***Narrative* at 25**

**SPEAKERS**: James Phelan (JP), Per Krogh Hansen (PKH), Sue J. Kim (SK), Susan Lanser (SL), and Gerland Prince (GP)

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Welcome to *Narrative* at 25, a podcast produced by The Ohio State University Press. This session was recorded at the 2017 Narrative conference in Lexington, Kentucky. You will hear *Narrative* editor, Jim Phelan, in conversation with Per Krogh Hansen, Sue Kim, Sue Lanser, and Gerald Prince as they discuss the past, present, and future of *Narrative* on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the journal.

**JP**: Welcome everyone. I’m Jim Phelan. I’m the editor of *Narrative*, which is the official journal of the International Society for the Study of Narrative, and we are here to talk about its reaching its 25th year of existence. And I’m delighted to be joined by several distinguished narrative theorists, people who have made important contributions to the field and who are regular readers of the journal, and I’m going to let each of them introduce themselves and say a little bit about their connection to the journal, so Gerry?

**GP**: I’m Gerry Prince, and I’ve read the journal since its very first number actually in 1993, and I’ve been also on the board for a long time. And I always read all the titles in digging the various issues of the journal, and I often read actually the articles, too.

**SK**: My name is Sue Kim. I’m a professor of English at UMass, Lowell. I first learned about the journal pretty late, probably 2004–2005. I can talk about it later if you want, but I tend to do things backwards. And so I was already an assistant professor working in American literature and culture, particularly ethnic studies, and I went to the Narrative conference at Dartmouth that Robyn Warhol organized. And even though I had gone to Cornell for grad school, I was like what is this thing called narrative theory, and so I was very fascinated. I felt like I had always been looking for the tools to talk about narrative in greater detail. And I think narrative theory, and particularly the journal, provides a lot of these tools. I also read all the titles when the journal comes out, and then I read not all but many of the articles.

**SL**: I’m Sue Lanser and I have also been reading the journal since it came out, and in fact, it came out at such a perfect moment for me because it was just where the turn toward post-classical narratology was taking hold, and so it was thrilling to me actually to see a journal that was focused solely on narrative but also focused on the range of what narrative thinking could be. And I read more than the titles, but I also read all the titles. And really for 25 years, it’s been my go-to place for my first thinking about narrative, and sometimes especially when I couldn’t make it to a conference I could see what was happening in any given year.

**PKH**: And my name is Per Krogh Hansen. I’m from the University of Southern Denmark. My first meeting with the journal was in 2004. A colleague of mine also from Denmark had published an article in the journal. I didn’t know about the journal at the time, so he was so nice to send me a copy, and I looked into it. Oh, this is the journal I’ve been looking for especially because I did my Ph.D. on the concept of character and had started working on unreliable narration—all these kinds of concepts—so this conceptual development of narrative theory and narrative analysis interested me. So it was great to find that there was a journal, which actually was made for this purpose.

**JP**: So it’s great that everyone reads all the titles. This is Jim, again. Each of you has a set of interests, in terms of your own work, and also a larger interest in the field, so if you could maybe just talk a little bit about how you feel the journal serves you and from your particular positions within the larger field of narrative theory.

**GP**: Gerry Prince, again. There are basically, in the journal, two kinds of articles. Both of them have something of general significance to say about narrative, but some of them say it through the analysis of a particular novel or set of narratives and others don’t so much. And in my case, I do tend to read the others—the ones that are not necessarily articulated in terms of a particular reader, but ones that the title of which announce some very general thing like omniscient narration or fictionality or something of the sort. And to go back to something that Sue Lanser said earlier, one of the great things about the journal is indeed that it was—it wasn’t the first journal devoted to narrative because there was of course *The* *Journal of Narrative Technique*—but it was the first journal devoted to narrative. And there were other good journals that did very many excellent pieces on *narrative*. But they also did all sorts of other things, whereas with *Narrative* you know what you’re in for.

**PKR**: Per Krough Hansen, filling in again. I re-second that. I think that is one of the true values here, but I also think that even in these, how you call it, more theoretical articles, they usually have an outset or at least some kind of appliance also to watch the corpus. In which I think is one of the most valuable things about the way that we actually practice things here is that we always want to see how does this work in different texts or different examples or so. So compared to a lot of other journals and anthologies coming out where we really have a lot of theory going on, and theory perhaps which is getting more and more detached from what it was talking about, that really is never the case here. But I feel the same as you. I go for the articles, which have a wider perspective, a conceptual perspective, and then hook it up on something instead of digging into a novel or what have you.

