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[Book Review: The Cambridge Companion to Narrative by David Herman \(ed.\), 2007. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. xiii + 310 ISBN 978 0 521 67366 2 \(pbk\). Language and Literature: ...](#)

History, literature, religion, myth, film, psychology, theory, and daily conversation all rely heavily on narrative. Cutting across many disciplines, narratology describes and analyzes the language of narrative with its regularly recurring patterns, deeply established conventions for transmission, and interpretive codes, whether in novels, cartoons, or case studies. Indispensable to writers, critics, and scholars in many fields, *A Dictionary of Narratology* provides quick and reliable access to terms and concepts that are defined, illustrated, and cross-referenced. All entries are keyed to articles or books in which the terms originated or are exemplified. This revised edition contains additional entries and updates some existing ones.

In literature the very act of narration often constitutes a theme: everyone is familiar with narration that interrupts the story, that provides an ironic gloss on the action, that exposes the narrator, that serves to deceive. In *Narrative as Theme* Gerald Prince offers the first book-length study of the theme of narrative and of the relationship  $\emptyset$  between narrative and truth in fiction. In the first part, theoretical in nature, Prince considers the notion of theme as well as the theme of narrative itself, surveys the research that has come out of that notion, and isolates starting points for the investigation of narrative as theme. Of particular interest to narratologists will be his discussion of the "disnarrated," all those passages of a text that consider what did not or does not happen but could have. He shows how the disnarrated is an important guide to reading the theme of narrative. The second part focuses on seven French novels: Mme de Lafayette's *La Princesse de Clèves*, Voltaire's *Candide*, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, Sartre's *La Nausée*, Maupassant's *Bel-Ami*, Claude Simon's *La Route des Flandres*, and Patrick Modiano's *Rue des Boutiques Obscures*. Written in first and third person, absorbed or not in the act of narration, variously concerned with history, ethics, and psychology, these classical, modern, and postmodern works exemplify basic positions with regard to the truth or value of narrative. His *Dictionary of Narratology*, published by the University of Nebraska Press in 1987, confirmed Gerald Prince as one of the world's leading narratologists.

In this book Marina Lambrou explores the dimension of narrative storytelling described as 'the disnarrated' – events that do not happen but which are referred to – across three genres of texts: personal narratives; news stories; and fiction (literary and film). The book begins by asking why such disnarrated narratives are nevertheless considered tellable. It moves on to examine the pervasiveness of this phenomenon in news reports about "near misses" and the shared personal narratives about dangerous experiences, where "truth" is expected to be central their telling. It further discusses how disnarration is generated in counterfactual "what if?" scenarios in fiction where characters follow alternative, forked paths with fascinating unexpected consequences. This engaging work offers original insights to anyone interested in storytelling and will appeal in particular to scholars of language and literature, stylistics, narratology, media, film and journalism.

Do words--their sounds and shapes, their lengths and patterns--imitate the world? Mimology says they do. First argued in Plato's *Cratylus* more than two thousand years ago, mimology has left an important mark in virtually every major art and artistic theory thereafter. Mimology is the basis of language sciences and incites occasional hilarity. Genette treats matters as basic and staid as the alphabet and as reverberating as the letter R in ur-linguistics. Mimologics bridges mainstream literary history and Genette's expertise in critical method by undertaking an intensive study of the most vexed of literary problems: language as a representation of reality. --From publisher's description.

The past several decades have seen an explosion of interest in narrative, with this multifaceted object of inquiry becoming a central concern in a wide range of disciplinary fields and research contexts. As accounts of what happened to particular people in particular circumstances and with specific consequences, stories have come to be viewed as a basic human strategy for coming to terms with time, process, and change. However, the very predominance of narrative as a focus of interest across multiple disciplines makes it imperative for scholars, teachers, and students to have access to a comprehensive reference resource.

