story.

Not surprisingly, then, narrativity has been more often used as a variable quality than as a necessary component or set of components by which narrative can be defined. Thus Herman adopts the term "narrativehood" in the sense given it by Prince (1999) as a "binary predicate" by which "something either is or is not" deemed a story, and in this way reserves "narrativity" as a "scalar predicate" by which something is deemed "more or less prototypically storylike" (Herman 2002: 90–1). As Herman suggests, this distinction correlates with the distinction between "extensional" and "intensional" aspects of narrative which were introduced to narratology through the application of "possible worlds" theory by Doležel (1979, 1983, 1998), Pavel (1986), Ryan (1991), and others. Nevertheless, narrativity has not been used exclusively in an intensional sense. In his most recent reconsideration of this knotty terminological problem, Prince (2008) has sought to expand the

concept of narrativity to include both extensional and intensional aspects. For the first—the entities that constitute narrative—he has retained the term narrativehood; for the second—the qualities or traits of narrative—he has applied the term narrativeness. In Prince's view, both are scalar concepts in that they are subject to degrees, the first quantitative, the second qualitative. Without using the term narrativity at all, Morson (2003) also distinguishes between the defined object, for which he uses the term narrative, and the quality of narrativeness, which a narrative may or may not have (see also Hühn 2008: 143).

Further complicating any effort to organize the range of discourse on narrativity are the ways in which the term has been deployed in modal or generic distinctions to delineate both a field of specifically narrative modes and a broader field in which narrative is one of a number of communicative and artistic modes. In both, its flexibility as a scalar phenomenon plays a role. At the broadest level of abstraction, then, the discussion of narrativity can be organized under four headings: (a) as inherent or extensional; (b) as scalar or intensional; (c) as variable according to narrative type; (d) as a mode among modes.

3 History of the Concept and its Study

3.1 Prehistory of Narrativity

If, as noted above, the specific term "narrativity" did not develop its lively range of conceptual roles until the last decades of the 20th century, closely related concepts have been deployed from the start. The most influential precursor concept is the property of mediation, which Plato identified when distinguishing between the indirect representational character of *diegesis* and the direct presentational character of *mimesis*: the one narrated by the poet, the other performed (*The Republic*, Bk 3). As Schmid (2003: 17–8) notes, mediation was a central focus of classical narratology well before narratology got its name, notably in Stanzel's major work of the 1950s and 1960s, later reinvigorated in *A Theory of Narrative* ([1979] 1984), but lacking the word "narrativity." Another classical precursor concept is Aristotle's idea of *muthos*, "the configuration of incidence in the story" (Greimas & Ricœur 1989: 551), which anticipates the concept of "emplotment," a central term for Ricœur and others in the discourse on narrativity. In the development of structuralist narratology, the Russian formalist idea of "the dominant" has also been critical. Usually attributed to Tynjanov ([[6]1927] 1971) and influentially developed by Jakobson, the dominant is the "focusing component of a work of art: it rules, determines, and transforms the remaining components" and as such guarantees "the integrity of the structure" (Jakobson [1935] 1971: 105). The dominant has been taken up by Sternberg and others as a categorical determinant, a perceived modal

predominance, distinguishing any particular narrative from other modal kinds (see 3.5 below).

3.1 Narrativity as Inherent or Extensional

Though narrativity has leant itself predominantly to usage that is intensional, subjective, and variable according to context, audience, and other factors, there have been several powerful conceptions of the term as inherent, determinative, and co-extensive with any particular narrative.

3.1.1 Immanence

Greimas is the major exception to the general structuralist neglect of narrativity. His conception of the term is also notable for its breadth of application, referring to a structuring force that generates not simply all narratives but all discourse: "le principe organisateur de tout discours" (Greimas & Courtés 1979: 249). With regard to narrative in particular, Greimas distinguishes between an *apparent* and an *immanent* level of narration, with narrativity located in the latter. As such, "narrativity is situated and organized prior to its manifestation. A common semiotic level is thus distinct from the linguistic level and is logically prior to it, whatever the language chosen for the manifestation" (Greimas [1969] 1977: 23).

