

Narrative, Fiction, Theory
Spring Term
Richard Walsh

Narrative theory has always been preoccupied with literary fiction, yet has also asserted the much broader significance of narrative. How well has the example of literary fiction served as a theoretical paradigm for narrative in general? And conversely, how well has the general concept of narrative served the specific features of fictionality? This module adopts a broadly historical perspective upon the development of narrative theory, taking seminal theoretical works for its primary texts. The readings below are either available in the university library's e-journal collection (or LION, via the MetaLib gateway, in the case of Henry James), or they will be provided in handouts week by week. A useful introductory text on narrative theory is Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002).

Richard Walsh

1. Precursors

- Aristotle. *The Poetics of Aristotle*. Trans. Stephen Halliwell. London: Duckworth P, 1987. (extract on handout).
- James, Henry. "The Art of Fiction." *Partial Portraits*. 1888. London: Macmillan, 1911. [Literature Online link](#)
- James, Henry. *The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces*. Ed. Richard P. Blackmur. New York: Scribner's, 1962. (extracts on handout).
- Forster, E. M. *Aspects of the Novel*. 1927. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962. (extract on handout).
- Lubbock, Percy. *The Craft of Fiction*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1921. (extract on handout).

2. Russian Formalists

- Shlovsky, Victor. "Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*: Stylistic Commentary." *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*. Ed. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1965. (handout).
- Tomashevsky, Boris. "Thematics." *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*. Ed. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1965. (handout).
- Bakhtin, M. M., and P. N. Medvedev. *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*. 1928. Trans. Albert J. Wehrle. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978. (extract on handout).
- Propp, Vladimir. *Morphology of the Folktale*. 1928. Trans. Laurence Scott. Austin: U of Texas P, 1968. (extract on handout).

3. Structuralist Narratology

- Barthes, Roland. "An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative." 1966. Trans. Lionel Duisit. *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* 6, no. 2 (1975): 237-72.
- Greimas, A. J. "Elements of a Narrative Grammar." 1966. Trans. Catherine Porter. *Diacritics* 7, no. 1 (1977): 23-40.
- Bremond, Claude. "The Logic of Narrative Possibilities." 1966. Trans. Elaine D. Cancalon. *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* 11, no. 3 (1980): 387-411.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. "Structural Analysis of Narrative." Trans. Arnold Weinstein. *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 3, no. 1 (1969): 70-76.

4. Discourse Theorists

- Booth, Wayne C. "Distance and Point-of-View: An Essay in Classification." *Essays in Criticism* 11 (1961): 60-79.
- Stanzel, Franz K. "Second Thoughts on Narrative Situations in the Novel: Towards a 'Grammar of Fiction'." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 11, no. 3 (1978): 247-64.
- Genette, Gérard. *Narrative Discourse*. Trans. Jane E. Lewin. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1980. (extract on handout).

5. The Limits of Structuralism

- Barthes, Roland. *S/Z*. Trans. Richard Miller. London: Jonathan Cape, 1975. (extract on handout).
- Culler, Jonathan. *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975. (extract on handout).
- Chatman, Seymour. "Towards a Theory of Narrative." *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* 6, no. 2 (1975): 295-318.
- Smith, Barbara Herrnstein. "Narrative Versions, Narrative Theories." *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 1 (1980): 213-36.
- Chatman, Seymour. "Reply to Barbara Herrnstein Smith." *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 4 (1981): 802-09.

6. Narrative Semantics

- Dolezel, Lubomír. "Truth and Authenticity in Narrative." *Poetics Today* 1, no. 3 (1980): 7-25.
- Pavel, Thomas G. "Narrative Domains." *Poetics Today* 1, no. 4 (1980): 105-14.
- Ryan, Marie-Laure. "Fiction, Non-Factuals, and the Principle of Minimal Departure." *Poetics: International Review for the Theory of Literature* 9 (1980): 403-22.
- Margolin, Uri. "Reference, Coreference, Referring, and the Dual Structure of Literary Narrative." *Poetics Today* 12, no. 3 (1991): 517-42.

7. The Narratological Diaspora

- White, Hayden. "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality." *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 1 (1980): 5-27.
- Brooks, Peter. *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984. (extract on handout).
- Branigan, Edward. *Narrative Comprehension and Film*. London: Routledge, 1992. (extract on handout).
- Bakhtin, M. M. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. 1963. Trans. Caryl Emerson. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1984. (extract on handout).
- Lanser, Susan S. *Fictions of Authority: Women Writers and Narrative Voice*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992. (extract on handout).

8. Cognitive Narratology

- Schank, Roger C. *Tell Me a Story: Narrative and Intelligence*. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1990. (extract on handout).
- Bruner, Jerome. "The Narrative Construction of Reality." *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 1 (1991): 1-21.
- Jahn, Manfred. "Frames, Preferences, and the Reading of Third-Person Narratives: Towards a Cognitive Narratology." *Poetics Today* 18, no. 4 (1997): 441-68.
- Herman, David. "Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences." *Narrative Inquiry* 11, no. 1 (2001): 1-34.