

# 32 Discourse Analysis and Narrative

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BARBARA JOHNSTONE

## 0 Introduction

Narrative has been one of the major themes in humanistic and social scientific thought since the mid-twentieth century. The essence of humanness, long characterized as the tendency to make sense of the world through rationality, has come increasingly to be described as the tendency to tell stories, to make sense of the world through narrative. In linguistics, narrative was one of the first discourse genres to be analyzed, and it has continued to be among the most intensively studied of the things people do with talk.

I begin with a brief description of structuralist narratology, the most immediate context for discourse analysts' work on narrative. I then turn to some of the earliest and most influential American work on narrative in linguistics, that of Labov and Waletzky (1967; Labov 1972: 354–96). Subsequent sections cover other important work on the linguistic structure of narrative and on its cognitive, cultural, social, and psychological functions, on the development of narrative skills and styles in children, and on variation in narrative. I then touch on some work on narrative in other disciplines which bears on and often draws on linguistic discourse analysts' work: work on "narrative knowing" and narrative rhetoric, on history as story, on the "narrative study of lives" as a research method in education, psychology, and sociology, and on poststructuralist literary narratology. The final section discusses the current state of narrative study in discourse analysis and sketches some directions in which new work is going.

## 1 Structuralist Narratology

Two related but somewhat different approaches to the structure of narrative became known in the West beginning in the mid-1950s. One was that of the Russian Vladimir Propp, whose *Morphology of the Folktale* (1968) was published in Russian in 1928 but first translated into English in 1958. Although Propp borrowed the term "morphology"

from biology rather than linguistics, his technique for showing what all folktales have in common and how they can differ is essentially that of linguistic analysis. Propp's work might more accurately be called the *syntax* of the folktale, since its fundamental claim is that all folktales have the same syntagmatic deep structure, the same sequence of "functions" or meaningful actions by characters. Once characters and their initial situation are introduced ("A little girl and her little brother lived with their elderly parents"), an interdiction is addressed to the hero or heroine and some family member leaves home ("One day the parents said to the girl, 'We are going into town. Take care of your brother and don't go out of the yard.' Then they left"). Next the interdiction is violated (the little girl leaves the yard) and a villain appears on the scene (geese swoop down and snatch the little brother). And the tale continues, one more or less predictable function after another.

While Propp's approach to characterizing the universal features of folklore is like that of formal syntax, Claude Lévi-Strauss's (1955, 1964, 1966) is more similar to formal semantics. Lévi-Strauss's interest was in describing the abstract elements of meaning that are expressed in myth, semantic contrasts such as male/female and raw/cooked. His claim is that traditional narrative around the world, though superficially varied, all deals with a limited number of basic themes. A number of French philosophers and literary theorists, writing in the late 1960s, adapted Propp's and Lévi-Strauss's ideas or similar ones to the analysis of literary narrative. The best known of these is probably Roland Barthes, whose "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives" was published (in French) in 1966. Others are A. J. Greimas (1966), Tzvetan Todorov (1967), and Gérard Genette (1966). (See Culler 1975: ch. 9 for an overview of structuralist theory about literary narrative.)

These structuralist approaches to myth and literature were not all the same, but they all shared two assumptions. One was that there are abstract levels on which structures and meanings that seem different superficially are really the same. The other was that narrative can be separated from the events it is about. This assumption is discussed most explicitly in the work of French linguist Émile Benveniste (1966), who distinguished between *histoire* and *discours*, or "story" – the events – and "discourse" – the presentation of the events in a narrative. Both these ideas were current in the American linguistics and literary theory of the 1960s (the former most obviously in Transformational/Generative Grammar), and, as Hopper (1997) points out, both were taken into the first American work on narrative discourse.

## 2 "Oral Versions of Personal Experience": Labov and Waletzky

William Labov's influential work on personal experience narrative (PEN) began in the context of his research about the social correlates of linguistic variation on Martha's Vineyard, in New York City, and elsewhere. In order to elicit unselfconscious, "vernacular" speech, Labov had people tell stories about themselves, often (though not always) stories about dangerous or embarrassing experiences. Fourteen of these stories formed the basis for "Narrative analysis: oral versions of personal experience" (Labov and Waletzky 1967), published in the proceedings volume of the 1966 meeting

of the American Ethnological Society. (The paper has since been reprinted as Labov and Waletzky 1997.) In this paper, Labov and Waletzky propose a “formal” approach to PEN. The goal was to describe the invariable semantic deep structure of PEN, with an eye to correlating surface differences with the “social characteristics” of narrators. Labov’s project was similar to Vladimir Propp’s in its attempt to lay out the underlying syntagmatic structure of plot elements in narrative, except that Labov’s focus was on the functions of individual clauses rather than larger chunks.