It is also important to note that, for Greimas, narrativity is a disorganizing as well as an organizing force in that it disrupts old orders even as it generates new ones. It is "the irruption of the discontinuous" into the settled discourse "of a life, a story, an individual, a culture," disarticulating the existing discourse "into discrete states between which it sets transformations" ([1983] 1987: 104). To bear this in mind is to see the deep commonality of modes (descriptive, argumentative, narrative) often left segmented in analytical terminology. In an analysis of Maupassant's "A Piece of String," Greimas carefully demonstrates how customary distinctions such as that between descriptive and narrative segments give way at a deeper level that organizes "according to canonical rules of narrativity" ([1973] 1989: 625). However static they may appear to be, descriptive segments are imbued with the same undergirding narrativity that organizes the segments of action.

3.1.2 Emplotment

For Ricœur, a key manifestation of narrativity is "emplotment," the articulation of which involves "broadening, radicalizing, [and] enriching" the Aristotelean idea of plot with the Augustinian understanding of time ([1985] 1988: 4). This allows him on the one hand to develop a complex reassessment of the temporal difference between fictional and historical narrative, while on the other to bring out their deep

commonality. To accomplish this, Ricœur, like Greimas, posits a deep level of narrativity; but unlike Greimas, he sees it as a "pre-understanding" of our historical mindedness—"an intelligibility of the historicality that characterizes us" (Greimas & Ricœur 1989: 552)—and it lies at the heart of his critique of Greimas's a-temporal model of fictional narrative (Ricœur [1980] 1981). In addition, and further differentiating his usage from that of Greimas, Ricœur saw the operation of emplotment as a dialectical process, a dynamic interaction between this "first-order intelligence" and the surface level where narrative is structurally manifest in the text (Greimas & Ricœur 1989: 551–52). Emplotment, then, is an evolving, processual feed-back loop between the informing level of narrativity and the particularity of its manifestation.

Like Ricœur, White (1973, 1978, 1981) does not limit narrativity to the designated modes of fiction. But where Ricœur's theory of emplotment not only bonds but distinguishes fictional and nonfictional narrativity (Schaeffer → Fictional vs. Factual Narration [7]), White has tended over the course of his writings to stress the commonality of their narrativity. More than this, narrativity is for White a "panglobal fact of culture," without which there is no conveying knowledge as meaning. Narrativity is at one with the perception of meaning because meaning only emerges when events have been "emplotted" with "the formal coherency that only stories can possess" (White 1981: 19). For this reason, history, by definition, cannot exist without narrativity. In its absence, there is a mere succession of events (annals) or, at best, events organized by some other means than plot (chronicles). It is emplotment that brings events to life, endowing them with cultural meaning, since "[t]he significance of narrative is not latent in the data of experience, or of imagination, but fabricated in the process of subjecting that data to the elemental rhetoric of the narrative form itself" (Walsh 2007: 39). The final irony, then, is that narrativity is the unacknowledged necessity of what we take for truth, for to attain the status of truth, a representation of "the real" requires, at a minimum, "the character of narrativity" (White 1981: 6).

3.1.1 A Logic of Narrativity

For Sturgess, too, narrativity is inherent in narrative. It is an "enabling force" that "is present at every point in the narrative" (Sturgess 1992: 28). He also echoes Greimas when he writes of narrativity's power over "nonnarrative" segments like descriptive passages. It governs "*not only the chronology of a novel's story, but equally every interruption of that chronology, and every variation in the mode of representation of that story*" (22). At the same time, he situates himself in opposition to Greimas's idea of "a deep structural level of narrative which is presumed in some way to account for the existence of the narrative in question"

(14). Drawing on Bremond's (1973) critique of Greimas, Sturgess sees narrativity instead as an all-determining "logic" or "power of narrativity which decides" how elements are deployed at any moment in a narrative (Sturgess 1992: 140–41).

