THEORY AND INTERPRETATION OF NARRATIVE
JAMES PHELAN AND PETER J. RABINOWITZ, SERIES EDITORS
Postclassical Narratology
Approaches and Analyses

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JAN ALBER AND MONIKA FLUDERNIK
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The title of this collection of recent narratological work, Postclassical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses, openly alludes to David Herman’s seminal bimillennial volume Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis (1999b), in which he introduced the term postclassical narratology¹ and defined it as follows:

Postclassical narratology (which should not be conflated with poststructuralist theories of narrative) contains classical narratology as one of its “moments” but is marked by a profusion of new methodologies and research hypotheses: the result is a host of new perspectives on the forms and functions of narrative itself. Further, in its postclassical phase, research on narrative does not just expose the limits but also exploits the possibilities of the older, structuralist models. In much the same way, postclassical physics does not simply discard classical Newtonian models, but rather rethinks their conceptual underpinnings and reassesses their scope of applicability. (1999a: 2–3)

As Herman here indicates, recent postclassical narratology has to be contrasted with what he calls classical narratology. What is subsumed under classical narratology primarily embraces the work of the French structural-
ists (Roland Barthes, Claude Bremond, Tzvetan Todorov, A. J. Greimas, and Gérard Genette), but also the German tradition in narrative theory (Eberhard Lämmert and Franz Karl Stanzel). Herman, in turn, refers back to Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan’s classic study *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (1983) (Herman 1999a: 1), which—together with Seymour Chatman’s *Story and Discourse* (1978) and Gerald Prince’s work (e.g., 1982, 1987)—most clearly shaped the image of what narratology is for a wide readership of students and academics. Other influential spokespersons at first seen to fit the same groove were Meir Sternberg (1978), Thomas Pavel (1986), and Susan Lanser (1981).² Yet, one could argue that these representatives of classical narratology already started to drift away from the structuralist model, if ever so slightly and imperceptibly. Where Rimmon-Kenan felt she had to cling to the “geometric imaginary” of narratology (Gibson 1996) in order to ward off deconstruction (Herman 1999a: 1), Lanser began to incorporate questions of gender and ideology (see her debate with Diengott—Lanser 1986, 1988; Diengott 1988), Sternberg went beyond mere chronology to focus on the dynamics of narrative design, Thomas Pavel founded possible-worlds theory, and Seymour Chatman started to analyze film narrative.

Herman uses the term narratology “quite broadly, in a way that makes it more or less interchangeable with [narrative studies]” (1999a: 27, n1; original emphasis). In fact, it is more or less synonymous with the phrase “narrative analysis” in his subtitle and in the final sentence of the “Introduction,” which provides an outlook for “narrative analysis at the threshold of the millennium” (27).³ In order to understand how Herman conceives of the originary quality of classical narratology, it is therefore useful to contrast it with its postclassical progeny. As Herman sketches the distinction in the passage cited above, postclassical narratology introduces elaborations of classical narratology that both consolidate and diversify the basic theoretical core of narratology. Such work is exemplified by the essays in the first section of the volume. Moreover, postclassical narratology proposes extensions of the classical model that open the fairly focused and restricted realm of narratology to methodological, thematic, and contextual influences from outside. These reorientations reflect the impact of literary theory on academia in the 1980s and 1990s. Herman in this second area notes three major lines of

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² All of these scholars have groundings in Russian Formalism and linguistics-based narrative semiotics. The term narratology was coined by Todorov in *Grammaire du Décameron* (1969), where he writes: “Cet ouvrage relève d’une science qui n’existe pas encore, disons la NARRATOLOGIE, la science du récit” (1969: 10).

³ For a critique of this broad usage see Nünning (2003: 257–62) and Meister’s more radical suggestions concerning a narratological fundamentalism (2003).
development which reflect sections two to four of the collection: the rise of “new technologies and emergent methodologies”; the move “beyond literary narrative”; and the extension of narratology into new media and “narrative logics.” (Compare the table of contents and 1999a: 14–26 in the “Introduction.”)

With some historical hindsight one could now perhaps regroup these developments slightly differently and focus on four types of interactions. The first category is roughly equivalent to Herman’s revisions of classical problems. It includes work that extends the classical paradigm intradisciplinarily by focusing on theoretical blind spots, gaps, or indeterminacies within the standard paradigm. Methodological extensions of the classical model, secondly, absorb theoretical and/or methodological insights and import them, producing, for instance, narratological speech act theory (Pratt 1977), psychoanalytic approaches to narrative (Brooks 1984, Chambers 1984, 1991), or deconstructive narratology (O’Neill 1994, Gibson 1996, Currie 1998). The third orientation integrates thematic and therefore variable emphases into the classical model, whose core had consisted of invariable, i.e., universal, categories. Examples are feminist, queer, ethnic or minority-related, and postcolonial approaches to narrative (see Nüning’s diagram listing the many new versions of narratology [2003: 249–51]). Contextual versions of postclassical narratology, constituting the fourth trend, extend narratological analysis to literature outside the novel. Narratology now includes a consideration of various media (films, cartoons, etc.), the performative arts as well as non-literary narratives. Conversely, the narrative turn (Kreiswirth 2005, Phelan 2008b) in the (social) sciences and humanities has resulted in an awareness of the centrality of narrative in many areas of culture, from autobiography and history to psychology, the natural sciences, banking or even sports (Nash 1990).

Thus, while some scholars continue to work within the classical paradigm by adding analytical categories to the original base of structuralist concepts, others attempt to instantiate a more or less radical break with the tradition by transcending the assumptions and categorical axioms of the classical paradigm. The motives for such a reconceptualization of the theoretical models and even the discipline of narratology often relate to the consequences of the narrative turn. Put differently, it is because narrative theory can now service


many different sciences (or serve quite diverse masters) that an adaptation of its theoretical bases becomes necessary. In this way new light tends to be shed on hitherto unquestioned axioms which had been developed in relation to literary narrative, most often the novel, and which are therefore not ideally suited to their new contexts of application.

The present volume abides by Herman’s dual focus on what one could call a critical but frame-abiding and a more radical frame-transcending or frame-shattering handling of the classical paradigm. The first part of this book deals with extensions of classical narratology that take the achievements of structuralism as a starting point for close scrutiny and then suggest revisions of the traditional paradigm. Here the emphasis is on adding new distinctions, questioning unacknowledged presuppositions, and on radically revising the standard concepts and typologies, redesigning the conceptual underpinnings of structuralist approaches. The second part, on the other hand, focuses on narrative analyses that move beyond the classical framework by extending their focus to a variety of medial and thematic contexts, from the visual realm to the generic (e.g., autobiography), the queer, and the non-literary (e.g., medical interviews). Some contributions also arrive at radical revisions of the classical model because the intermedial or thematic applications they have in hand require such trimming or redesigning.

The essays in this volume moreover address potential overlaps between the various postclassical approaches. For instance, they link ethnic concerns with those of gender, visual narration with reader response, the autobiographical mode and psychoanalysis with issues of gender and sexual orientation, formal concerns with sociological analysis, or the rhetorical approach with the unnatural. More generally, this collection presents new perspectives on the question of what narratives are and of how they function in their different media. We also wish to suggest that, as the first decade of the third millennium draws to a close, we are now perhaps beginning to see a second phase of postclassical narratology. David Herman’s volume *Narratologies* could be argued to represent the first adult phase in a *Bildungsroman*-like story of narratology. In this reading, Shklovsky and the Russian Formalists figure as narratology’s infancy and the structuralist models of the 1960s and 1970s as its adolescence. This

[. . .] adolescence of narratology was followed by a reorientation and diversification of narrative theories, producing a series of subdisciplines that arose in reaction to post-structuralism and the paradigm shift to cultural studies.