**SK**: No, I agree. This is Sue Kim. I think one of the things I appreciate about *Narrative* is that it focuses on the theories of narrative—these larger ideas and strategies and forms—but you have people from a lot of different, specific fields, right, backgrounds. For example, I’m a twentieth, twenty–first century person. I tend to focus on ethnic studies, post-colonial studies. I’m interested in engaging with cognitive narrative theory. But I remember specifically—I can’t remember the title or the name now—but the winner of last year’s Phelan prize, for the best essay in *Narrative*, which basically questioned specific theories of cognitive theory from a medievalist, from an early modern perspective, and I loved that just because, and again that’s not my field and it wouldn’t necessarily change how I do cognitive theory say in the twenty-first century, but it did make me realize an aspect that is not, again, natural to cognition, but it’s a historically situated thing.

**SL**: Yeah. This is Sue Lanser. I just want to also underscore, for me, the value of the journal as a source for teaching materials because when I teach narrative theory, I always go first to *Narrative*. I look and see what’s there, what’s new, what do I want my students to understand, and the range of topics that *Narrative* has engaged over the past 25 years is really extraordinary. We really can teach out of the journal and teach also the changes over time.

**JP**: This is Jim again. So maybe one thing to talk about from my perspective, reflecting on what people are saying, this idea of being. Well, when I took over the journal, right—so, I’ll just say a little bit about that moment and that history. George Perkins had been the editor of *The* *Journal of Narrative Technique*. We had done some work together on conferences and things like that, and he was getting to a situation where he felt he was looking to retire, support at Eastern Michigan, where *The Journal* *of Narrative Technique* was and still is, although it changed to *JNT*. Anyway, George felt it was important to find a way for it to go forward as a society’s journal, and I had said to him. Well you know, once I decided I was willing to do it that I would want to reorient it a little bit, and he was very open to that and welcomed my ideas. So the conception I had was to think about it as a journal in which all kinds of perspectives on narrative would be welcome, but also so that means what is your criteria in terms of what would be appropriate for this journal and what wouldn’t and sort of worked with a general stance that each contribution, each essay, would need to be of interest to more than one audience. Right? So in one way I would try to articulate this when I was saying no to submissions—that we’d like there to be some kind of reciprocity or two-way traffic between interpretation and theory, interpretation and history, you know, so something general at stake that goes beyond the reading or a particular text. But then also that there could be, as Per was saying, some connection in that way. So I would say the most frequent reason why we turn down an essay is that it’s only doing one of those things.

**PKR**: Per, again. I was thinking about another thing I find very valuable about the journal is the tendency to debate. I think that’s an extremely important aspect of having a journal because it is a place. We can meet at conferences, and we can have our discussions there, and we can exchange on the list servers, and what have you, but having these good debates on the journals is a very important aspect of it, too. And I’m wondering, was that a part of your plan from the beginning?

**JP**: It was, and early on we had Ralph Rader and Michael McKeon debating about the origins of the English novel and things like that, and at that time we explicitly marked it off as a kind of dialogue section and in some of my earlier editorial columns I was encouraging that, especially in terms of people writing responses to essays. And that actually didn’t get picked up on, so then we had other kinds of occasions, you know like the fictionality thing.

**GP**: But it’s—excuse me. Gerry Prince. I think it’s good not to impose manufactured dialogues or debates. It’s good if spontaneously somebody reads something and says wait a minute, I don’t really agree with this, or I think one should add that and so on. I think then it is, in my opinion, truly engaging and interesting rather than the more conventional okay I’m going to have, I don’t know, some post-structuralist versus structuralist debate or something, yes?

**SL**: I just have to say—this is Sue Lanser—Gerry, that my first appearance in *Narrative* was in a dialogue, let’s say, with you, and I was so honored to be asked to write in conversation with you. I think you know it certainly did advance my thinking.

**GP**: You know, and it did advance my thinking, and I remember really this is true. I enjoyed your response. It’s not that I agreed with it, but I figured that no, you know it’s a good response, and there’s no need for me to respond to the response.