Cohen also proposes a logic of narrativity, but one that simply requires that the languages of literary and filmic fiction render their signs consecutively. The result, however, is also a co-extensively inherent narrativity that the reader or viewer is led to apprehend: "an unfolding structure, the diegetic whole, that is never fully *present* in any one group yet always *implied* in each group" (1979: 92). Like Sturgess, and unlike Ricœur and White, Cohen restricts narrativity to works of conscious art. But Sturgess's concept differs from all three in two fundamental ways. First, for Sturgess, the "logic of narrativity" requires no sequential structuring principle, but simply the ability to arouse "a sense of its own wholeness" as narrative (1992: 28). Second, narrativity only crystallizes when the reader is persuaded that what is being read is a narrative. It is in this sense a reflexive concept.

An advantage of both Sturgess's and Cohen's logics is the way they can accommodate postmodern and other extreme forms of weakened or obscured storyline that are often considered "anti-narrative," since "every narrative will possess its own form of narrativity" (Sturgess: ibid.). In Cohen's words, even "the randomness common to [...] surrealist experiments points to the fundamental and seemingly inevitable *narrativity* of cinematic and literary language" (1979: 92). A disadvantage of this approach to narrativity is the threat of circularity, which weakens both its analytical leverage and its ability to distinguish narrative competence from narrative incompetence.

3.2 As Scalar or Intensional

Some scholars start out with an extensional definition of narrativity, equating it with a "set" of defining conditions, as in "the set of qualities marking narrative and helping a reader or viewer perceive the difference between narrative and non-narrative texts" (Keen 2003: 121) or "the set of properties characterizing narrative and distinguishing it from nonnarrative" (Prince [1987] 2003: 65). But these same scholars will often go on to treat the concept of narrativity as an intensional quality by which a text is felt to be "more or less narrative" (ibid.). Indeed, as Schmid (2003: 30) notes, it is hard to remain objective or to do away with an interpretive stance when discussing the scalar narrativity of texts. This double usage of narrativity is the problem Prince (2008) set out to resolve when he divided narrativity into narrativehood and narrativeness. As he demonstrates, the scalar nature of narrativity is not only complicated by the variable combinability of these two

subcategories but by other factors as well. With similar ambition, Ryan has spelled out a "tentative formulation of [nine] nested conditions" that might be used in describing narrative as a "fuzzy set," recognizable in any particular work according to the number and importance of the conditions present (Ryan 2006a: 7–10, 2006b: 194). Many scholars have, nonetheless, centered their theorizing on a single manifestation of narrativity, while explicitly or implicitly acknowledging the complexity of narrative response that makes narrativity both a scalar and a fuzzy concept. This in turn means that there can be no pure segregation of their work under one caption or another.

3.2.2 Sequentiality

In the 1970s, when Sternberg developed his theory of three overarching "master forces" of narrative—curiosity, suspense, and surprise (1978)—he did not use the word "narrativity." In more recent years, however, the term "narrativity" has become increasingly useful for him as "the play of suspense/curiosity/surprise between represented and communicative time." The important sequentiality in this regard is an intersequentiality entailing "an interplay between the one sequence's flow of developments and the other's flow of disclosures" (2010: 637). A narrative, then, is a text in which "such play dominates." Narrativity would appear to be a scalar property which can be "stronger" or "weaker," but when it is dominant in any text, its "functional" character is to act as a "regulating principle" (1992: 529). At this point, the theory transits to a concept of inherency. Thus "strong narrativity [...] not merely represents an action but interanimates the three generic forces that play between narrated and narrational time" (2001: 119). If this process "constantly changes en route from beginning to end" (2010: 637), these changes involve fluid qualitative adjustments of thought and feeling as the text is processed by the mind. But they, along with all the other elements of the narrative, are orchestrated according to "the unbreakable lawlikeness of the narrative process itself" (2003: 328).