[. . .] Out of the diversity of approaches and their exogamous unions with critical theory have now emerged several budding narratologies which beto-
Herman’s narratologies would therefore correspond to a phase of diversification. In postclassical narratology’s second phase, which is one of both consolidation and continued diversification, one now has to address the question of how these various narratologies overlap and interrelate (see also Herman/Biwu, 2009). Narratology, to continue our metaphor, in settling down, will now have to align with one another the numerous centrifugal models that arose in the first phase of postclassicism; it will now have to determine how these thematic and contextual inflections of narratology can be linked to the structuralist core in methodologically sound ways. This is not a call for a prescriptive unity of methods and models but an attempt to align the many disparate ways of doing postclassical narratology (phase one) and to check out their moments of overlap as well as the extent of their incompatibilities. Newer developments also focus on the no doubt fuzzy boundary line between a general literary study of narratives and more specifically narratological analysis of the same texts. No one overarching model is envisaged here, but in our opinion considerable consolidation despite continuing diversity is called for at this moment. By taking phase-one developments seriously, postclassical narratology will moreover subject its structuralist core to severe critical scrutiny, lopping, modifying, revising, or redesigning the foundations of the discipline. In what follows, we will first discuss the diversity of current narratological research and then turn to developments that suggest a more centripetal tendency in the process of establishment.

**POSTCLASSICAL NARRATOLOGY: PHASE ONE**

**Multiplicities, Interdisciplinarities, Transmedialities**

As Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck put it, the differences between the classical structuralist paradigm and the new postclassical research program can be characterized as follows: “Whereas structuralism was intent on coming up with a general theory of narrative, postclassical narratology prefers to consider the circumstances that make every act of reading different. [. . . ] From cognition to ethics to ideology: all aspects related to reading assume pride of place in the research on narrative” (2005: 450).

Ansgar Nünning has captured the extent and variety of new approaches in a useful diagram (2003: 243–44) that provides a visual map for what he considers to be the most important distinctions between classical and post-
classical narratologies. He contrasts (1) classical text-centeredness with post-classical context orientation and (2) the treatment of narrative as a *langue* with the pragmatic focus on the *parole* of individual (use of) narratives in postclassical approaches. As in the syntax vs. pragmatics dichotomy, Nünning also (3) sees classical narratology as a closed system and postclassical narratologies as emphasizing the dynamics of narration. He moreover (4) subsumes the shift from the functional analysis of features to a reader-oriented focus on strategies and applications in the dichotomy and (5) contrasts classical bottom-up analysis with postclassical top-down inferencing. Nünning’s table next opposes (6) “(reductive) binarism” with a “preference for holistic cultural interpretation” and (7) structuralist taxonomy with thematically and ideologically directed analysis. As a consequence, (8) where classical narratology remained shy of moral grounding, postclassical narratologies open themselves to moral issues, analogously causing (10) a shift from descriptive to interpretative and evaluative paradigms. Thus, (9) classical narratology’s aim to provide a “poetics of fiction” (in alignment with the semiological thrust of narratology) is superseded by “putting the analytical toolbox to interpretative use.” Nünning also sees the rise of diachronic or historical narratology as a postclassical phenomenon (11). His summary in the diagram of the dichotomy classical vs. postclassical consists in the contrasts of (12) universalism vs. particularism (which is equivalent to contextualism), and (13) the opposition between a relatively unified discipline vs. “an interdisciplinary project consisting of heterogeneous approaches” (all 243–4). Paradoxically, Nünning’s rhetorical strategy of establishing open, non-taxonomic postclassical narratologies actually involves the dualism of a before and after and therefore relies on a structural binarism of the very kind that it is trying to transcend.

Generally speaking, then, postclassical narratologies along the lines sketched by Nünning seem to move toward a grand contextual, historical, pragmatic and reader-oriented effort. Such integration and synthesis allows researchers to recontextualize the classical paradigm and to enrich narrative theory with ideas developed after its structuralist phase. While classical narratology was a relatively unified discipline or field, postclassical narratologies are part of a large transdisciplinary project that consists of various heterogeneous approaches (see also Herman 2007).

6. The numbering in what follows corresponds to Nünning’s order in the diagram.
7. To put this slightly differently, the chief concern of structuralist narratologists was “with transtextual semiotic principles according to which basic structural units (characters, states, events, etc.) are combined, permuted, and transformed to yield specific narrative texts” (D. Herman 2005: 19–20).
Feminist narratology can serve as a good example of the types of strategies and extensions of the classical model that are being practiced in postclassical narratologies. Feminist narratologists such as Robyn Warhol or Susan Lanser have highlighted the fact that narratives are always determined “by complex and changing conventions that are themselves produced in and by the relations of power that implicate writer, reader, and text” (Lanser 1992: 5). Much feminist narratology studies elements of story and/or discourse against the foil of gender differences. Such a deployment of narratological models places narratives in their historical and cultural contexts, highlighting the central significance of gender stereotypes. As a consequence, some feminist narratologists like Susan Lanser (1986, 1988) and Ruth Page (2006) have proposed that one take the gender of authors, authorial audiences, actual readers, narrators, narratees, and characters into consideration, thus initiating a rewriting of classical models. The question of a narrator’s properties needs to incorporate their sex and gender; the explicit naming of narrator figures, their external appearances, and actions often yield information on the basis of implied genderization by means of dress codes, behavioral patterns, and cultural presuppositions. Feminist narratologists moreover supplement classical theories about actants by sociocultural roles. Under the heading of “the engaging narrator,” Robyn Warhol has postulated the existence of different types of narratorial discourse in texts by nineteenth-century male and female authors (1989), adding a consideration of popular literature to this field of inquiry (2003). Kathy Mezei (1996) and Ruth Page (2003), on the other hand, look at “male” and “female” plot structures (e.g., one climax vs. several climaxes or no climax at all).

It is also worth noting that Judith Roof (1996) and Lanser (1995, 1999, this volume) have extended feminist narratology into queer studies. For example, in Come As You Are, Judith Roof looks at the reciprocal relation between narrative and sexuality. Queer narratology should disclose the traces of heterosexuality in narratives, pointing out “the production of sexual categories whose existence and constitution depend upon a specific reproductive narrative heteroideology” (1996: xxvii). Thus, narrative analysis should uncover “the preservation of literal and metaphorical heterosexuality as (re) productive (and hence valuable).” At the same time, Roof pleads for a “constitution of narrative that includes both heterosexuality and homosexuality as categories necessary to its dynamic” (xxvii). This raises the following narratological problem: In what way do feminist and queer approaches go beyond the thematic highlighting of male (patriarchal and heteronormative) dominance in literature and beyond an analysis of counterhegemonic and subversive discourse in general? One way of answering this question is to
describe feminist/queer (or postcolonial) strategies by resorting to narratological categories. Thus, the use of second-person fiction in Edmund White’s *Nocturnes for the King of Naples* (1978) allows the author to inveigle the heteronormative reader into sympathizing with a love relationship, which only later emerges as homosexual (cp. Fludernik 1994b: 471).