**JP**: Which was, I really appreciated that moment because I think you were the first person who did that and said okay, let it stand, and let the debate be there. I don’t have to have the last word. And you know, I think if you did, it would be the illusion of a last word.

**GP**: Exactly, exactly.

**JP**: So especially for, well, all of you, you’ve all been reading it long enough—do you recognize the journal being somewhat different now than it was when you first started reading it?

**GP**: I think so. I think so. I think, of course, the journal probably always will have an important, a literary, tendency. It’s clear it’s unavoidable. But I do think that there’s been a number of articles that deal with things that are not literary in the more conventional sense, and that’s all to the good, and I always want to see even more of that if you will, so that’s one thing. The other thing is that it clearly has become much more international than it was in the beginning. The beginning was interesting. I went back to the first number in preparation for this, and it was interesting because it didn’t have to do with post-structuralism, you know, and there were quite eminent figures who expressed themselves from one thing or another, but it is true that it came up more or less at the time when a so-called post-classical narratology was beginning to make an impact. But the journal has been able, I think, to negotiate the two very well, but it in no sense do I think of *Narrative* as representing any kind of either a contextual or post-structuralist or post-classical narratology. I think that's a very good feature that it’s kept, It’s a eclecticism in the good sense, if you will.

**JP**: Right. Right. I like to think of it as pluralism, but…

**GP**: Ok, fine. Fine.

**JP**: But whatever, right.

**SL**: This is Sue Lanser. I think in the early years, the journal was extensive in a literary sense, and now it's more—so that there were theorists of the novel, historians of the novel, in the early volumes. And now it's more extensive in the generic sense or a sense of the multiple media and forms of narrative that Gerry was talking about. I also think it's always been a place with stars. So that first, you know, those first issues already had Gayatri Spivak, Michael McKeon—and then also very welcoming to new voices, and I really appreciate that. Some of the things that I teach regularly are actually like Laura Buchholz’s piece on morphing which I use for free indirect discourse so often with my students. I think she was a master student when she published that. Fabulous.

**PKR**: As I've mentioned before, I came into *Narrative* later here, and when I was reflecting on the same thing, that if it had changed over the years, I didn't really find that it changed that much actually. I think this scope is wider. I mean there's more room for nonliterary narrative studies, and as Gerry said, I would appreciate if there was even more of that actually. So if we’ve opened up the field more for that. And of course there's more international scholars contributing now, but I think in general, there is a line saying that this this partly pragmatic approach to analysis and narrative so it doesn't tend to dissolve into, how do you call it, pure theory, which I really think is radical.

**SK**: You know—this is Sue Kim—I echo what Per was saying. I’ve read some of the earlier stuff, but you know really since 2004 especially. I mean I don't think I don't feel like it's changed massively. Again I think the scope has widened, and I think even though—I mean one of the things I like is that there’s sort of this pluralist or Big Ten approach to narrative theory or this approach to narrative. It’s still very much—and I don't even know how to sort of really define it or theorize it yet—but there still is a kind of like a dividing line between narrative theory, again even if it's post-classical, even if it's post-structural, that has a genealogical relationship to you know structuralist narratology because there are other ways you know studying narratives that are radically different, and I am not sure how you know how to bridge these yet.

**JP**: Are there things that the journal isn’t doing that you think it should be doing?

**GP**: You know what I like because just as I went back to the first issue I also looked in particular at the more recent ones, and I liked reading that translation of posing terms of brevity as form. And I was thinking that one thing that the journal can do with discretion is publish some pieces that were never translated in English that came out in German or French or whatever language, and then make it available, if you will—even if it's an old piece. But some old pieces are still very new if you will—invaluable. So that's a good thing. I really enjoyed that piece.

**PKH**: Here, here. I agree with that. I think bringing in translations of classical or newer texts that never really got into the discussion is perhaps also in relation to these articles where we are looking into to someone who has contributed a lot to the year, and then I was kind of thinking also that I do miss a review section here for book reviews. I think there's so many good books coming out here and it's actually getting harder and harder to get them reviewed. So I think that is one thing, especially because the field here is shared in a way where there is a lot of different perspective. But there is a common interest in most of the things coming out. So it would be great, and I don't think it should necessarily be like ten page reviews, so it could be shorter. But I think that could be interesting to add to it.