According to Labov and Waletzky, a clause in PEN can serve one of two functions, referential or evaluative. Referential clauses have to do with what the story is about: events, characters, setting. Evaluative clauses (and evaluative aspects of referential clauses) have to do with why the narrator is telling the story and why the audience should listen to it: evaluative material states or highlights the point of the story. Labov and Waletzky (1967) concentrates on reference in narrative, especially reference to events. A later, more easily accessible book chapter about narratives by young gang members from Harlem (Labov 1972: 354–96) concentrates on evaluation. I will summarize both versions together here, focusing mainly on the parts of each that have been most influential.

Any narrative, by definition, includes at least two “narrative clauses.” A narrative clause is one that cannot be moved without changing the order in which events must be taken to have occurred. If two narrative clauses are reversed, they represent a different chronology: “I punched this boy / and he punched me” implies a different sequence of events than “This boy punched me / and I punched him.” For Labov, “narrative” is not any talk about the past, or any talk about events; it is specifically talk in which a sequence of clauses is matched to a sequence of “events which (it is inferred) actually occurred” (Labov 1972: 360).

Although “minimal narratives” like the two about punching in the previous paragraph consist of just two narrative clauses, most PEN is more complex, including more narrative clauses as well as “free” clauses that serve other functions. A “fully developed” narrative may include clauses or sets of clauses with the following functions, often roughly in this order:

- 1 abstract
- 2 orientation
- 3 complicating action
- 4 evaluation
- 5 result or resolution
- 6 coda.

Each of these elements of PEN serves a double purpose, making reference to events, characters, feelings, and so on that are understood to have happened or existed outside of the ongoing interaction, and at the same time structuring the interaction in which the story is being told by guiding the teller and the audience through the related events and insuring that they are comprehensible and worth recounting.

The **abstract** consists of a clause or two at the beginning of a narrative summarizing the story to come. In response to Labov’s “danger of death” question, for example, a person might begin, “I talked a man out of – Old Doc Simon I talked him out of pulling the trigger,” then going on to elaborate with a narrative. (Examples are

Labov's.) The abstract announces that the narrator has a story to tell and makes a claim to the right to tell it, a claim supported by the suggestion that it will be a good story, worth the audience's time and the speaking rights the audience will temporarily relinquish.

**Orientation** in a narrative introduces characters, temporal and physical setting, and situation: "It was on a Sunday, and we didn't have nothin' to do after I – after we came from church"; "I had a dog – he was a wonderful retriever, but as I say he could do everything but talk." Orientation often occurs near the beginning, but may be interjected at other points, when needed. The characteristic orientation tense in English is the past progressive: "I was sittin' on the corner an' shit, smokin' my cigarette, you know;" "We was doing the 50-yard dash."

**Complicating action** clauses are narrative clauses that recapitulate a sequence of events leading up to their climax, the point of maximum suspense. These clauses refer to events in the world of the story and, in the world of the telling, they create tension that keeps auditors listening. The **result or resolution** releases the tension and tells what finally happened. Often just before the result or resolution, but also throughout the narrative, are elements that serve as **evaluation**, stating or underscoring what is interesting or unusual about the story, why the audience should keep listening and allow the teller to keep talking. Evaluation may occur in free clauses that comment on the story from outside: "And it was the strangest feeling"; "But it was really quite terrific"; or in clauses that attribute evaluative commentary to characters in the story: "I just closed my eyes / I said, 'O my God, here it is!'" Or evaluation can be embedded in the narrative, in the form of extra detail about characters ("I was shakin' like a leaf"), suspension of the action via paraphrase or repetition; "intensifiers" such as gesture or quantifiers ("I knocked him *all* out in the street"); elements that compare what did happen with what did not or could have happened or might happen; "correlatives" that tell what was occurring simultaneously; and "explicatives" that are appended to narrative or evaluative clauses. (Strategies for evaluation are treated in detail in Labov 1972: 354–96.)