Analogously, postcolonial narratologists centrally address the question of how the narrative text is imbued with colonial or neocolonial discourse that correlates with the oppression of native populations and how the discourse simultaneously manages to undermine this very ideology (Pratt 1992, Spurr 1993, Doyle 1994, Aldama 2003). Brian Richardson (2001a, 2006, 2007b), for instance, has suggested that we-narration occurs strategically in postcolonial fiction, reflecting the anti-individual conception of traditional cultures. While these two examples focused on the use of a prominent experimental form of narrative for the purposes of conveying non-normative or counterhegemonic messages, other narratologists have tried to argue that the categories of narratology need to be modified or extended in order to accommodate the concerns of race, power, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. In a recent MLA panel on “Race and Narrative Theory,” Dorothy M. Hale proposed that narratology could not adequately deal with postcolonial writing since its categories were imbued with colonial logocentrism (Hale 2008). Though we do not share this viewpoint, we do agree that colonial, sexist, or racist literature often uses narrative devices and strategies that through their use in these ideologically loaded texts may seem to acquire phallogocentric and discriminatory overtones. Yet postcolonial, queer or antihegemonic narratives may be using the same writing strategies for quite subversive ends. Such a technique of “double-voicing” can be fruitfully compared with Henry Louis Gates’s category of “signifying” (Gates 1988) and of course with Mikhail Bakhtin’s characterizations of heteroglossia (Bakhtin 1981). Narrative devices by themselves do not carry any ideological freight; often they are neutral modes of focusing attention that only acquire normative or critical meanings in their various contexts of use.

Another important feature of postclassical narratologies already noted in Herman (1999a) is their emphasis on new media. While traditional narratologists such as Stanzel and Genette primarily focused on the eighteenth-century to early twentieth-century novel, transmedial approaches seek to rebuild narratology so that it can handle new genres and storytelling practices across a wide spectrum of media. An interesting issue in this context is the question of how narrative practices are shaped by the capacities of the medium in which the story is presented. In their attempts to determine the different lan-

8. For work in the area of cultural narratology see also Nünning (1997 and 2000).
guages of storytelling, proponents of transmedial narratology look at plays, films, narrative poems, conversational storytelling, hyperfictions, cartoons, ballets, video clips, paintings, statues, advertisements, historiography, news stories, narrative representations in medical or legal contexts, and so forth.9 For instance, much attention has recently been paid to the analysis of drama (Richardson 1987, 1988, 2001b, 2007a, Fludernik 2008, Nünning/Sommer 2008) as a narrative genre. Thus, the question of whether it makes sense to posit a dramatic narrator (Jahn 2001)10 or whether one will need to introduce a level of performance into narratology (Fludernik 2008) has been raised. Work on drama as narrative has highlighted the numerous narrator figures in plays (Richardson 1988, 2001b; Nünning/Sommer 2008). Analogously, film studies have underlined narrator-like elements in film such as voice-over narration (Bordwell 1985, Kozloff 1988, Branigan 1992). The concept of a dramatic narrator as the instance that tells the story of the play similarly echoes discussions about the existence of a “cinematic narrator” in film; both resort to the narrator category from novels or short stories (Chatman 1990: 127).11

Other transmediality narratologists such as Marie-Laure Ryan, Jörg Helbig, and Werner Wolf have studied the potential narrativity of hyperfictions (Ryan 1999, 2001; Helbig 2001, 2003). They also focus on possible narratives in paintings, poetry, and even musical pieces (Wolf 1999, 2002, 2003; Ryan 2004). Transgeneric extensions of narratology (see especially Ryan 2008), in addition to the analysis of drama and poetry (Müller-Zettelmann 2002, in progress), target autobiography, historiography, legal narrative, documentaries, and conversational storytelling (see also Nünning and Nünning 2002).

Besides the theoretical and medial extensions just outlined, some forms of postclassical narratology ground themselves in a rhetorical framework. For both Genette and Booth, rhetoric served as a master trope for their textual analyses. Rhetorical narratology moreover integrates findings from reader-response theory. Rhetorical theorists such as Wayne C. Booth, James Phelan, and Peter Rabinowitz are particularly interested in the contexts of narr-

9. For instance, Jarmila Mildorf’s essay in this collection addresses the potential usefulness of narratology in the social sciences, while Martin Löschnigg looks at autobiographies from the perspective of cognitive narratology.

10. Manfred Jahn argues that “all narrative genres are structurally mediated by a first-degree narrative agency which, in a performance, may either take the totally unmetaphorical shape of a vocally and bodily present narrator figure (a scenario that is unavailable in written epic narrative), or be a disembodied ‘voice’ in a printed text, or remain an anonymous and impersonal narrative function in charge of selection, arrangement, and focalization” (2001: 674).

11. For a detailed discussion of the concept of the cinematic narrator see Jan Alber’s essay in this volume.
tive production and reception. More specifically, they see narrative as an act of communication between the real author and the flesh-and-blood reader, but also between the implied author and the authorial audience (or implied reader), and, finally, between the narrator and the narrative audience (or narratee). In short, the rhetorical approach attempts to ascertain the purpose of stories and storytelling.

Thus, Wayne C. Booth, in the context of the neo-Aristotelianism of the Chicago School, introduced the term *implied author* as a heuristic tool. The “implied author” denotes the real author’s “second self,” and as such satisfies “the reader’s need to know where, in the world of values, he stands, that is, to know where the author wants him to stand” (1983: 73). Booth argues that analyses along the lines of the implied author enable us “to come as close as possible to sitting in the author’s chair and making this text, becoming able to remake it, employing the author’s ‘reason-of-art’” (1982: 21). Similarly, James Phelan defines the implied author as “a streamlined version of the real author,” and this version is “responsible for the choices that create the narrative text as ‘these words in this order’ and that imbue the text with his or her values” (2005: 45; 216). The ultimate goal of narrative criticism is to asymptotically approximate the condition of “the authorial audience,” i.e., the ideal audience for whom the author constructs the text and who understands it perfectly (Rabinowitz 1977: 121–41; see also Rabinowitz 1998; Phelan 1996: 135–53). According to Phelan, “the rhetorical model assumes that the flesh and blood reader seeks to enter the authorial audience in order to understand the invitations for engagement that the narrative offers” (Phelan 2007b: 210).

Furthermore, rhetorical theorists argue that narrative texts permanently invite us to make ethical judgments—about characters, narrators, and implied authors (Phelan 2007a: 6). Phelan thus discriminates between four ethical positions. The first involves (1) the ethics of the told (character-character relations); the second and third concern the ethics of the telling, namely (2) the narrator’s relation to the characters, the task of narrating, and the audience, and (3) the implied author’s relation to these things. The fourth ethical position relates to (4) the flesh-and-blood audience’s responses to the first three positions (Phelan 2005; 2007a: 11).

12. For discussions of the implied author see Kindt and Müller (2006) and the contributions by Jan Alber and Henrik Skov Nielsen in this collection. In The Rhetoric of Fictionality, Richard Walsh reintroduces the actual author. More specifically, he suggests eradicating extra- and heterodiegetic narrators in narrative fiction: “Extradiegetic heterodiegetic narrators (that is, ‘impersonal’ and ‘authorial’ narrators), who cannot be represented without thereby being rendered homodiegetic or intradiegetic, are in no way distinguishable from authors.” He therefore concludes that “the narrator is always either a character who narrates, or the author” (2007: 84; 78).
Finally, it is worth noting that a narrative’s development from beginning to end is governed by a textual and a readerly dynamics (along the pattern of instability—complication—resolution) (Phelan 2007a: 15–22), and understanding their interaction provides a good means for recognizing the purpose of the narrative. Recent rhetorical narratology can therefore be seen as a continuation and deepening of the rhetorical framework of Boothian theory and as an underlining of discourse narratology’s rhetorical foundations. At the same time, it can be regarded as an important contextualizing venture that opens the text to the real-world interaction of author and reader, and hence provides a perfect model for discussing the ethics of reading and the treatment of ethical problems in narrative fiction.