**SK**: And book reviews are very helpful to scholars in the field. There is definitely something—and I don't have the answer to it so I'll just sort of sketch it out, and I don’t think this will be news to anybody. On the one hand, one of the reasons I like *Narrative* is that it seems to be coming out of this genealogy from structuralist narrative and then post-classical narrative and looking at specifically these narrative forms and various sort of approaches to narrative. On the other hand, and I think we're all aware of this, there are so many other ways. I mean so, for example, like you know I'm in ethnic studies and so even though some people use the tools of narrative theory—like heterodiegetic or something like that right or unreliable narrator or things like that—the approach to narrative is so different, right. It’s either ideological and or historical and or related to nation and all these things, and these things also show up in narratives but in a very different way, and this actually goes to what Sue was saying. I mean one of the reasons that I think the essays and narratives are teachable is because students can understand them, right. I mean good on you, Jim. I think there's a high readability level in these articles, whereas say for example some of the other journals, some of the more, I mean, that are more informed. I mean, again, contemporary narratology is also informed by post-structuralism, but maybe some of these other firms that are much more cultural studies based. It is a challenge to teach it to undergraduates because they have to have read Lacan and Dearden, Foucault and like Stuart Hall and Marcson, everyone, and I don't know. But one of the things that I liked about narrative and narrative theory like the conference association, the journal, is its attention to form. But I wish there was a way to, without losing that focus or specialty, to bring these things that are happening. Say for example, in some areas of MLA or ASA, they could be somehow brought into more productive conversation. I feel like right now people are aware of that, and maybe are individually interested in sort of building bridges or working together or using the tools of one field or the other, but there still is a real different continent.

**JP**: There's an editorial kind of reflection, right. There's a way in which the journal is the product of the field, in the sense of what gets submitted, right. And then there’s a way in which this kind of conversation, and my own thinking, etcetera, can try to influence what gets published and saying we’re going to seek something like this—you know, a cluster of essays and so on. And again I think there's a question of balance there that can be a tricky one. How much to simply rely on what comes in, and how much to say okay, well we really want to do X, Y, Z. And maybe it goes back a little bit to the question about special issues and clusters and so on, but it is very helpful to hear you express these thoughts.

**SL**: This is Sue L. I’m thinking also that we can expand the readership of *Narrative* and in some ways by reaching out to bring in new voices who would represent different geographical perspectives, different ethnic perspectives, and I’d like to say different theoretical perspectives. Also different historical venues. I did a survey once of the journal for an article I was writing, and I think of the vast majority of pieces that focus on a text focused on twentieth century and twenty–first century text. Some focus on the nineteenth century, and then it gets pretty thin as you go down. I was delighted that you said you were reading it. You were influenced by something that was written by a medievalist, but I think we could also expand toward historical—different historically based essays.

SK: Oh, I would also echo what Jared said earlier about the nonfictional, nonliterary narratives. I'm going to be attempting to talk about this this morning because, again, there's so many things I can't wrap my head around, but I feel like if any—not to get political—but if nothing else, the recent election has shown us how important narratives are. I mean I think that narrative theory and the journal, *Narrative*, has such powerful potential to be really effective and understanding—helping to understand how narrative works. But it will take work for us to like reach out into those nonliterary texts.

**GP**: I know I'm sure, and I know that there's been attempts both at the Narrative conference and for the journal, *Narrative*, to expand and diversify and be more inclusive. And these attempts have worked to some degree, but they're not easy to realize actually. The goals are not easy to achieve. One of the things that the journal can encourage, I think, and does have to do with diversifications is to try and include, I don't know, generate, but I don't know how more pieces that tell us about poetics of narrative that come from really very different topics that is not a Western context but really contexts that are unknown to most of us. What did the Indian poeticians say about whatever, you know? Did they have any notion or like or similarity to, I don’t know, unreliable narration or something like that, yes?

**SK**: Or non-modern texts, too.

**GP**: Or non-modern texts, which would fit in exactly the same kind of category, yes. Another thing that I enjoyed was a piece on writing an unreliable narrator, and I thought that was an interesting piece. And I thought it's not easy to have such pieces but to have writers talk about the way they use a particular device or the difficulties or non-difficulties perhaps of using that particular device and what they’ve learned, what they haven't learned etcetera, etcetera. I thought that was also an interesting piece.