This concise and highly accessible textbook outlines the principles and techniques of storytelling. It is intended as a high-school and college-level introduction to the central concepts of narrative theory – concepts that will aid students in developing their competence not only in analysing and interpreting short stories and novels, but also in writing them. This textbook prioritises clarity over intricacy of theory, equipping its readers with the necessary tools to embark on further study of literature, literary theory and creative writing. Building on a 'semiotic model of narrative,' it is structured around the key elements of narratological theory, with chapters on plot, setting, characterisation, and narration, as well as on language and theme – elements which are underrepresented in existing textbooks on narrative theory. The chapter on language constitutes essential reading for those students unfamiliar with rhetoric, while the chapter on theme draws together significant perspectives from contemporary critical theory (including feminism and postcolonialism). This textbook is engaging and easily navigable, with key concepts highlighted and clearly explained, both in the text and in a full glossary located at the end of the book. Throughout the textbook the reader is aided by

diagrams, images, quotes from prominent theorists, and instructive examples from classical and popular short stories and novels (such as Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter*, or Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, amongst many others). *Prose Fiction: An Introduction to the Semiotics of Narrative* can either be incorporated as the main textbook into a wider syllabus on narrative theory and creative writing, or it can be used as a supplementary reference book for readers interested in narrative fiction. The textbook is a must-read for beginning students of narratology, especially those with no or limited prior experience in this area. It is of especial relevance to English and Humanities major students in Asia, for whom it was conceived and written.

Phelan's compelling readings cover important theoretical ground by introducing a valuable distinction between disclosure functions and narrator functions.

*Do You Feel It Too?* explores a new sense of self that is becoming manifest in experimental fiction written by a generation of authors who can be considered the 'heirs' of the postmodern tradition. It offers a precise, in-depth analysis of a new, post-postmodern direction in fiction writing, and highlights which aspects are most acute in the post-postmodern novel. Most notable is the emphatic expression of feelings and sentiments and a drive toward inter-subjective connection and communication. The self that is presented in these post-postmodern works of fiction can best be characterized as relational. To analyze this new sense of self, a new interpretational method is introduced that offers a sophisticated approach to fictional selves combining the insights of post-classical narratology and what is called 'narrative psychology'. Close analyses of three contemporary experimental texts — *Infinite Jest* (1996) by David Foster Wallace, *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* (2000) by Dave Eggers, and *House of Leaves* (2000) by Mark Danielewski — provide insight into the typical problems that the self experiences in postmodern cultural contexts. Three such problems or 'symptoms' are singled out and analyzed in depth: an inability to choose because of a lack of decision-making tools; a difficulty to situate or appropriate feelings; and a structural need for a 'we' (a desire for connectivity and sociality). The critique that can be distilled from these texts, especially on the perceived solipsistic quality of postmodern experience worlds, runs parallel to developments in recent critical theory. These developments, in fiction and theory both, signal, in the wake of poststructural conceptions of subjectivity, a perhaps much awaited 'turn to the human' in our culture at large today.

The *Bloomsbury Handbook of Literary and Cultural Theory* is the most comprehensive available survey of the state of theory in the 21st century. With chapters written by the world's leading scholars in their field, this book explores the latest thinking in traditional schools such as feminist, Marxist, historicist, psychoanalytic, and postcolonial criticism and new areas of research in ecocriticism, biopolitics, affect studies, posthumanism, materialism, and many other fields. In addition, the book includes a substantial A-to-Z compendium of key words and important thinkers in contemporary theory, making this an essential resource for scholars of literary and cultural theory at all levels.

Scholars interested in narrative critical / narratological analyses of the Old Testament and New Testament Bible will welcome this extensive practical study that discusses all aspects that should be evaluated when a narratological analysis is undertaken. All the relevant aspects, such as the relationship between narrator and narratee, plot development, characterization, temporal relationships, focalization, and setting are discussed in such a way that it is easy to follow, yet of high academic quality. Each aspect is illustrated by several examples from the Old Testament and New Testament. At the end of each chapter is a bibliography directing readers to more technical books/articles on the subject.

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