The Rhetoric of Fictionality
Walsh, Richard

Published by The Ohio State University Press

Walsh, Richard.
The Ohio State University Press, 2007.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/27983.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/27983

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=1149492
My attempts to write this book began long, long ago, when I was still the Keasbey Research Fellow at Selwyn College, Cambridge. It’s been a slow process, but not a painful one thanks in large part to the interest and support of the many people who have become involved, in one way or another, along the way. The first I’d like to mention, from those early days, is Manuela Tecușan, whose enthusiasm always made me smile. Soon afterwards my colleagues at the University of York became important, both for their contributions to the supportive research environment in which I’ve worked ever since, and for their indulgence of my occasional contributions to it. In particular, I’m grateful to Jacques Berthoud, without whom this work would probably have never seen the light of day. I am hugely indebted to him for his belief in the merit of my work and his instrumental support of my career (in fact, his creation of the possibility of my career). I’d also like to thank Stephen Minta and Derek Attridge, both of whom have provided invaluable advice and encouragement.

My experience of my fellow narrative theorists, both on and off the page, has been overwhelmingly positive, and the few people I can mention by name must also stand in part as representatives of a scholarly community I think is notable for its intellectual generosity. I owe special thanks to those who took an early interest in my work, and indeed sought me out because of it: notably Meir Sternberg, Monika Fludernik, and Emma Kafalenos. Among the many more who have contributed to the work in progress via questions, conversations, or correspondence, I’d like to mention Gerald Prince, Brian Richardson, Jan Baetens, Jonathan Culler, Alan Palmer, David Herman, Ruth Page, and Frederick Aldama. The three people whose influence has been greatest on the final form of the book,
though, are James Phelan, Peter Rabinowitz, and Brian McHale: their
detailed comments and suggestions in response to the draft manuscript
were a crucial aid at the point when my own sense of it was numbed by
proximity. Jim and Peter, in fact, have been formative influences upon my
thinking at several prior stages, as editors of the Blackwell *Companion to
Narrative Theory* and (in Jim’s case) as editor of *Narrative*, in which some
of my earliest work appeared. As editors of the Theory and Interpretation
of Narrative Series they have engaged with the detail of my argument and
its articulation with far greater care than an author has a right to expect,
and I would have produced a lesser book without them. The production of
the book is also indebted, of course, to the efforts of the staff at The Ohio
State University Press, and among these I’d like to give particular thanks
to Sandy Crooms and Maggie Diehl for their very helpful and solicitous
approach.

I’ve already alluded to some of the intermediate stages in the realiza-
tion of this project, and there are several institutional acknowledgments
due in relation to that process. Two British Academy Overseas Conference
Grants, in 2003 and 2005, allowed me to air preliminary versions of argu-
ments included here. Many of those arguments have also appeared in print
in earlier or shorter form, as follows: part of chapter one in the Blackwell
*Companion to Narrative Theory* (2005); chapter two as “Fictionality and
Mimesis: Between Narrativity and Fictional Worlds,” *Narrative* 11.1 (2003);
chapter three in *Style* 35.4 (2001); chapter four as “Who Is the Narrator?”
*Poetics Today* 18.4 (1997); half of chapter six as “The Narrative Imagina-
tion across Media,” *Modern Fiction Studies* 52.4 (2006); chapter seven as
“The Novelist as Medium,” *Neophilologus* 84.3 (2000); and chapter eight
as “Why We Wept for Little Nell: Character and Emotional Involvement,”
*Narrative* 5.3 (1997).

My last and most personal thanks, though, go to Duncan, Frances,
Alex, Ryan, and Marcia, for making the whole thing that much harder.