Narrative Causalities

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Notes to Preface

1. In addition to the many paintings he made of squares superimposed on squares, Albers described and published his findings in *Interaction of Color* in 1963. The original edition is in the form of a box containing some 150 color illustrations in several dozen folders, and an eighty-page book. Later editions include reproductions of only a few of the illustrations.

Notes to Chapter 1

1. According to Turner, “It is not possible for a human infant to fail to achieve the concept of a container, for example, or liquid, or pouring, or flowing, or a path, or movement along a path, or the product of these concepts: the small spatial story in which liquid is poured and flows along a path into a container” (*The Literary Mind*, 14).

2. For Meir Sternberg, the defining characteristic of narrativity is the interplay between the two temporal sequences: “actional and communicative, told and telling/reading . . . that generates the three universal narrative effects/interests/dynamics of prospection, retrospection, and recognition—suspense, curiosity, and surprise, for short” (“How Narrativity Makes a Difference,” 117). Compare to Gerald Prince’s perhaps more familiar definition of narrative as “the representation of at least two real or fictive events (or one situation and one event)” (*A Dictionary of Narratology*, rev. ed., 58). While Prince, in earlier work (e.g., in the first edition of his *A Dictionary of Narratology*, 58), defines *narrative* as a “recounting” of events (in other words, he requires that, in narratives, events must be reported by a narrator rather than enacted as in drama), in the 2003 revised edition he changes “recounting” to “representation.” Thus Prince, like Sternberg (116), now defines enacted events, as well as reported events, as narratives—a position that facilitates comparisons between narrative (a sequential representation of sequential events) and life (a sequential perception of sequential events). Both theorists recognize that the medium of the recounting may include, in addition to oral and written language, sequential images, gestures, and sounds. In sum, the two theorists’ definitions differ primarily in emphasis (see chap-
ter 7) and are in agreement on the core requirement: sequential events, sequentially represented.

3. “Une nouvelle coïncide souvent, mais non toujours avec une séquence: la nouvelle peut en contenir plusieurs, ou ne contenir qu’une partie de celle-ci” (“La Grammaire du récit,” 101). My translation, here and elsewhere unless otherwise specified. See also Todorov’s comments on this topic in his *Grammaire du Décaméron*, p. 20.

4. Although I have derived the ten functions in my model by considering which of Propp’s thirty-one functions interpret events in the narratives from various periods that I read and teach, I draw attention to similarities between the functions I select and those in two of the three five-function logically ordered sequences A.-J. Greimas uncovered in his analysis of Propp’s morphology (Greimas, “Searching for Models of Transformation,” 228), as well as those in the three core sequences in Paul Larivaille’s extension of Greimas’s model (Larivaille, “L’Analyse (morpho)logique du récit,” 376, 383). A sophisticated five-function model developed by William O. Hendricks from Propp’s work (the idea that narratives trace syntagmatic patterns) and Greimas’s (envisioning the forces of change synchronically in the semiotic square) is more abstract than earlier models and thus more versatile, but represents situations rather than the processes that change them (“A Rose for Emily: A Syntagmatic Analysis,” 262–64, 291). Of the models with which I am familiar, the one to which mine is closest in spirit is the concise five-category plot-grammar devised by Thomas Pavel (*The Poetics of Plot*), which convincingly depicts causal relations among represented events as interconnected trees. My model differs from all these in that it is designed to analyze, and to compare, the effects of sequence in (a) the sequence of perception of events in our world, (b) the sequence of a representation, and (c) the chronological sequence that we construct in response to a perceived or represented sequence.

5. I am grateful to James Phelan and David Herman, who helped me formulate the distinction between what a function is and how it is used.

6. Although Propp’s purpose is generally understood to be to demonstrate the generic identity of a category of Russian fairy tale, Propp does not claim that the one hundred tales he analyzed are identical in form. He recognizes, as I do, that not every function is represented in every sequence, and that narratives differ according to which functions they represent and according to the number of sequences they contain and the combinatory pattern in which multiple sequences are arranged. The question is whether Propp’s purpose—“a description of the tale according to its component parts and the relationship of these components to each other and to the whole” (*Morphology of the Folktale*, 19)—is to define a genre by revealing a pattern to which a set of narratives conform, or to reveal the differences that characterize an individual narrative.

Claude Bremond and Jean Verrier have claimed not only that Propp’s project was the former but that he failed to accomplish it. After analyzing French translations of the eight stories for which Propp provides a formal representation, they conclude that four of the eight “can-
not be reduced to the Proppian sequence without severe mutilations which destroy essential aspects of the plot” (“Afanasiev and Propp,” 192–93), and report what they perceive as “Propp’s blindness or indifference before the resistance his corpus offered to the analytical framework he attempted to impose on it” (193). Whatever Propp’s purpose was, his recognition that a number of different events can express the same function, and that a function can represent a number of different events, is a major contribution to understanding how a narrative communicates.