**JP**: Yeah, good. I’m glad you liked that. Yeah, it appealed to me for that reason, you know. The writer talking about trying to really engage with the theoretical concept. Yeah. In a special issue that we did on a short story—not the one we did a few years ago but back in the 90s—we had a short story writer talking about that. I like that, but yeah, so again that might be another place to sort of look for a way to expand. That's also relevant to what we think of us and the mission of the journal.

**SL**: Can I say something about the quality of the writing and the journal? And Jim, I really have to credit you for this because I know I’ve published in the journal, and you've read, and read so carefully and made suggestions. I mean, I just think your attention and the editorial team's attention to the writing is just extraordinary. And I actually just heard from a colleague who was recently published in the journal who said I've never had that much beautiful attention to my work and the revision process.

**SK**: Here, here.

**SL**: It's really—it's a real gift to the profession.

**JP**: Well, a lot of the credit—you know, give credit where credit is due. And the editorial assistants, people like Nick Heer and Julianna Hofmann before him, and really since the journal started—the graduate students at Ohio State who have worked for the journal have been outstanding. So they do a lot of that detail work. I just try to do a lot of sort of conceptual and organizational things like that with a sort of sentence. I mean occasionally I’ll…

**SL**: Well, both levels are really critical and I think they have really made this a journal where the quality of the writing and the thinking is very, very high.

**JP**: Well, thank you very much. I think as the editor of *Narrative*, right, I get my head focused on alright, what's coming in, what's coming out, and I'm aware of the other journals right, but I’m not maybe as aware as you. So when—you know, I feel like things are working pretty well and all of that, but I was sort of interested in your thoughts on the *Narrative* journal in relationship to other journals, other scholarships on narrative studies you know. How do you see its place in reflecting the fields and influencing the fields being related to some of the other venues?

**SK**: You have a bit of a biased sample because I think I’m like *Narrative* is the best journal.

**GP**: Two things. One, there is a journal called *Narrative Inquiry* which does work on narrative but very different from the work that is published in *Narrative*. And it would be great, and I think we touched upon it a little bit if somehow *Narrative* could also attract some of these people who write who, rather than narratological or structuralist or that kind of approach, use linguistic approaches, use conversational narrative approaches and so on.

**JP**: More toward social science.

**GP**: Right. Labov, Harvey Sacks—this kind of stuff all in psychology. So that's one journal that I think of, and I must say that I read *Narrative* much more assiduously than *Narrative Inquiry*, but there are other journals that do work on narrative that is very interesting. I'm thinking of course of *Poetics Today*. I'm thinking of *Style*. They are more varied journals. They also deal sometimes with poetry, with prosody, with this, with that. *Poetics Today* in particular has diversified enormously. *Style*, as the name indicates, the style of all sorts of things, but they do valuable work on narrative. But they do not, I think, have the range for that kind of work that *Narrative* has clearly because *Narrative* is devoted to narrative whereas *Style* or *Poetics Today* or *Poetics*. There's also the journal, *Poetics*, which is an interesting journal very empirically oriented, sometimes. Well, they cover much larger territories.

**PKR**: Yeah. Per here. I totally agree. I think that it could be interesting to have more dialogue to the narrative inquiry range of this whole way of thinking here. I mean to me, I think *Narrative* is the one journal that I definitely am reigned to. There’s a few Danish journals that are always open, and then there's a book series from de Gruyter, Narratologia,which basically is somewhere in between a journal and separate books because there's so much dialogue between these different volumes about them. And I think if we compare these to *Narrative* and Narratologiaseries, I think the difference between a real journal and what a book series can do is everything there. I mean because you won't find the science, the debates, and what have you now is located, they are all, they are also extremely expensive to buy and heavy to carry around. And I think the value of having *Narrative* is here—that it could be interesting at some time to go through all the old issues and find out how many concepts have been suggested here and how many survived to make that kind of statistics because I'm pretty sure that it will be a few of them. But I'm also sure that when we read it, you know the cost of this is coming out of that in the time where we are we are making these considerations. It's extremely inspiring. We pick on some of it and some of it we could walk on or we can use it, and some of it you'll just let go again, and I think that is important for this kind of journal—that it is also once in a while a bit quick and dirty. We try something off to see how it works and perhaps they don’t. Perhaps it ignites the debate or perhaps it's just forgotten afterwards, and I think that that is one of the most important aspects of it.