So far, we have listed several extensions of narratology that tried to take into account theoretical developments in academia since the 1970s—reader response theory, feminism, gender and queer studies, postcolonialism, the ethical turn. We would now like to turn to developments in narratology that are not linked to external stimuli but have arisen from inside the discipline and in reaction to extensive analysis of the theoretical models, their gaps, inconsistencies, even contradictions. However, it should be noted that this distinction is not a watertight binary opposition but rather a convenient way of highlighting intrinsic and extrinsic developments that are both affecting postclassical narratologies, sometimes in combination with each other. Generally speaking, we feel that this contest between different positions is healthy for narratology because it generates different kinds of valuable knowledge about narratives.

Besides accommodating many diverse intellectual currents, postclassical narratology also seeks to address and potentially remedy some of the shortcomings of traditional narratology. For example, structuralist narratology did not pay much attention to the referential or world-creating dimension of narratives (perhaps because structuralism’s precursor, the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, excluded the referent from his theory of the sign and instead favored the dichotomy signifier vs. signified) (see also Herman/Biwu, forthcoming). Cognitive narratologists, like Monika Fludernik (1996, 2003b), David Herman (2002, 2003), Manfred Jahn (1997, 1999b, 2003), and Ralf Schneider (2000), on the other hand, show that the recipient uses his or her world knowledge to project fictional worlds, and this knowledge is stored in cognitive schemata called frames and scripts. The basic assumption of cognitive narratology is that readers evoke fictional worlds (or story-

13. “Frames basically deal with situations such as seeing a room or making a promise while scripts cover standard action sequences such as playing a game of football, going to a birthday party, or eating in a restaurant” (Jahn 2005: 69).
worlds) on the basis of their real-world knowledge; cognitive narratology seeks to describe the range of cognitive processes that are involved. Alan Palmer (2004) and Lisa Zunshine (2006), for instance, argue that the way in which we attempt to make sense of fictional narratives is similar to the way in which we try to make sense of other people. They argue that we understand narratives by understanding the minds of the characters and narrators, that is, their intentions and motivations. Most importantly, cognitive approaches are based on a constructivist theory of reading, arguing that what we read into texts is not necessarily “there” as a pre-given fact. This emphasis ties in with non-essentialist, pluralist, and generally pragmatic concerns and preoccupations, thereby establishing connections with recent developments in linguistics, where the direction of research has also moved from syntax to pragmatics and on to cognitive approaches. Cognitive narratology can thus be argued to affect the status of categories of narratological analysis; it shifts the emphasis from an essentialist, universal, and static understanding of narratological concepts to seeing them as fluid, context-determined, prototypical, and recipient-constituted.

Possible-worlds theory is an area of narratological study which links with postclassical narratology in interesting ways. The basic assumption of possible-worlds theory is that reality is a universe composed of a plurality of distinct elements. The actual world (AW) is the central element, and it is surrounded by various alternative possible worlds (APWs), such as dreams, fantasies, hallucinations, and the worlds of literary fiction. For a world to be possible it must be linked to the center by “accessibility relations.” Important possible-worlds theorists are Lubomír Doležel (1998), Marie-Laure Ryan (1991, 1999, 2001, 2005, and 2006), and Ruth Ronen (1994). It could be argued that Marie-Laure Ryan’s more recent research (1999, 2001, and 2004) constitutes an interesting postclassical development over Doležel’s and her own earlier work (Ryan 1991). Her forays into media studies highlight the way in which the underlying cognitivist and transmedial aspects of her 1991 model have been extended and explicated in the last fifteen years. Furthermore, Ryan has recently shown that postmodern narratives have found in the concepts of possible-worlds theory “a productive plaything for [their] games of subversion and self-reflexivity” (2005: 449). She also looks at potential analogies between parallel universes in physics on the one hand and possible worlds in narrative fiction on the other (esp. Ryan 2006). Ryan’s concept of immersion (Ryan 2001), moreover, builds a bridge to cognitive studies of narration.

We just referred to the pragmatic revolution in linguistics with the development of context-oriented models in text linguistics, speech act theory,
sociolinguistics, and conversation analysis. For narratology, the analyses of conversational narrative by William Labov (1972), Deborah Tannen (1984), and Wallace Chafe (1994) have been seminal. Discourse analysis has had a major impact on the postclassical narratological work of David Herman (1997, 1999c, 2002) and Monika Fludernik (1991, 1993, 1996). In the wake of linguistic pragmatics, narrative analysis has started to include nonfictional narrative in its analyses. Conversation analysis in narratology has largely fed into cognitive strands of narratology. In Fludernik’s work (1996, 2003a) it has moreover impacted diachronic narratology. This trend is complemented by extensive interest in narratology on the part of conversation analysts. Linguists and psychologists like Michael Bamberg (2007; Bamberg et al. 2007), Brigitte Boothe (2004), Anna de Fina (2003), Mark Freeman (1999), Alexandra Georgakopoulou (1997) and others are doing research on narrative identity, performance and empathy. A true interdisciplinary field has here been emerging.

A fourth development that rewrites the classic design of narratology concerns the discovery of narrative’s evolution over time. This comes in two forms, as a study of how narrative changes through the centuries and, in conjunction with this descriptive focus, a revision of narratological categories as a response to the different aspects and textual features that one finds in earlier texts. Thus, Fludernik’s diachronic study of narrative structure (1996, 2003a) provides a functional re-analysis of patterns from earlier narrative at later stages of literary storytelling besides discussing the move from oral to written forms of narrative. Another diachronically focused study is Werner Wolf’s analysis of anti-illusionism (1993). Nünning’s volume Unreliable Narration (1998) not only produces a new extensively outlined model of the signals of unreliability in the introduction but also includes a series of essays illustrating the historical development of this narrative strategy (see also Zerweck 2001). David Herman’s volume The Emergence of Mind (2011) is probably the most perfect example of the diachronic approach. It includes essays on the representation of consciousness which systematically cover all periods of English literature from the Middle Ages to the present time.

In recent years, a number of radical critiques and suggestions for rewriting the classical model have been proposed. Besides suggesting specific extensions or supplements to the classical paradigm, this type of research has additionally aimed at restructuring the basic setup of Genettean typology. The categories that have so far come in for most critical attention include focalization, voice, person, the status of the narrator and the implied author, and the story-discourse distinction. Thus, focalization figures in the already classical rewrite of Genette by Mieke Bal (1983, 1985/1997), but has been the focus
of further revision by, among others, Chatman (1990), Edmiston (1991) and Jahn (1996, 1999a). Voice has been targeted in Aczel (1998, 2001), Fludernik (2001), and in Walsh (2007, this volume). Walsh (2007) moreover queries the story-discourse distinction (see also Fludernik 1994b, this volume) and the existence of a heterodiegetic extradiegetic narrator (see also this volume), in continuation of Ann Banfield’s theses in *Unspeakable Sentences* (1982; see also Fludernik 1993). Massive attention has recently been given to the implied author and the issue of unreliability, and even a return of the author into narrative studies is being promoted in clear violation of what has almost become a taboo in literary studies.\(^{14}\) The list could be extended to include many more issues and critics and a large variety of supplementary proposals and critical restructurings.