Almost all arguments identifying narrativity with sequentiality start from the idea that there is more to it than simply one thing after the other. In this they follow antecedent theorizing ranging from Aristotle's view of the well-made tragedy to Tomaševskij's ([[8]1925] 1965) definition of *fabula* and Forster's ([1927] 1962) definition of plot, all of which stress the importance of causal connection. Since then, much theorizing about narrative has featured a sense of causal agency as "a necessary condition of narrativity" (Richardson 1997: 106; White 1981; Bal [[9] 1985] 1997; Bordwell 1985; Rabinowitz 1987). Pier (2008) more rigorously distinguishes between treatments of causality suitable in defining narrative and "narrative worlds" and a more adequate understanding of narrativity in relation to

the complex, evolving, process of causal inference "set in motion by heuristic reading and semiotic reading" (134).

More recently, understanding of sequentiality has been enlarged by the importation of schema theory from cognitive psychology (Bordwell 1985; Fludernik 1996; Herman 2002; Hühn 2008; Emmott & Alexander → Schemata [10]). Especially important has been the concept of cognitive scripts in analyzing what happens at the script/story interface (Herman 2002). Scripts are stereotypical sequences warehoused in the brain that together contribute to Bruner's (1991) "canonicity" or the expectations on which Sternberg's sequence of curiosity/suspense/surprise depends. They participate in varying degrees of narrativity, depending on the extent to which they are breached with the unexpected. (For further commentary on narrativity and schema theory, see 3.2.4 below.)

Ryan complicated the sequential unfolding of scalar narrativity when she located it in the varying ratio of two levels: "one pertaining to story (or the 'what' of a narrative) and the other to the discourse (or the 'way' such narrative content is presented)." For example, "[t]he same text can present full narrativity in sense 1, but low narrativity in sense 2, when it tells a well-formed story but the progress of the action is slowed down by descriptions, general comments, and digressions" (2007 : 34 n.25). Kermode (1983) takes this bi-level approach a step further. In narratives of any complexity, he argues, the sequentiality of the story's narrativity is always at war with the nonnarrativity of the discourse. Narrativity on this view is a kind of psycho-cultural "propriety" that lies in the comforting "connexity" of the *fabula*, accepted simply as such. In this way, Kermode's account of the reassurance of story chimes with White's idea of narrativity as a conduit of ideological *doxa*. But for Kermode, what disturbs the orthodoxy freighted in the narrativity of the *fabula* is the *sujet* or the rendering of the story. It is the *sujet* that prevents us, if we are intent on not "underreading," from resting in the story's reassuring sequential narrativity, for it abounds in "mutinous" nonnarrative elements that contend with the text's narrativity, crying out to be accommodated by interpretation even as they frustrate it (137).

3.2.3 Eventfulness

Recent attention to eventfulness by the Hamburg Narratology Research Group responds to the need for a clearer understanding of what constitutes a narrative event than is found in most sequentiality-based theories (Hühn 2008: 146). Schmid (2003) develops his theory of eventfulness within a definition of the narrative event as a non-trivial change of state that takes place and reaches completion (is "resultative") in the actual ("real") world of any particular fictional narrative. Its narrativity, then, depends on its non-triviality, which in turn is a factor of its

eventfulness. For Schmid this depends on five key variable features: relevance, unpredictability, persistence, irreversibility, and non-iterativity. Hühn (2008) supplements Schmid's concept by drawing on schema theory and Lotman's concept of the "semantic field." Combining these two areas of research gives Hühn's version of eventfulness an analytical scope that includes both the cognitive drama of schematic disruption and an awareness of historical and cultural contexts afforded by the recognition of differing semantic socio-cultural fields.

Audet has sought to disconnect the concept of narrativity from any dependent connection with crafted narrative, identifying it instead with the more widely occurring sense of what he calls "eventness [*événementialité*], […] where the tension between a before and an after seems to generate a virtuality, that of a story to come" ([2006] 2007: 34). Audet builds on Lotman's idea of a hierarchy of events, proposing three levels or types of event: the "inworld event" (concrete action), the "discursive event," and the "operal event" ("connected to the performing of the work itself") (33), each of which in its emergence raises narrativity through its aura of events to come. However far one wishes to go down this road with Audet, he, like Cohen, Sturgess, and as we will see Fludernik, has found a way to accommodate those postmodern experimental texts that often frustrate narratologists wedded to a narrative-centered theory.