At the end of the story, the teller may announce via a **coda** that the story is over ("And that was that"), sometimes providing a short summary of it or connecting the world of the story with the present ("That was one of the most important;" "He's a detective in Union City / And I see him every now and again").

Labov's characterization of narrative reflected contemporary concerns and anticipated and influenced later work in discourse analysis in several ways. Labov was one of a number of linguists who, beginning in the 1960s, started to show that connected talk is orderly and describable in terms of its structure and function. This observation makes linguistic discourse analysis possible. Labov's work with Americans' narratives, along with work by Grimes (1975), Longacre (1976, 1983), and others comparing discourse syntax and semantics across languages, began to illustrate the functional reasons for grammatical choices, anticipating subsequent work in functional grammar and grammaticalization (see the chapters in part I of this volume). The suggestion that discourse, like syntax, can be modeled in terms of variable surface structure and invariable deep structure has been taken up by scholars interested in formal models of discourse (see Polanyi, this volume). Labov's illustration that reference is not the only function of talk, that a great deal of what speakers and audiences do serves to create rapport and show how their talk is to be understood, was part of the move during the

1960s away from the Bloomfieldians' completely referential view of language, a move which is reflected in almost every other chapter in this volume as well.

Two aspects of Labov's work have, however, caused recurrent confusion. One of these has to do with the meaning of the term "narrative." For Labov, a "narrative" was a sequence of clauses with at least one temporal juncture, but a "complete" or "fully formed" narrative included such things as orientation and evaluation as well. "Personal experience narrative" included both "minimal" and more elaborate types. Many subsequent researchers continued to use the same term – "narrative" – both for any talk representing a sequence of past events and for talk specifically meant to get and keep someone interested in listening to a recounting of events. This has resulted in confusion both in the design and in the reporting of narrative research, since the two uses of "narrative" refer to two levels of analysis, "narrative" in the first sense being a necessary part of "narrative" in the second sense. Some scholars have accordingly found it helpful to substitute another term, such as "story," for the second sense. Following Polanyi (1985), I adopt this distinction in what follows, using "narrative" to mean talk that represents events in the past and "story" to mean roughly what it does in everyday parlance: narrative with a point.

A second source of confusion has been the inadvertently normative sound of some of Labov's terminology, and, partly in consequence, the normative way in which his analysis has sometimes been read. Labov's claim to be describing "the normal structure of narrative" or characterizing "fully developed" or "complete" narratives have led some to suppose that he was making more universal and/or more judgmental claims than were probably intended. It has been observed over and over that not all stories have abstracts or codas and that PEN is often less monologic than were the stories Labov analyzed. It has been easy for researchers to forget that the PEN Labov characterized was mainly collected in research interviews with relative strangers, and that the fact that stories arising in different contexts turn out to be different actually does more to support Labov's claims about the connection between narrative form and contextual function than to debunk them.

### 3 Other Work on the Structure of Narrative

Although Labov's work on narrative has been particularly influential (at least in the English-speaking world; see Gülich and Quasthoff 1985 for an overview of narrative analysis in the northern European context), Labov was by no means alone in his interest in generalizing about the underlying formal and semantic structure of narratives and stories. Some research has aimed to produce completely explicit models for how people (and other potential information processors, such as computers) produce and comprehend stories. This includes, for example, work by van Dijk and Kintsch (van Dijk, 1977, 1980; Kintsch and van Dijk 1978) describing semantic "macrostructures" and the "macrorules" that model how stories are understood, as well as work on "story grammar" by Fillmore (1982), Rumelhart (1980), de Beaugrande (1982), and others. In a similar vein but with a more ethnographic purpose, Polanyi (1981, 1985) shows how "adequate paraphrases" of conversational stories by Americans can be a way of arriving at the most basic statements of their beliefs about the world.

One particularly influential approach to the organization of oral narrative is that of Dell Hymes (1981), who showed that Native American myth was performed in poetic lines and stanzas marked by grammatical parallelism, recurring words or particles such as *see*, *I say*, or *lo*, and repeated numerical patterns of phrases. Other analyses of the line-by-line structure of narrative are those of Chafe (1980a), Sherzer (1982), Tedlock (1983), and Woodbury (1987); line-based transcription systems arising from these scholars' observation that oral discourse is not produced in paragraphs have been widely adopted in narrative research.