**GP**: Jim, how many submissions are there more or less in a given year?

**JP**: More or less 100.

**GP**: Okay. Okay.

**JP**: There may have been a little bit more recently. We're publishing18–20. Something like that per year, typically.

**GP**: And do they tend to come from the same kinds of places or not really?

**JP**: Well, I mean here’s what going back to what you were saying before about how the journal has changed. What stands out for me is the really significant increase in submissions from abroad, not in North American journals. So different places in Europe, Israel, Australia, New Zealand, China, occasionally Japan, Korea—I think we’ve had submissions from. So now, well, I’d say you know it's pretty diverse, and I don't know that I could say that okay, here’s the thing that we can count on sort of consistently. The other thing that I would say, going back to something that Sue mentioned, is we do get a lot of submissions from graduate students and there's a big range there. But some of them are really outstanding and there are some that are promising, and I was like okay, well, let's work with this you know, and that becomes I think another valuable role that the journal can play.

**SK**: So in terms of the journal in relationship to other journals, and I’m sort of going to say the opposite of what I said before because, I mean, the other journals I read are journals in association with Asian American studies, MELUS, sometimes BMLA, and the *Journal of Narrative Theory* and the things. I mean, *Narrative* is like comfort food, right, because you know whatever the field, you know you're going to get some sort of theoretical contribution intervention of some sort. And you know that you're going to have at least some illustration or application of it, right. I mean, that's one of the strengths of the journal is that you know whatever the particular approach or the text or the historical period, it has that quality.

**JP**: To pick up on what Per was saying, and again, I'd be interested in your thoughts on it. I think one of the things that I've come to think over the course of my time as editor is that we often look for the big intervention, you know, paradigm-shifting things, that kind of language to talk about the significance of a particular piece. But I think I've come to appreciate more kind of the way in which it feels, incrementally develops and changes, and those incremental contributions collectively are very significant, and we can mis-sense that. So, I don't know. Is that something you guys share or not?

**SK**: I completely agree.

**JP**: It’s necessary for me as editor to feel like okay, not everything has got to be the paradigm-shifting thing, but this can be a significant contribution.

**SK**: And I mean not that the scientific or social scientific journal should be our model, but that's often particularly how the scientific or medical journals work, right. I mean they're doing these controls for these tiny, tiny sort of things. I mean particularly working in something like cognitive studies or APIC studies. It's so complicated. Right? I mean, I'm very happy to learn one small, specific thing that actually makes sense or revises a specific part of that understanding.

**SL**: I think portability is key. If I learned something reading an essay and I can take it somewhere else, whether it's an essay focused on a single text or an essay with very large you know contours, that sense of portability is really, for me, is really critical, and I think *Narrative* really chooses pieces that seem to have that portability. I know there's a *Narrative* article, and when I’m advising graduate students about where to submit things, or colleagues of mine, I mean I hate to use this old saw, but I do know it when I see it, you know. There is a way in which I have a sense of that a *Narrative* essay is different from an essay in a period journal or in an area of studies journal. It really has its own kind of identity. There is, of course, overlap of some degree—the core.

**JP**: Yes, sure. Right, right.

**GP**: And it’s very often it's on the—and I don't mean to be dismissive of the rest of the lines—but sometimes its only ten lines in a piece that actually are portable, if you will.

**SK**: If you can remember one of my lines…

**GP**: Yes, yes. So really, a little detail but which is truly informative and, to a particular reader, is new and therefore portable.

**PKH**: I think also that there have been announced way more paradigm shifts than there actually have been in the century. And I think that there’s also some kind of a critique-ness or roundabout—this whole thing about saying oh this is going to be a new thing that we’re all going to think about these next couple of years, so I kind of stick to the pragmatic and see if it works, it works, and to see how that is. I also think I can’t remember how long in years. Say, how many works are they in?

**JP**: Well, this is interesting because in the beginning, you know, I never did want to have word limits, right. Take the space you need to, you know, answer your question right. Solve your problem, whatever. But I’ve now relented to 25 years and just last month, I think we wrote to Emily, our journal’s manager, and said okay, well let's put in the guidelines something about, you know, quality is more important than length. However, most essays are between I think it’s 6,500 words and 9,500 words, but we do publish more than that. I think PLMA says 8,000 is a good word limit.

**PKH**: I hope that maybe sometime in the future we’ll find ways of using the digital media—something to support all this kind of stuff. I mean people might hand in something that's twice as long, and you connect to it though. You know you could push it on the Internet later, but we want the condensed version where you’re actually saying what you want to say so that we could use that flexibility actually in a new media now.