Morson (2003) also uses a concept of eventness (with other qualities) in developing his scalar concept of narrativeness. Adapting the term from Bakhtin, Morson's version of eventness is the sense of multiple (but not infinite) possibilities for what will ensue, given where we are in the narrative. It is a feeling of "process" not unlike that of life as it is lived (72). It is the source of narrative suspense, and, to the degree that a narrative sustains from one moment to the next this quality of being open to future developments, to the same degree does the reader experience the quality of narrativeness.

3.2.4 Tellability

Originally introduced by Labov (1972), tellability (Baroni → Tellability [11]) (or narratibility; cf. Prince 2008) is what makes a story worth telling. It allows a positive answer to the question "What's the point?" and has often been "hard to disentangle" from narrativity (Ryan 2005b: 589). Specifically, tellability is the variable *potential* of a story as yet unnarrativized, while narrativity is the variable *success* of its narrativizing. In Herman's precise wording: "Situations and events can be more or less tellable; the ways in which they are told can […] display different degrees of narrativity. Thus, whereas both predicates are scalar, tellability attaches to configurations of facts and narrativity to sequences representing those configurations of facts" (2002: 100). Nonetheless, the border between the two

concepts has often been blurred. In scalar conceptions of narrativity, tellability often ranks high on the list of qualities that participate in a text's narrativity. Bruner (1991) asserts that without tellability there can be no narrativity. Tellability is also essential to Fludernik's experience-based concept of narrativity. Conceived as the narrator's emerging sense of the importance ("point") of the events narrated, tellability, for Fludernik, is the third of three narrational operations—reviewing past events, reproducing them, and evaluating them—that, when conjoined, "constitute narrativity" (2003: 245). For Hühn (2008), eventfulness is the prior concept on which tellability depends. In passing, he makes the useful distinction between narratives with sufficient eventfulness to be tellable and what he terms "process narratives," found in the sciences, historiography, lawsuits, and even in recipes and instruction manuals, which are "a more descriptive and neutrally informative way of tracing and communicating developments, processes, and changes" (145 n.30). Elaborating further, Hühn argues that tellability is absent from the narrativity of the uneventful, plotless narration of type I events, but is the key distinction of the eventful, emplotted narration of type II events (see Hühn → Event and Eventfulness [1]).

3.2.5 Narrative Competence and Experientiality

The increasing concern for reader/audience response in postclassical narratology has led to a focus on narrative competence, which has involved varying degrees of a "constructivist" orientation to narrativity like the one Scholes (1982) developed in reaction to the widespread use of the term in film theory as "a property of films themselves." In English, Scholes argued, the word narrativity "implies a more sentient character than we generally allow an artifact. For this reason and some others," Scholes employs the word "to refer to the process by which a perceiver actively constructs a story from the fictional data provided by any narrative medium. A fiction is presented to us in the form of a narration (a narrative text) that guides us as our own narrativity seeks to complete the process that will achieve a story" (60).

Echoing Iser ([[12]1972] 1974) and Sternberg (1978), Scholes's concept of narrativity engages in fictional world-making by filling in gaps, both "passive or automatic" and "active or interpretive," guided always by the semiotics of fictional and filmic language (Scholes 1982: 61). Once aroused, the "primary effort" of our narrativity is "to construct a satisfying order of events." This it does by exercising the power of our narrativity in concert with the "narrational blueprints" (69) of the art to construct "two features: temporality and causality" (ibid.). Anticipating McHale's (2001) view of weak narrativity, Scholes argued that this exercise of our gift of narrativity is essential even in those postmodern and experimental novels and films that seek to disrupt it, since without this cognitive and semiotic equipment

the effects of their disruption would go unexperienced (64).