A second approach to the structure of narrative examines how storytelling is embedded in its interactional context. Research in this framework examines how the structure of stories reflects the fact that stories perform social actions (Schiffrin 1984, 1996) and how audiences are involved, directly or indirectly, in their construction (Ochs et al. 1989; Norrick 1997). Polanyi (1985: 63–74) shows, for example, how in one case the responses of a story's audience made the teller completely change the point of her story. Goodwin (1982) examines "instigating" in the discourse of urban African American girls, showing how the framing of a story in the larger social context of gossip-dispute affects how the story has to be told, understood, and reacted to. Watson (1973) articulates Labov's work with Burkean (Burke 1945, 1950) rhetorical theory to suggest a way of describing how the structure of stories is affected by the social contexts in which they are performed.

A third set of questions that have been asked about the structure of stories has had to do with linguistic features that are characteristic of this discourse genre. The use of the English simple present tense in narrative in place of the past, traditionally referred to as the Historical Present, is the focus of analysis by Wolfson (1982), Schiffrin (1981), Johnstone (1987), and others, who have connected this usage with the marking of evaluative high points and the characterization of social relations. Tannen (1986, 1989) examines how and why storytellers "construct" dialogue for characters in their stories, sometimes giving them words they could not possibly have said or words the narrator could not possibly have heard. Romaine and Lange (1991) and Ferrara and Bell (1995) discuss the history of quotatives, the verbs such as *say*, *go*, *ask*, and so on with which narrators introduce constructed dialogue, focusing particularly on the emergence of the new quotative *be like*. Other narrative framing devices, strategies by which narrators and audiences negotiate transitions between the "storyworld" of the ongoing interaction and "talerealm" in which the narrated events are located, are discussed by Young (1987) and others.

## 4 Why People Tell Stories

In addition to asking questions about the form of narrative talk, discourse analysts have also asked questions about its function. Talking about the past is apparently something all humans do. Rosen (1988) suggests that the "autobiographical impulse," the urge to make our lives coherent by telling about them, must be universal; personal narrative is how we make sense of ourselves as individuals and as members of groups. As Linde (1993: 3) puts it, "In order to exist in the social world with a comfortable sense of being a good, socially proper, and stable person, an individual needs

to have a coherent, acceptable, and constantly revised life story." Schiffrin (1996) shows how two storytellers create individual identities, situating themselves in their families and in society through choices they make as they narrate; Johnstone (1996) discusses self-expressive reasons for individuals' storytelling styles.

Shared stories, as well as shared ways of telling stories and shared uses for stories, also make groups coherent. Among the earliest work by ethnographers of communication were studies of the functions of narrative and speech events in which narrative was central (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1974; Darnell 1974), and ethnographers have continued to explore the uses of narrative in various parts of the world (see, for example, Scollon and Scollon 1981; Basso 1986; Patrick and Payne-Jackson 1996). Smaller-scale social groupings are also constituted and maintained partly through shared uses of narrative. Bauman (1986), for example, discusses stories and storytelling events as they serve to negotiate social relations in Texas; Johnstone (1990) talks about how storytelling creates community and a shared sense of place in the American Midwest; Shuman (1986) examines the uses of stories by urban adolescents; Coates (1996) shows how "telling our stories" defines the interrelationships of a group of female friends.

## 5 The Development of Narrative Skill and Style

Even very young children appear to want to talk about the past (Miller and Sperry 1988). As they learn to take other people's perspectives, children gradually learn to provide orientational and evaluative detail that can keep audiences informed and involved. Kernan (1977) shows how evaluative devices develop with age, younger children implying their feelings and rarely recreating speech while older children rely more on explicit strategies such as telling how they felt and constructing dialog for themselves and other story characters. Romaine (1984: 146–58) uses Labov's characterization of story structure to analyze narratives by Scottish pre-adolescents, suggesting that while evaluative strategies vary, the syntax tends to be simple and relatively iconic, avoiding such strategies as passivization and subordination. McCabe and Peterson (1991a) studied pre-adolescents' uses of connectives such as *then*, *and*, and *because* in elicited stories. Hudson and Shapiro (1991) examine how developing expertise in remembering and representing events, constructing narrative macrostructures, using tense, aspect, pronouns, and anaphora, and interpreting the context all come together as children mature. Other studies of the development of storytelling ability are Botvin and Sutton-Smith (1977), Umiker-Sebeok (1979), Bennett-Kastor (1983, 1986), Preece (1987), Cook-Gumperz and Green (1984), Berman (1988), and many of the chapters in McCabe and Peterson (1991b).