A final postclassical area of research is the study of unnatural narratives, that is, anti-mimetic narratives that challenge and move beyond real-world understandings of identity, time, and space by representing scenarios and events that would be impossible in the actual world.\(^{15}\) Brian Richardson (1987, 1997, 2000, 2002, 2006) is the most important representative of this type of postclassical narratology that looks at anti-mimeticism, but recently a number of younger scholars such as Jan Alber (2002, 2009a, 2009b, in progress), Henrik Skov Nielsen (2004), and Rüdiger Heinze (2008) have also begun to look at the ways in which some (primarily postmodernist) narratives challenge our real-world parameters.\(^{16}\) Even before the invention of the term “unnatural,” Brian McHale (1987, 1992) and Werner Wolf (1993) devoted themselves to the range of specific techniques employed in postmodern or anti-illusionist narrative texts. McHale lists a substantial number of metafictional strategies, all of which are designed to foreground the inventedness of the narrative discourse. Wolf’s study attempts an exhaustive description of anti-illusionistic techniques which are meant to cover all anti-illusionistic writing, not just the specific kind of anti-illusionism practiced in postmodernist texts. Unnatural narratology, in a sense, is a combination of postmodernist narratology and cognitive narratology. It could also be argued to constitute an answer to poststructuralist critiques of narratology as guilty

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15. Alber argues that unnatural narratives confront us with physically or logically impossible scenarios or events (2009a; 2009b; in progress; Alber/Heinze in progress; see also Tammi 2008: 43–47 and Alber/Iversen/Nielsen/Richardson 2010). Alber’s Habilitation (in progress) also contains a historical analysis of the development of unnaturalness in English literary history.

16. See also the essays by Jan Alber and Henrik Skov Nielsen in this volume.
of logocentrism and displaying a “geometrical imaginary” (Gibson 1996; see also Currie 1998). However, rather than deconstructing narratology’s constitutive binaries, unnatural narratology (as a development from Fludernik’s “natural” narratology and cognitive narratology in general) tries to set up a narratological model for experimental texts that complements classical narratology and also connects with it by means of a cognitive framework.

**PHASE TWO: CONSOLIDATION AND CONTINUED DIVERSIFICATION**

**Essays in this Volume**

The essays collected here typically combine the resources of various disciplinary traditions of postclassical narratology. They also reach back to concerns and theories already current in the heyday of classical narratology, though not usually discussed as “narratological,” like the work of Girard, Bakhtin, and David Lodge. All Anglo-American work on narrative moreover takes its reference point in the seminal thought of Henry James and E. M. Forster, which proved to be of continuing relevance even during the heyday of structuralist narratology. In our summary of the essays, we will foreground their potential as indices of where narratology may be heading at the moment. In our view, the research that follows seems to suggest that we have reached a new stage at which one has to ponder the overlaps and potential areas of cross-fertilization between the numerous flourishing narratologies.

The volume divides into two parts. A shorter first part deals with a number of extensions and criticisms of classical narratology. It includes creative additions to the standard model by Werner Wolf and Alan Palmer and a radical critique of the category of voice (as well as other cherished staples of narratology) by Richard Walsh, and an analytical essay on mediacy versus mediation by Monika Fludernik. Part II, called “Transdisciplinarities,” documents a number of innovative blendings of narratological issues with generic, medial, gender-related, psycho-analytic, and nonfictional contexts.

Richard Walsh opens the volume by radically questioning key axioms of narratology. His point de repère is the question of voice. In development of his 2007 book *The Rhetoric of Fictionality*, Walsh here proceeds to link his questioning of the category voice with his reservations about the communicative model of narratology, i.e. the assumption that every text must have a narrator figure. He conceptualizes narrative representation as rhetorical in

17. We owe this point to James Phelan (personal communication).
mode, and as semiotic (rather than narrowly linguistic) in scope. The rhetori-
cal orientation of his argument appropriates Plato’s emphasis upon the act of
narrative representation as diegesis or mimesis. Walsh draws out the recur-
siveness implicit in that formulation, and discriminates between its legitimate
scope as a model of agency and the rather different issue of rhetorical effect.
The semiotic nature of narrative representation is asserted through the meta-
phorical nature of the concept of voice, and through Walsh’s efforts to take
the full measure of that fact with respect to other narrative media (principally
film, but also the cognitive medium of mental representation).

Werner Wolf’s is the first of two essays that attempt to close gaps in the
traditional narratological model. Noting that the concept of mise en abyme
has no conceptual counterpart relating to its frame, he proposes the con-
cept of mise en cadre for this lacuna. Wolf outlines how the addition of this
concept can help to describe a number of textual features and how it can
also be applied to medial contexts. Wolf’s contribution aims at bridging the
gulf between classical and postclassical narratology by proposing a “neo-
classical” variant. He suggests that the concepts devised by classical narratol-
yogy have not lost their relevance. On the contrary, they are open to a fruitful
development and supplementation and can be adapted to recent approaches.

Alan Palmer contributes to the extension of narratological categories by
proposing a theory of intermental thought. Such thinking is joint, shared, or
collective and community-based, as opposed to intramental, individual, or
private thought. It can also be described as socially distributed, situated, or
extended cognition, or as intersubjectivity. Intermental thought is a crucially
important component of fictional narrative because much of the mental func-
tioning depicted in novels occurs in large organizations, small groups, work
colleagues, friends, families, couples and other intermental units. It could
plausibly be argued that a large amount of the subject matter of novels is
the formation, development and breakdown of these intermental systems.
So far this aspect of narrative has been neglected by traditional theoretical
approaches and fails to be considered in discussions of focalization, char-
acterization, story analysis, and the representation of speech and thought.
Palmer therefore crucially contributes to closing this gap in the traditional
narratological paradigm.

Monika Fludernik in her contribution returns to a both historical and
critical analysis of the relationship between the terms mediacy, mediation,
and focalization. Following on from earlier work on drama as narrative,
Fludernik considers the status of mediality for narrativity and contrasts Stan-
zel’s and Genette’s complex negotiations with the story-discourse dichotomy,
the status of the narrator as mediator, and with the placing of focalization
or perspective in relation to the story-discourse binary. The essay revisits the exchange between Chatman and Barbara Hernstein Smith on the notion of narrative transmission. It also engages extensively with Richard Walsh’s no-mediation thesis (Walsh 2007) and places the mediacy and (re)mediation debate within the framework of her own narratological model. Like Walsh’s paper in this volume, this essay queries some long-held beliefs or basic axioms of narratology.

David Herman opens Part II of the volume by looking at William Blake’s poem “A Poison Tree” (1794), a text which operates across various communicative media. Herman inquires into “(1) the structure and dynamics of storytelling practices; (2) the multiple semiotic systems in which those practices take shape, including but not limited to verbal language; and (3) mind-relevant dimensions of the practices themselves—as they play out in a given medium for storytelling.” According to Herman, Blake’s poem articulates and enacts a model according to which a more effective engagement with the world is premised on the ability to take up the perspectives of others. And, according to Herman, this is one of the most important features of narrative in general: narrative is centrally concerned with *qualia*, i.e., the sense of “what it is like” for someone or something to have a particular experience, and hence narrative is uniquely suited to capturing what the world is like from the situated perspective of an experiencing mind. Herman’s contribution merges cognitive and transmedial narratology; he sees his essay as a first step toward an investigation of the potential overlaps between different post-classical approaches. His contribution also has an openly ethical slant, thus linking to the paper of Amit Marcus.

Jan Alber’s essay can be situated at the crossroads of transmedial narratology, the rhetorical approach to narrative, and unnatural narratology. He reconsiders the process of cinematic narration from the perspective of hypothetical intentionalism, a cognitive approach in which “a narrative’s meaning is established by hypothesizing intentions authors might have had, given the context of creation, rather than relying on, or trying to seek out, the author’s subjective intentions” (Gibbs 2005: 248). Alber argues that when we make sense of a film, we always speculate about the potential intentions and motivations behind the movie, without ever knowing whether our speculations are correct. In a second step, Alber shows that there is a convergence between the functions of the cinematic narrator, that is, “the organizational and sending agency” (Chatman 1990: 127) behind the film, and those of the implied filmmaker, who mediates the film as a whole and guides us through it (Gaut 2004: 248). Replacing the filmic narrator and the implied filmmaker (analogous to the “implied author” [Booth 1982: 21; Phelan 2005: 45]) with the
“hypothetical filmmaker,” Alber integrates the viewers’ speculations about the conscious or unconscious motivations of the professionals responsible for the making of the film into the analysis. He thus combines the views on intentionality provided in Herman (2008) with a cognitive and reader-response oriented model. Alber applies this new theoretical framework to an experimental narrative, namely David Lynch’s film *Lost Highway* (1996).