Leitch also adopted a constructivist narrativity, but with an account of the capabilities required that is interestingly different from Scholes's: "At its simplest level, narrativity entails three skills: the ability to defer one's desire for gratification; [...] the ability to supply connections among the material a story presents; and the ability to perceive discursive events as significantly related to the point of a given story or sequence" (Leitch 1986: 34). For Leitch (similarly to Scholes), it is up to any particular narrative "to cultivate an appropriate degree of narrativity, which may vary widely from one story to the next" (35). However, both stop short of a more extreme constructivism by contending that narrativity leaves off when we are no longer "under the illusionary guidance of a maker of narratives" (Scholes 1982: 64). This would leave out of account the power of narrativity to read a narrative where none is intended—to project, for example, from natural events the signs of a maker intent on communicating a prophetic story. "Life resumes," Scholes writes, "when narrativity ceases" (ibid.).

Nelles goes further in the direction of readerly control when he defines narrativity as "the product of a tropological operation by which the metaphor of narration is applied to a series of words on a page. To read a text by means of the trope of narration is to read out of it a narrator and its voice, and a narratee and its ear" (Nelles 1997: 116). Narrativity is at work, in other words, when a reader frames, or reframes, a text as narrative, an operation that can be applied even to texts commonly designated as something else (a lyric poem, an argument, a piece of music). Once such a text is imbued with narrativity, "the tools of narrative analysis can be applied" (120). From here it is a short step to narrativity as a universal feature of creative perception, that power that White theorizes as at once seeing and making history where there is none—the power to narrativize the real.

The infusion of cognitive research has invigorated research on narrative competence. Notable in this regard is the work of Fludernik, for whom narrativity is quite explicitly "not a quality inhering in a text, but rather an attribute imposed on the text by the reader who interprets the text as narrative, thus *narrativizing* the text" (2003: 244). Fludernik derives the essential quality of narrativity from what she calls "human experientiality," building on pre-cognitive work by Hamburger ([[13]1957] 1993) and Cohn (1978) that had keyed narrative to its unique capability of portraying consciousness. Fludernik enlarges this focus with insight gained from Labovian discourse analysis and schema theory, expanding it to encompass a great range of expressive acts, starting with the conversation of everyday life (Fludernik → Conversational Narration – Oral Narration [14]). Thus when readers encounter texts formally described as narratives, they draw on an immense accumulation of

frames and scripts that arise from the experience of life itself.

In this way, Fludernik displaces the centrality traditionally conferred on the formal properties of "story," "plot," and "narrator" in definitions of narrative, while (like Cohen, Sturgess, and Audet in their different ways) expanding the range of full narrative legitimacy to experimental fiction in which these properties are barely perceptible. At the same time, by locating narrativity as a "natural" process not dependent on the experience of literature, Fludernik broadens what Culler (1975: 134–60) called "naturalization"—the process by which a reader gains or seeks to gain cognitive control over texts. She also narrows this process to a specifically narrative operation, replacing Culler's term "naturalization" with "narrativization," by which the reader draws on a compendium of experiential, not strictly literary, schemata marshaled under the "macro-frame" of narrativity. It is this that allows a "re-cognization of a text as narrative" (Fludernik 1996: 313). Only to the degree that a text resists narrativization does it discourage perceptions of narrativity. Yet even extreme postmodern textual derangements and other such "unnatural" cases, if repeated often enough, may become part of a reader's natural experience and thus susceptible to narrativization.

Herman, in his turn, builds on the "natural narratology" of Fludernik, Labov, and others, drawing, as they did, on cognitive theory and discourse analysis. For Herman, too, narrativity can be found in the larger terrain of human experience, and indeed much of his work intermixes a focus on narrativity as it occurs in conversation, ranging across a spectrum from the banal to the unfathomable. To put this in his words: "Narrativity is a function of the more or less richly patterned distribution of script-activating cues in a sequence. Both too many and too few script-activating cues diminish narrativity" (Herman 2002: 91). But Herman also critiques Fludernik's reliance on "experientiality" as the determinate factor in gauging a text's degree of narrativity. To do so, he argues, places "too much weight on a participant role whose degree of salience derives from a larger, preference-based system of roles" (2002: 169, 2009: passim).