As they acquire cognitive and linguistic abilities, children are also socialized into the functions of narrative in their communities. Among the best-known studies of this process is Heath's (1982, 1983) work with families in two working-class communities in the southern United States. Working-class white children in "Roadville" were taught to tell "factual" stories that ended with morals about what they had learned; working-class African American children in "Trackton" were encouraged to entertain others with fantastic tales. This and other differences in pre-school socialization have implications for children's success in school, where, for example, white children may already

know to tell “sharing time” stories the way teachers expect but African American children may not (Michaels and Collins 1984). Among other work on narrative socialization is McCabe and Peterson (1991a).

## 6 Variation in Narrative

Much of the research discussed so far is aimed at discovering and describing what is generally or even universally true about the structure and function of narrative. But discourse analysts have also devoted considerable attention to how and why stories and their uses differ. For one thing, the basic plot structure described by Propp, Labov, and others is characteristically western. In his work (1979) on “textbuilding” in Southeast Asia, Becker shows, for example, that Javanese shadow puppet plays have a structure very different from that of the Aristotelian tragedy or the American PEN. Shadow theater plots are made coherent through spatial coincidence, as characters in different substories set in different eras come together in the same place, rather than chronologically, via rising tension leading to a cathartic climax. While European-American plots often revolve around sets of three (daughters, tasks, lead-ups to the punch line), Hymes (1981) shows that a significant set of recurrences in Native American myth may number two, four, or five. In a set of studies that involved showing a short, wordless film, Chafe and his coworkers (1980b) examined how people from various places, speaking various languages, put what they had seen into words. Clancy (1980), for example, found differences between Japanese speakers and English speakers in how nominals were used in the introduction of characters. Tannen (1980) found that Greeks tended to narrate the film in a more dramatic, story-like way than Americans, who tended to aim for referential completeness and accuracy in their retellings.

There are also cross-cultural differences in the functions of narrative. Scollon and Scollon (1981) claim, for example, that for Athabaskans experiences and stories about them are the primary source of knowledge, as reality is socially constructed through narrative. This claim has been made more generally about “oral” cultures by scholars such as Goody and Watt (1968) and Ong (1982). Blum-Kulka (1993) compared dinner-table storytelling in American and Israeli families, finding that middle-class American families tended to ritualize the telling of stories about the day, particularly by the children, while in the Israeli families storytelling was more collaborative and more evenly distributed among family members. Etter-Lewis (1991) describes personal storytelling by African American women, and Riessman (1988) compares narratives by an Anglo-American woman and a Puerto Rican, pointing out that social class as well as ethnicity is a factor in the women’s different experiences and different recountings.

On the whole, though, there has been relatively little work correlating variation in narrative structure and style with social class, except to the extent that class is inevitably intertwined with other ways people position themselves socially and are positioned by others. Exceptions are Dines (1980) and Ferrara (1997), who correlate differences in the use of the narrative discourse markers *and stuff like that* and *anyway* with social class differences.



More attention has been paid to the ways narrative enters into the construction and expression of gender. Talbot (1999: ch. 4) provides an overview of some of this work. Johnstone (1993) shows how Midwestern women and men construct different worlds in their stories via different plot types and different uses of detail and constructed dialog, the women's stories focused more often on community and the men's on contests. Porter (1988) compares PEN by mothers and their daughters, showing how women's life histories "situate and construct both their past and present experience" (1988: 545) as women, mothers, and daughters, and Silberstein (1988) uses courtship stories by several generations of women in one family to examine how narrative "creates and maintains gender" (1988: 126). Ochs and Taylor (1992) discuss how dinner-table storytelling in the American families they studied helps maintain the patriarchal role of the father.