7. Propp too, after specifying that “[t]he sequence of functions is always identical” in each of the set of fairy tales he studied, immediately explains “that by no means do all tales give evidence of all functions. But this in no way changes the law of sequence. The absence of certain functions does not change the order of the rest” (Morphology of the Folktale, 22). My theory explains the invariant sequence Propp perceived as a logical necessity: at each stage in a sequence that begins at the onset of a problem and leads to its resolution, only events with certain outcomes (e.g., events that fill a specific one or two functions) can move the situation closer to resolution.

William O. Hendricks, who analyzes (in “On the Notion ‘Beyond the Sentence’”) “the criteria by which it is determined where to draw the line separating work which may legitimately be considered an attempt to extend linguistic science from that which may not be so considered,” proposes that “the drawing line between what constitutes a legitimate extension of linguistics beyond the sentence and that which does not be determined by this criterion: wherever a gap exists between the structural unit and the basic units (phonological, morphological, and syntactic) of the language, linguistics has not been extended, but on the contrary abandoned” (40, 43). For Hendricks, “Vladimir Propp’s morphological analysis of Russian fairy tales . . . essentially straddles the border between what does, and what does not, constitute a legitimate extension of linguistics” (40).

On the one hand, in Hendricks’s words, “each function refers to a class of actions rather than to one specific action”; the function “is a sort of equivalence class” (41). On the other hand, however, a function is “not so much a class of verbs as it is of ‘actions,’ i.e., the classes are established primarily on semantic grounds” (41). Furthermore, Hendricks notes that “at one point Propp equates verbs of sentences with the constant aspects of tales . . . but the labeling of the functions actually implies the ‘doer’ (grammatical subject) and the ‘receiver’ of the action (grammatical object). For instance, the function Victory actually refers to ‘victory of the hero over the villain’ . . . It would thus seem that the function corresponds to the sentence rather than to the sub-sentence unit” (42).

But Propp, Hendricks continues, “is concerned with ‘actions,’ not with sentences. That is, not only is the relation notional (one of chronology), but the entities so related are notional also (actions, rather than sentences).” And in folktales, “the relation between ‘actions’ . . . and individual sentences is not one-one. That is, a given action may in fact be signified by a series of sentences” (42).
In sum, for Hendricks, Propp does not “specify the exact relation between his structural unit, the function, and its linguistic manifestation (in terms of sentence constituency, etc.). Indeed, one of the variables of tales, according to Propp, is the choice of linguistic means to realize the tale” (43). As I use the term, a function is a semantic rather than a linguistic unit, and no one-to-one relation between a function and a linguistic unit (sentence, paragraph, etc.) is suggested. I am grateful to David Herman, who brought Hendricks’ study to my attention.

8. A negative function represents a specified event that does not occur; function $I_{\text{neg}}$ marks the recognition that a function-H endeavor will not reach a successful conclusion. Theoretically, a negative version of every function can be conceived. In practice, however, if a function-A or function-a event, for instance, does not occur, then the prevailing equilibrium (EQ) remains unbroken. With the exception of function $I_{\text{neg}}$, the non-occurrence of an event that, had it occurred, would have changed the prevailing situation can be omitted in a function analysis except in instances in which the perceiver considers it worth including. For examples of analyses that do include the non-occurrence of specified events, see chapters 2, 5, 6, and 7.

9. Compare representation and fabula to the terms discourse and story made familiar by Seymour Chatman (Story and Discourse). For my purposes representation is preferable to discourse, because it allows me to talk about representations in any medium without needing to explain that a film, for instance, or a ballet is in effect a discourse. By using the Formalist term fabula to denote the conceptual construct that readers (listeners, viewers) make from a representation, I reserve the word story to name examples of the short-story genre: the stories we read or hear or tell.

Among theorists writing about narrative, there is wide variation in the names chosen to denote the interrelated trajectories I call representation and fabula, and in the definitions provided. As I use the terms, fabula includes the reported events, chronologically ordered, and the identity (but no other characteristics) of the agents who perform them. I include as aspects of representation both the manifestation (in words, for example, or film) and the shaping of the material (through perspective, for instance, which may or may not reveal motivation, and including the sequence, duration, and frequency of events in the representation).