Phelan (2005, 2007), from his quite differently oriented "rhetorical understanding of narrativity," also advocates maintaining a focus on both sides of the reader/text transaction. For him, narrativity is a complex, "double-layered phenomenon" involving both a progression of events and a progression of reader response. Each is characterized by a "dynamics of instability," the one driving the tale, the other driving the response to it (Phelan 2007: 7). The tension of characters acting and reacting in an unstable situation is accompanied by a "tension in the telling—unstable relations among authors, narrators, and audiences," and it is the complex interaction of the two kinds of instability that constitutes narrativity and

that "encourages two main activities: observing and judging" (ibid.). Put differently, narrativity involves "*the interaction of two kinds of change*: that experienced by the characters and that experienced by the audience in its developing responses to the characters' changes" (Phelan 2005: 323). As a scalar concept, "[v]ery strong narrativity depends on the work's commitment to both sets of variables (textual and readerly). Weak narrativity arises from the work's lack of interest in one or both sets of variables" (Phelan 2007: 215; see also Ryan 2007; Prince 2008).

3.2.6 Fictionality

Keen draws attention to a "slippage" whereby fictionality has been included as an index of narrativity (2003: 121). This controversial association of narrativity and fictionality can be traced back to Hamburger ([1957] 1993). However, as noted above, White (1973, 1978, 1981), has encouraged not just a slippage but a conflation of narrativity, fictionality, and history. Historical narratives are "verbal fictions the contents of which are as much *invented as found and the forms of which have more in common with their counterparts in literature than they have with those in science*" (1978: 82). Consciously or not, White ironizes a distinction that Woolf expressed when she wrote, "Let it be fact, one feels, or let it be fiction. The imagination will not serve under two masters simultaneously" (Woolf [1927] 1994: 473; see also Ryan 1991; Doležel 1998: 1–28; Cohn 1999: chap. 7). From his functionalist standpoint, Walsh rises above both White's extreme view that "[a]ll narrativity [...] shares in the properties of fictionality" and the counter-argument for an absolute categorical distinction between fiction and nonfiction. "Fictionality," he contends, "is the product of a narrative's frame of presentation, of the various possible elements of what Gérard Genette has described as the paratext" (2007: 45). Correlatively, "a rhetoric of fictionality depends for its cultural currency upon its functional distinctiveness from nonfictional narrativity" (46).

3.3 As Variable according to Narrative Type, Genre, or Mode

Herman writes that "narrative genres are distinguished by different preference-rule systems prescribing different ratios of stereotypic to nonstereotypic actions and events" (2002: 91). Variant narrativities, in other words, accompany generic variations among the totality of narrative genres. In her influential essay, "The Modes of Narrativity," Ryan (1992) developed a narrativity-based taxonomy of narrative text types that included "simple narrativity" (dealing with a single conflict as in fairy tales and anecdotes), "complex narrativity" (having interconnected narrative threads as in the triple-decker 19th-century novel), "figural narrativity" (abstract universals, concepts, or collectivities freighted on characters and events as in certain lyrical and philosophical works), "instrumental narrativity" (illustrative

support in sermons and treatises), and "proliferating narrativity" (having no overarching narrative but a series of little narratives involving the same cast of characters as in picaresque and magical realist novels). Ryan (1992, 2004, 2005c) also invokes the necessity of a modal view of narrativity if we are fully to grasp the narrative potential of non-verbal media: "It is only by recognizing other modes of narrativity […]—modes such as illustrating, retelling, evoking, and interpreting—that we can acknowledge the narrative power of media without a language track" (2005a : 292).