There are also studies of variation in narrative connected with situation and purpose and with medium. Comparing literary narrative with spontaneous conversational storytelling, Pratt (1977) suggests that one difference between the two has to do with how audiences interpret violations of their expectations: in the literary speech situation, says Pratt, violations must be interpreted as intentional floutings of the conventions, done for a purpose, rather than as mistakes. Walker (1982) shows that witnesses in court proceedings, bringing with them their knowledge about the necessity of evaluation in everyday storytelling, find themselves repeatedly cut off and corrected for interpreting as they narrate. Stahl (1979) and Tannen (1982) compare oral and written versions of personal experience stories, cataloging differences in what gets told and how.

## 7 Narrative Research Across Disciplines

Narrative has come to seem important to people throughout the humanities and social sciences. Beginning in the late 1970s, new, narrative ways of understanding history and humanity and doing research have become more and more prominent. The narrative aspects of the human mind – the ways in which the making of stories enters into how we understand the world and ourselves – are now seen to be as crucial as our rational side (Bruner 1986; Schafer 1981; Polkinghorne 1988). The observation made by White (1981) and others that history can only be selective storytelling about the past helped give rise to a way of imagining the historical enterprise which is sometimes called the "New Historicism" (Cox and Reynolds 1993). As Miller (1990) points out, each contemporary theoretical framework for literary and cultural studies – deconstruction, feminism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, reception theory, Bakhtinian dialogism, and so on – makes significant claims about narrative. In anthropology, Turner (1981) and others showed how societies make the world coherent by constructing dramatic plots to model human actions, and narrative rhetoric is now taken seriously alongside traditionally more highly valued strategies such as argumentation (Fisher 1987). Qualitative social-scientific research based on life histories, sometimes referred to as "narrative analysis" (Manning and Cullum-Swan 1994) or "the narrative study of lives" (Josselson 1996), is challenging the methodological hegemony of quantitative research paradigms in education, sociology, and psychology; and

anthropologists have experimented with narrative as a way of representing other worlds of belief and experience (see Clifford and Marcus 1986; van Maanen 1995).

## 8 Current State of the Field

As scholars across disciplines have gotten more and more interested in narrative, the study of narrative has become more and more often interdisciplinary. The Fifth International Conference on Narrative, held in 1996, included panelists from departments of English, rhetoric, communication, education, foreign languages and comparative literature, psychology, nursing, political science, sociology and social work, history, art, philosophy, marketing, and organizational behavior, as well as linguistics. A 1997 collection of short papers marking the thirtieth anniversary of the publication of Labov and Waletzky's key article (Bamberg 1997) includes contributions by linguists, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, literary scholars, educational researchers, and rhetoricians. Whether the questions we try to answer are primarily about language – how narrative is structured, how grammatical resources for framing, narrating, orienting, and so on are developed and deployed – or primarily about speakers and social interaction – how people use stories to display sociolinguistic identities, how narrative circulates social power and creates and perpetuates social relations – linguistic discourse analysts have much to learn from theories about systems and society developed by others, as well as much to offer in showing others the value of close, systematic reading and listening.

Current research suggests several ways in which work on narrative may continue to develop. For one thing, discourse analysts continue to refine and fill in details in our understanding of the structure of narrative and its functions, examining new framing devices, asking new questions about the discursive representation and construction of time and space, and looking at how narrative functions in new contexts. Following the lead of sociolinguists, discourse analysts interested in narrative are beginning to consider new and different ways of accounting for variation in addition to the by now traditional explanatory variables (place of origin, social class, gender, ethnicity, and so on). We are thinking more, for example, about how language ideology affects linguistic choices (Schieffelin et al. 1998) in narrative and elsewhere, and about the role played by situated, changeable social identities that can be expressed through fleeting or long-term mixings and borrowings (LePage and Tabouret-Keller 1985). Work on formal modeling of narrative for computational purposes continues and grows in sophistication, drawing on new ways of explaining dynamic systems, such as chaos theory (Wildgen 1994).

As we continue to think about the uses of narrative in human life, we are paying increasing attention to the political effects of narrative, seeing storytelling not only as a way of creating community but as a resource for dominating others, for expressing solidarity, for resistance and conflict; a resource, that is, in the continuing negotiation through which humans create language and society and self as they talk and act. We see narrative more and more as a way of constructing “events” and giving them meaning, as we pick out bits of the stream of experience and give them boundaries and significance by labeling them. Like all talk and all action, narrative is socially and

epistemologically constructive: through telling, we make ourselves and our experiential worlds.

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