**JP**: You know, one thing that is coming, and again I’d be interested to get your thoughts on this, is with Project MUSE. We’re going to have the affordance of being able to publish essays as they are ready, rather than all at once and a number. So I think that's a good thing. But I also think that that potentially says all right, then do we need a print journal and that kind of thing?

**SK**: Yes, we need the print journal.

**GP**: So give us or invent an example for us of that possibility.

**JP**: OK. So suppose we were to be publishing one of the primary addresses from this conference, so right now it probably couldn't appear until next May, but we could maybe have it ready in June—this June.

**GP**: And how would I know that unless I check Project MUSE every day, practically going to *Narrative*?

**PKH**: Jim will write you.

**GP**: No, no. No, Jim, I mean does it involve also somehow writing a message to the membership saying something like you can now access such and such?

**JP**: Yeah, I think it would have to. Again this is new, and we haven’t worked that all out yet, but yeah, it wouldn't be…

**GP**: Because that would be important. The good thing with the solid is that, well, it comes in your box, you open it, you see okay, it’s come out.

**JP**: You read the titles.

**GP**: Exactly, and you know.

**PKH**: I have to admit that for preparing this conversation here. I went through the shelf with all the old *Narrative*s on and there were several holes in between. I didn't recognize that, and I also know there are issues missing where I have read some of the articles right because I read them online, and I basically do that all the time. I'd rather take it down, put it on my computer from where I’m sitting, then stand, just to get up, and get it off the shelf from over there. So I think, in some sense, this is a development that we have to look into, and I mean taking the nature of *Narrative* that you aren’t taking into consideration, saying that it is not that often thematically connected essays, and so I think it makes perfect sense to start doing these to publish these online.

**SK**: I want both—hardcopy and electronic.

**SL**: Yeah.

**JP**: Well, that’s actually reassuring.

**PKH**: Please, just print it yourself, and put it out there.

**GP**: No. Initially, I suppose, even if at some point it went all the way online, but for a while there would be some kind of parallel.

**JP**: Yeah, I mean what the print does, you know, the print approach as the center. What it does is it organizes a year, right. It organizes each issue, and then it organizes a year, and it's like okay. I have to think about backlog and what's in the pipeline, where we are. You know all that kind of thing. If we just went online, it would be much more—even more so, I think. I do try to say look, let's judge everything on its own merits. But there is this sense of well, how much room do we have and that kind of thing, right. And so you move away from how much room do we have. You know it could affect all kinds of editorial decisions you make.

**GP**: Yes. It makes me think also I know because I've edited a journal, *French Forum*, and some people get very impatient where their piece that has been accepted has not yet been published. They get indignant, vehement, very upset.

**JP**: Academics? Really those attitudes? Wow.

**SK**: Well, there’s also people coming up for tenure and all that who need these things, but yes, there are various reasons.

**GP**: Yes.

**SL**: Early online publication, I think, is kind of lovely in that it’s forthcoming in the print version. But there is something about an issue that you then look sequentially at how organized the issue—and I make up a kind of narrative myself as I read that table of contents—that I think for narratologists is quite delightful.

**JP**: Yeah, because we always do pay some attention to that. I mean, I know I'm interested in narrative progressions. Okay. Well, we’ve come to the end of our time. Any final thoughts from anyone?

**SK**: Thank you so much, Jim, for all your work over the years and decades.

**GP**: That’s a good final thought.

**SL**: I look forward to the next 25 years. Knocking a lot of wood.

**JP**: Well, thank you all very much for participating, giving me more to think about. And you know I’ll just say it's been an honor, a privilege, a pleasure to be editor of this society’s journal. Thank you all again.

Thank you for listening to *Narrative* at 25. The music is by Podington Bear. The song is “Golden Hour” from the album *Springtime*. This podcast was produced by The Ohio State University Press, sound recording by Emily Taylor and Nicolas Potkalitsky. It was edited by Megan Morrison, Nicolas Potkalitsky, and Emily Taylor. We’d like to thank our participants, Per Krogh Hansen, Sue Kim, Sue Lanser, and Gerald Prince, and *Narrative* editor, Jim Phelan. Special thanks to Narrative conference organizers Alan Nadel and Matt Bryant Cheney,