Hühn (→ Event and Eventfulness [1]) distinguishes between "broad" and "narrow" definitions of narrativity according to whether one is operating with a minimal definition of narrative with its minimal concept of event (type I) or a more restricted definition of narrative, requiring an event or events that fulfill certain conditions (type II). Hühn's distinction yields a fixed concept of narrativity for "plotless" or "process" narration built from type I events, but yields a scalar concept of narrativity for "plotted" narration in which type II events play an integral role. In her three-part anatomy of narrativity, Revaz (2009) includes a plotless type (chronicle) organized solely by chronology (diary-like genres), followed in ascending degrees of complexity by relation and récit (fully emplotted narrative). Fludernik, resisting the efforts of some to extend full narrativity to historical writing, categorizes it instead as "restricted narrativity, narrative that has not quite come into its own" (1996: 26). Finally, where Ryan (1992) uses the term "anti-narrativity," McHale settles on the term "weak narrativity" to describe the way in which Hejinian, Ashbery, and other avant-garde narrative poets interpolate, break up, or suspend narrative lines in their work. In such works, narrativity is not abolished; rather, "we intuit that we are in the presence of narrativity. But at the same time that our sense of narrative is being solicited, it is also being frustrated" (McHale 2001: 164).

3.4 As a Mode among Modes

Chatman's widely referenced distinction between narrative "text-types" and "non-narrative text-types" (argument, exposition, description) draws on the idea of a type-determinative "overriding" presence of one property or another (1990: 21). Though he does not use the term "narrativity," in essence he is echoing the Russian formalist concept of the "dominant" that Sternberg deploys when he writes of the way a predominating narrativity draws technically non-narrative elements into a narrative whole.

Phelan sets *narrativity* in contrast to two other modes: *lyricality*, in which the dominant is "an emotion, a perception, an attitude, a belief" or some form of meditation; and *portraiture*, in which the dominant is the revelation of character. All

three can to some extent be present in a text of any length, but a text is hybridized when two or more are present in strength, with one or the other dominating (Phelan 2007: 22–4). What is meant by "hybrid" and by the terms, "dominate" and "dominant" is itself a question on which there is room for debate. Sternberg, for example, argues for the importance of "properly [naming] the text after its dominant" since, once narrativity dominates, it draws the nonnarrative elements under its control in a way that is absolute. This includes "language, existents, thematics, point of view, etc." as well as descriptive phrases and "equivalence patterns." Under sufficient narrative pressure, "the descriptive turns kinetic" (Sternberg 2001: 119–20). This would appear, however, to exclude the possibility of hybrids for, given the dominant, "everything assimilates and conduces to its narrativity, as inversely with narrative elements in descriptive writing" (121). For Schmid (2003: 21–2), the situation can be more fluid, such that there are hybrid texts in which the functionality of descriptive and narrative elements can vie for dominance. A key element in reading such texts, then, is how the reader chooses to interpret them.

In sum, the growing attention to the term "narrativity" continues to keep pace with the increasing range and richness of narratological debate. Whether or not this term will eventually displace the centrality of the term "narrative," what Prince wrote over a decade ago still holds true: "further study of narrativity constitutes perhaps the most significant task of narratology today" (1999: 43).

4 Topics for Further Investigation

(a) The widely endorsed idea promoted by Bruner, Sacks, and others that "each of us constructs and lives a narrative" (Sacks 1985: 105) has been attacked by Strawson (2004) as a fallacy that does not match the "gappy" discontinuity of consciousness and selfhood. But the issue is more complex than either position (Battersby 2006), and narrativity may play a key role in resolving it. (b) Related to this is the need for more work on narrativity as a part of what Brooks calls "our cognitive toolkit" (2005: 415; Herman 2002, 2009). (c) The narrativity of dreams is a limit case on which much depends in the definition of narrativity. On the one hand, there is flat rejection (Prince 2000: 16); on the other, support (Metz 1974; Walsh 2010). (d) Work is needed on narrativity in digital media, especially in narrativized games (Ryan 2006a) and what Aarseth (1997) calls ergodic literature in which the "story" is created in real time insofar as the events are determined by "non-trivial" actions of the players. (e) A highly consequential and disputed area for research is the role narrativity plays in law, its ethics and its practice (Brooks & Gewirtz 1996; Brooks 2005; Abbott [2002] 2008: 175–92; Sternberg 2008; Simon-Shoshan 2012; Ayelet 2013). (f) Narrativity may well turn out to be a key concept in building a

critical and theoretical understanding of "narrative-impaired" art that has recently been gathered under the heading of "unnatural narratology."

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