Susan Lanser sketches the ways in which a particular topos, namely lesbian desire, may be linked with historically variable narrative parameters, thus combining feminist/queer narratology with a diachronic outlook on narrative. More specifically, Lanser explores what she calls the “sapphic dialogic,” a form of narrative intersubjectivity in which erotic content is filtered through the relationship between a (typically intradiegetic) female pairing of narrator and narratee. Reaching back to the sixteenth century, Lanser uncovers the history of a typical scenario in which female narrators tell other women about heterosexual congress in a context in which the telling becomes yet another erotic experience. Hence, Lanser identifies sapphic form as an underpinning of the eighteenth-century novel’s domestic agenda. Linking these analyses to the rise of the novel, Lanser is able to demonstrate that the eighteenth-century novel female protagonist is not only swept up in the consolidation of the heterosexual subject; but further, the novel preserves within its heterosexual frame the secret of domesticity’s dependence on the structural deployment of lesbian desire. Lanser’s contribution therefore uses the communicative scenario of text-internal dialogue and storytelling to figure an underlying sexual subtext. The paper combines a gender approach with a framework of reader response and the concerns (if not the model) of rhetorical narratology.

Our next contributor, Amit Marcus, merges narratology with psychoanalysis by looking at René Girard’s notion of mimetic (or triangular) desire (Girard 1965) and setting this in correlation with the story-discourse distinction. For Girard, the subject does not desire the object in and for itself. Rather, the desire is mediated through another subject, who possesses or pursues the object. This third figure (the mediator or rival) is admired by the subject but also despised as an obstacle in achieving the object. In his contribution, Marcus looks at narratives in which the narrator is both one of the main characters in the story and the desiring subject. He shows that the narratives he analyzes present several ways in which narration can be linked with mimetic desire. While in two of the narratives he analyzes (Grass’s *Cat and Mouse* and Genet’s *The Thief’s Journal*) mimetic desire only motivates the narration and the narrator’s appeal to a narratee, without there existing a story on that level, in Camus’s *The Fall* the story at the level of narration is woven into the
story of the past life of the narrator. In sum, Marcus argues that if mimetic desire is the basis of the relation between the narrator and the narratee, then narratorial authority seems to be motivated by the anxiety that the loss of the narratee will cause unbearable pain to the narrator, whose mediator and rival will no longer provide him with the (fragile) existential security that he needs. The essay illustrates how the narrator-narratee relationship interacts with the story-discourse level of narrative in ways which, incidentally, are also notable in second-person narratives (Fludernik 1993, 1994a).

In her contribution, Jarmila Mildorf follows David Herman’s suggestions concerning the development of a “socionarratology” (1999b) and shows that narratology, if suitably adapted to social science requirements, can add further insights into the particularly “narrative” features of oral stories. More specifically, she analyzes two oral narratives from the database of personal experience of health and illness (DIPEx) with a view to identifying possible points of convergence between narratology and the social sciences. Mildorf uses narratological terms such as the “experiencing I,” the “narrating I,” “focalization,” “slant,” “filter,” and “double deixis” in you-narratives and illustrates that frequently-evoked concepts in the social science literature such as “social positioning,” “identity,” and the marking of “in-group” and “out-group” relations can be further illuminated if reconsidered through a narratological lens. Her contribution is therefore a test case for narratology’s ability to connect with work on storytelling outside the humanities. In particular, it provides a useful model for cooperation between narratologists and sociologists or psychologists who have so far been using different models and terminology. By showing that these models may be compatible with the narratological paradigms, Mildorf sketches an optimistic horizon for narratology’s involvement with its neighbor disciplines in the social sciences.

Martin Löschnigg discusses models and categories of cognitive narratology that may be relevant for a narratologically grounded analysis of autobiographical discourse. More specifically, he merges cognitive and transmedial narratology and, using Fludernik’s model of “natural” narratology, deals with the discursive representation of experientiality in autobiography. He focuses on the role of narrative in the formation of identity; the role of frames and scripts in the textual representation of memory; and finally, on the question of the fictionality of autobiography. Löschnigg argues that the new frame-oriented models of cognitive narratology provide criteria for describing one’s life as (re)lived, allowing one to emphasize the continuity of narration and experience. This puts the binary narrator-experiencer model of classical narratology on a different and more flexible basis. He suggests that narrativity is a determinant of autobiography; “narrativized” understandings of identity
are based on lived experience and on the capacity of narrative to impose order and coherence on what is otherwise a jumble of disconnected fragments of experiences and memories. Löschnigg also demonstrates that the frames, scripts, and schemata of cognitive narratology can help us grasp autobiography’s temporal complexity by identifying processes of segmentation and of creating coherence, which are especially important in memory-based narratives. The essay closes with a consideration of the question of fictionality in autobiography, which can now be approached in a more differentiated manner. If narratology cannot provide criteria to distinguish between “fact” and “fiction” in autobiographical writing, provided such a distinction is possible at all, it can at least, according to Löschnigg, provide the theoretical basis for describing the fictional as an integral element of life-writing. Löschnigg’s paper is therefore located at the borderline of fictionality and in this way reaches out from classical literary narratology to the wider area of real-life storytelling practices.

Finally, Henrik Skov Nielsen discusses hybrid narrative texts which cannot easily be categorized as either fiction or non-fiction. More specifically, he looks at two types of texts. On the one hand, he considers what he calls “underdetermined texts,” such as James Frey’s *A Million Little Pieces* (2003), i.e., texts that present themselves as neither fiction nor non-fiction. On the other hand, he analyzes “overdetermined texts,” such as Bret Easton Ellis’s *Lunar Park* (2005), that present themselves as both fiction and non-fiction. Frey’s book was published as non-fiction but turned out to represent the experiences of James Frey in an exaggerated and partly inaccurate way; Ellis’s was published as fiction but is in many (though definitely not all) respects a factually accurate rendering of Bret Easton Ellis’s life. Nielsen notes that, interestingly, both kinds of texts use techniques of fictionalization. He moves beyond the fiction/non-fiction boundary by arguing that invention is a resource of fictionality available as a rhetorical strategy in the real-world discourse of the author. Nielsen therefore combines a rhetorical slant on narrative with a reconsideration of the fiction/non-fiction divide and with a focus on the curious status of autobiography. He also proposes some radical revisions of the classical paradigm of narratology, thereby linking back to Part I of the volume.

As this summary illustrates, one can observe many synergetic effects between the diverse essays collected in this volume. Some of these connections arise from a common focus on a specific genre (autobiography in the essays by Löschnigg and Nielsen); the history of narratology (Walsh, Fludernik); ques-
tions of fictionality (in Walsh and Löschnigg); the central role of cognition in narrative (in Palmer, Herman, and Alber); questions of authorship, responsibility or authority (in Walsh, Wolf, Alber, and Nielsen); as well as the issues of gender and queering (Lanser, Marcus).

