The Theory and Interpretation of Narrative Series
To my children, Avi and Yael
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A Note on Terminology

The traditional assumption that language and literature can and do mirror or reflect reality was often associated with the Aristotelian term *mimesis*. Later claims about the limitations of language and literature have, among other things, led to a substitution of *representation* for *mimesis*. Since I am fully aware of the problematic nature of language and literature, I use *representation* consistently in my discourse, but I retain *mimesis* both in quotations from others and in references that are meant to evoke the traditional belief in imitation. A similar procedure characterizes my use of *self* and *subject*. The traditional humanist conception of an autonomous, introspective self has often been contested, leading to a replacement of *self* by *subject*.¹ The view I suggest incorporates the interrogation of the traditional one, and I use *subject* rather than *self* except in quotations or when referring to the concept in its humanist acceptation. I also use *self* in the chapter on *Beloved*, because in that novel the term recurs in dramatizing the painful aspirations of subjects to become selves.