Theoretically speaking, what is even more interesting is the fact that these very different approaches document that the field of narratology has now reached a phase which is dominated by partial consolidation without any undue reaching after singularity. At the same time, the trends towards commonality are offset by the diversity of approaches, a multiplicity of co-operations with partner disciplines, and the general theoretical “promiscuity” typical of postmodernity. All of the contributors to the volume are critical of traditional theories, but not one of them wants to eliminate the classic model as a whole. Rewriting the traditional paradigm in its various typological manifestations instead takes the form of querying one particular element (voice, mediacy, the narrator) or of adding one more distinction to the paradigm (Wolf, Palmer, Lanser), extending the model to cover new generic applications (poetry, film) or linking it with new thematic foci (collectivities in Palmer, sexuality and queerness in Lanser and Marcus, ethics in Marcus and Nielsen). Some contributors also try to extend narratology theoretically by adopting research questions, concepts, or frameworks from outside structuralism: cognitive studies (Fludernik, Herman, Alber, Löschnigg), painting (Wolf), Girard’s psychoanalysis (Marcus), and media studies (Walsh, Alber).

One could summarize these tendencies by saying that there is a consensus on narratology as a transgeneric, transdisciplinary, and transmedial undertaking, to echo Nünning and Nünning’s 2002 title.

Secondly, all contributors on the whole agree that narratology should cover more than the classical genre of the novel. Postclassical narratology, one could therefore argue, has a much wider conception of what counts as narrative than just the traditional novel (Genette, Stanzel, Chatman, Rimmon-Kenan). The debate on extending narratology to other genres has resulted in a general consensus of crediting film as a narrative genre and a wide acceptance of drama, cartoons, and much performance art, as well as some painting, under the description of narrative genres. The borderline is now located in the gray area made up of poetry, music, and science. One can therefore claim that narratology’s object of analysis has shifted since the 1980s—narrative now includes a much wider spectrum of “texts.” This change requires a reworking of narratological concepts since the traditional model was based on a very restrictive corpus of (generically) rather uniform verbal narratives.

Third, the extension of narrative into a variety of different media has been accompanied by a shift from text-internal close analysis to context-relative
cultural studies, particularly foregrounding the question of narrative’s function in social, historical, ideological, or psychological contexts. Rather than merely analyzing how texts work, and which of their elements are responsible for which meaning or design effects, the current emphasis lies on what these narratives achieve in communication, which ideological or identity-related messages they convey, what ‘cultural work’ (Tompkins 1986, Beck 2003) they perform, and what possible effects they may engender in the real world. One could, therefore, argue that all narratology nowadays is context-sensitive.

Fourth, we would like to propose that the cognitive model, which is one of the many ongoing projects in the field, is slowly establishing itself as a new basis for ever-increasing areas of narratological research. The cognitive model provides a useful explanatory framework which offers a potentially empirical grounding for dealing with textual features. It has also introduced to narrative studies some new terminology and concepts which are perhaps apt to replace more traditional elements in the paradigm. Among such new concepts one can point first and foremost to the notion of the frame, which has now been generally absorbed into narratology much in the same way that linguistic terminology (e.g., of deixis and temporal modes) was in classical narratology. A second major adoption from cognitive science is prototype theory, which is becoming more widely accepted in narrative studies and is beginning to replace the former insistence on clear distinctions between narratological categories. Deconstructive treatments of the binary oppositions of classical narratology have helped to popularize a more relaxed attitude towards classification. One could also count experientiality, originally proposed by Fludernik in 1991 (see also 1996), as a cognitively based concept that has meanwhile been adopted by a number of researchers such as Wolf (2002) and Löschnigg (2006). A reliance on cognitivist and constructivist principles is now common in postclassical narratology, for instance in recent work by Ansgar Nüning (1998), Ralf Schneider (2000), Alan Palmer (2004), Richard Walsh (2007), and Jochen Petzold (2008). This emphasis on cognitive issues is linked to the medial extension of narratology since the classical model was unable to deal with many of the newer types of narrative, and the cognitive approach offers a model which can accommodate linguistic storytelling besides a host of other forms of narrative.

What we are arguing here is that, although there is no unified new methodology in sight for postclassical narratology (nor do we plead for such a

18. So-called cognitive narratology is usually associated with Monika Fludernik, David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Lisa Zunshine.

development), there is sufficient justification for referring to current narratological work in the singular as postclassical narratology; one does not necessarily have to foreground the existing diversity in a plural label—postclassical narratologies. Our reason for emphasizing an incipient move toward congruence, compatibility, and consolidation is our perception of recurrent strategies of patchwork and blending as illustrated in the essays in this volume. We are not saying that all future narratology will be based on cognitive theory, or that all research in narrative will necessarily be transmedial and function-oriented. What we are noting is a confluence of the various approaches that David Herman so magisterially outlined in his 1999 volume. Almost none of the essays printed in this book abides by any one single approach. The papers all combine and creatively blend different approaches, cognitive or otherwise, to achieve a synthesis that looks different in every individual essay but is a synthesis nevertheless. We do not maintain that there is a unified postclassical model on the horizon—nor would we want to invent one—but we are arguing that narratologists nowadays see the object of their research as more variegated than was the case twenty years ago; that they resort to very different methods in combination when approaching a problem; and that they will tend to ground their analyses in a rich contextual framework. To this extent, and to this extent only, do we see postclassical narratology not as continuing to proliferate into numerous new directions, but as beginning to sediment and crystallize into a new modus vivendi.
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Introduction


**Contributors**

**JAN ALBER** is assistant professor in the English Department at the University of Freiburg (Germany), where he teaches English literature and film. He is the author of a critical monograph entitled *Narrating the Prison: Role and Representation in Charles Dickens’ Novels, Twentieth-Century Fiction, and Film* (Cambria Press, 2007) and the editor/co-editor of collections such as *Stones of Law, Bricks of Shame: Narrating Imprisonment in the Victorian Age* (University of Toronto Press, 2009), *Unnatural Narratology* (de Gruyter, forthcoming), and *Why Study Literature?* (Aarhus University Press, forthcoming). Alber has also authored and co-authored articles that were published or are forthcoming in such international journals as *Dickens Studies Annual, The Journal of Popular Culture, Narrative, Short Story Criticism, Storyworlds*, and *Style*. In 2007, he received a scholarship from the German Research Foundation (DFG) which allowed him to spend a year at The Ohio State University doing research under the auspices of Project Narrative. His new research project focuses on unnatural (i.e., physically or logically impossible) scenarios and events in fiction and drama.

**MONIKA FLUDERNIK** is professor of English literature at the University of Freiburg, Germany. She is the author of *The Fictions of Language and the Languages of Fiction* (Routledge, 1993), *Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology* (Routledge, 1996), which was awarded the Perkins Prize by the Society for the Study of Narrative Literature (SSNL), *Echoes and Mirrorings: Gabriel Josipovici’s Creative Oeuvre* (Lang, 2000), and *An Introduction to Narratology* (Routledge, 2009). She has edited special issues on second-person fiction (*Style* 28.3, 1994), on “Language and Literature” (*EJES* 2.2, 1998), on “Metaphor and Beyond: New Cognitive Developments” (with Donald and Margaret Freeman, *Poetics Today* 20.3, 1999), and on German narratology (with Uri Margolin, *Style* 48.2–3, 2004). Further publications include collections of essays (e.g., *Hybridity and Postcolonialism: Twentieth-Century Indian Literature*,...
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1998; Diaspora and Multiculturalism: Common Traditions and New Developments, 2003; and In the Grip of the Law: Trials, Prisons and the Space Between, with Greta Olson, 2004). Her articles include papers on expatriate Indian literature in English, British aesthetics in the eighteenth century, and narratological questions. Work in progress concerns prison settings and prison metaphors in English literature and the development of narrative structure in English literature between 1250 and 1750.

DAVID HERMAN teaches in the English Department at The Ohio State University. The editor of the Frontiers of Narrative book series and the journal Storyworlds, he has published a number of studies on interdisciplinary narrative theory, narrative and mind, storytelling across media, modern and postmodern fiction, and other topics.

SUSAN S. LANSER is professor of English, Comparative Literature, and Women’s and Gender Studies at Brandeis University. She is the author of The Narrative Act: Point of View in Prose Fiction (1981) and Fictions of Authority: Women Writers and Narrative Voice (1992), and the co-editor of Women Critics 1660–1820: An Anthology (1995) and Letters Written in France (2001). Lanser has published numerous articles in journals such as Style, Eighteenth-Century Studies, Feminist Studies, Textual Practice, Semeia, Eighteenth-Century Life, the Journal of Homosexuality, the Journal of American Folklore, and Novel and in books including The Faces of Anonymity, Reconsidering the Bluestockings, Blackwell Companion to Narrative Theory, and Singlewomen in the European Past. Her research interests include narrative theory, the novel, eighteenth-century cultural studies, the history of gender and sexuality, and the French Revolution. Lanser is currently completing a book entitled The Sexuality of History: Sapphic Subjects and the Making of Modernity.

MARTIN LÖSCHNIGG studied English and German literature and linguistics at the Universities of Graz (Austria) and Aberdeen (UK). He is currently associate professor of English, chair of the Section on the New Literatures in English, and deputy director of the Centre for Canadian Studies at Graz University. Löschnigg was a visiting scholar at the Free University of Berlin and at Harvard University in 1995 and 1996, and a visiting associate professor of English at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis in autumn 2005. His main research interests are narrative theory, autobiography, the English novel, the literature of war, and Canadian literature. Löschnigg has published on the literature of the First World War (Der Erste Weltkrieg in deutscher und englischer Dichtung [1994] and Intimate Enemies—English and German Literary Reactions to the Great War 1914–1918, edited with Franz K. Stanzel [1993]), on fictional autobiographies (Die englische fiktionale Autobiographie: Erzähltheoretische Grundlagen und historische Prägnanzformen von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts [2006]), and on Canadian literature with Maria Löschnigg (Kurze Geschichte der kanadischen Literatur [2001] and Migration and Fiction: Narratives of Migration in Contemporary Canadian Literature [2009]).

AMIT MARCUS studied comparative literature and philosophy at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is the author of Self-Deception in Literature and Philosophy (Wis-
senschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2007) and of several articles which were published in international journals such as the *Journal of Literary Semantics, Mosaic, Narrative, Partial Answers*, and *Style*. The main focus in his research so far has been on unreliable narration and fictional “we” narratives. He was granted a scholarship from the Minerva Foundation for the years 2006–2008 at the universities of Freiburg and Giessen, and recently received another scholarship from the Humboldt foundation for the years 2010–2012 at the University of Freiburg.

**JARMILA MILDORF** completed her PhD in sociolinguistics at the University of Aberdeen (Scotland) and now teaches English literature and language at the University of Paderborn (Germany). She is the author of *Storying Domestic Violence: Constructions and Stereotypes of Abuse in the Discourse of General Practitioners* (University of Nebraska Press, 2007) and she has co-edited a volume on *Magic, Science, Technology, and Literature* (2006) as well as a special issue of the journal *Partial Answers* on *Narrative: Knowing, Living, Telling* (2008). Mildorf has also published articles in collections and journals such as *The Sociology of Health and Illness, The Journal of Gender Studies, Narrative Inquiry,* and *COLLeGIUM*. Her research interests are narrative, gender studies, language and literature, and medical humanities.

**HENRIK SKOV NIELSEN** is professor in the Scandinavian Institute at the University of Aarhus (Denmark). He is the author of articles and books in Danish on narratology and literary theory, including his dissertation on digression and first-person narrative fiction, *Tertium datur—On Literature or on What Is Not*. His publications in English include articles on Bret Easton Ellis, Edgar Allan Poe, psychoanalysis, and extreme narration, including an article on first-person narrative fiction in *Narrative* 12.2 (2004). A recent article, “Colonised Thinking” on the US influence on the humanities in Europe was published in the *Oxford Literary Review* (2008). He is the editor of a series of anthologies on literary theory, and is currently working on a narratological research project on the relation between authors and narrators.

**ALAN PALMER** is an independent scholar living in London and an honorary research fellow in the Department of Linguistics and English Language at Lancaster University. His book *Fictional Minds* (University of Nebraska Press, 2004) was a co-winner of the MLA Prize for Independent Scholars and also a co-winner of the Perkins Prize (awarded by the Society for the Study of Narrative Literature). His new book, *Social Minds in the Novel*, will be published by The Ohio State University Press. He has contributed essays to the journals *Narrative, Style* and *Semiotica*, as well as chapters to *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences* (ed. David Herman), *Narratology beyond Literary Criticism* (ed. Jan Christoph Meister), *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies* (ed. Lisa Zunshine), *Contemporary Stylistics* (eds. Marina Lambrou and Peter Stockwell), and *The Emergence of Mind: Representations of Consciousness in Narrative Discourse in English, 700 to the Present* (ed. David Herman). His chief areas of interest are narratology, cognitive poetics and cognitive approaches to literature, the cognitive sciences and the study of consciousness, the nineteenth-century novel, modernism, and the history of country and western music.
RICHARD WALSH is senior lecturer in English and Related Literature at the University of York, where he teaches primarily narrative theory, early film, and American literature. His first book, Novel Arguments: Reading Innovative American Fiction (Cambridge University Press, 1995), argued for the positive rhetorical force of non-realist narrative modes, and opened up a line of inquiry that defined his subsequent research in the field of narrative theory. Beginning with “Who Is the Narrator?” (Poetics Today, 1997) and culminating in The Rhetoric of Fictionality: Narrative Theory and the Idea of Fiction (The Ohio State University Press, 2007), Walsh proposes a fundamental reconceptualization of the role of fictionality in narrative, and in doing so challenges many of the core assumptions of narrative theory. His current research is concerned with narrative in its broadest interdisciplinary contexts, using the concept of emergence as a way to negotiate between its ubiquity and its limitations. He is the leader of the Fictionality Research Group, and director of Narrative Research in York’s Centre for Modern Studies.

WERNER WOLF is professor and chair of English and General Literature at the University of Graz (Austria). His main areas of research are literary theory (concerning aesthetic illusion, narratology, and metafiction in particular), functions of literature, eighteenth- to twenty-first-century English fiction, eighteenth- and twentieth-century drama, metareference in various arts, as well as intermediality studies. His publications include, besides numerous essays, Ästhetische Illusion und Illusionsdurchbrechung in der Erzählkunst (Aesthetic Illusion and the Breaking of Illusion in Narrative, 1993) and The Musicalization of Fiction: A Study in the Theory and History of Intermediality (1999). He is also co-editor of volumes 1, 3, 5, and 11 (forthcoming) in the book series “Word and Music Studies” (published by Rodopi), and has co-edited Framing Borders in Literature and Other Media (2006) and Description in Literature and Other Media (2007), both in the “Studies in Intermediality” series at Rodopi. Wolf is currently directing a project funded by the Austrian Science Foundation (FWF) on “Metareference in the Media,” which hosted several conferences. Two proceeding volumes (also in the series “Studies in Intermediality”) were also edited by Wolf: Metareference across Media: Theory and Case Studies (2009) and The Metareferential Turn in Contemporary Arts and Media: Forms, Functions, Attempts at Explanation (forthcoming).
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