Some theorists see the shaping and the manifestation as separate categories (and in addition to the category of unshaped events I call fabula). Other theorists include the shaping as an aspect of what I call fabula, and reserve the category I call representation for issues pertaining to medium. For a comprehensive analysis of variations among narrative theorists in the terminology they choose, the definitions they provide, and the aspects of narratives and narrative theory they address in their work, see Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan’s “A Comprehensive Theory of Narrative.” Claude Bremond was the first to describe what I term fabula as medium-free (“Le Message narratif,” 4).

10. In work that has helped me understand this distinction, Tzvetan
Todorov discerns two levels where what I call functional polyvalence may create ambiguity: (1) Within a fictional world, what he calls “propositional ambiguity” (l’ambiguïté propositionnelle) arises when two characters interpret a given event as an element in different sequences, or at different positions in a sequence. My example is a feud; one of his examples is a murder—which one character interprets as a punishment and another character interprets as a crime to be punished. (2) For readers of narratives, what he calls “sequential ambiguity” (l’ambiguïté séquentielle) arises in response to a narrative that is told first from one character’s perspective and then shifts to another character’s perspective (Grammaire du Décaméron, 64–68).

11. Marie-Laure Ryan explains that fictional texts each refer to a world of their own, and cannot be validated externally because other texts do not share their reference world. For nonfiction, in contrast, “[t]he reader evaluates the truth value of the text by comparing its assertions to another source of knowledge relating to the same reference world. This source of knowledge can range from sensory experience to information provided by other texts.” Her argument, which she develops by extending her earlier work on possible worlds, is that “[w]hether accurate or inaccurate, texts of nonfiction stand in a competitive relation with other texts and other representations because to the reader they offer versions of the same reality [whereas] fictional texts do not share their reference world with other texts” (“Postmodernism and the Doctrine of Panfictionality,” 166–67).

As successfully as in my judgment Ryan salvages the theoretical distinction between fiction and nonfiction, when the need arises to gauge whether a given narrative is nonfiction or fiction or exemplifies an intermediate position between, the criteria available to guide us are less precise than one could wish. The best to date that I have seen are those offered by Dorrit Cohn in The Distinction of Fiction, especially chapter 2. In chapter 6 I take up again the similarities and differences between fiction and nonfiction.

12. A picaresque novel is told from the perspective of the protagonist: the rogue. From the perspective of the townspeople, of course, the rogue’s arrival and disruptive behavior is a function-A disruptive event. Thus the town responds by trying to catch the rogue (function C’) and punish him, for instance, by putting him in prison (function H), thus succeeding (function I) in establishing a new equilibrium.

13. A new sequence is most commonly indicated by an event that is interpreted either as function A (or a), or as function C. The hermeneutic relationship between these two functions is complementary; an interpretation of an event as expressing either function will reinforce an interpretation of an event as expressing the other function. If we tentatively interpret something that happens as disruptive (as potentially a function A), then a character’s decision (function C) to attempt to ameliorate the effects of the event we thought disruptive will tend to convince us that the event was in fact disruptive. Similarly, if we are made aware that a character has decided to attempt to ameliorate a given situation, we will ten-
tatively interpret the situation, or the event that caused it, as function a or function A. The hermeneutic relationship between function C and function A is developed in chapter 4.

Readers’ decisions about where a sequence begins are influenced by characteristics of the reader (the reader’s individual sensitivities and historical period; the reader’s degree of involvement in the reported events, presuppositions, and degree of attentiveness to the details of the representation; and the reader’s purpose: a local-level or a global-level analysis), and also by characteristics of the narrative being read: both the fabula (some reported events are more obviously destabilizing than others, although historical shifts in what is considered acceptable behavior also come into play), and the representation (the perspective from which a representation is told, the sequence of the telling, which elements are revealed and which withheld, where emphasis is placed, and how—and how directly—a C-actant’s decision is indicated).

I am grateful to David Herman, who, in response to my earlier work on functions, suggested that I directly address the question of how, and according to what signposts, readers decide whether to interpret a local-level action as a sequence, or to reserve the sequence to represent global-level change.

14. In John Barth’s novella “Dunyazadiad” (in Chimera), which is inspired by both the fabula and the shape of The Arabian Nights, the character known as the Genie has read The Arabian Nights and thus can tell Scheherazade the stories that she will tell the king. Recounting to Scheherazade her story for the third night, Barth’s character the Genie “recited the opening frame of the Fisherman and the Genie, the simplicity of which he felt to be a strategic change of pace for the third night—especially since it would lead, on the fourth and fifth, to a series of tales-within-tales, a narrative complexity he described admiringly as ‘Oriental’” (31). Famously, early stories in Arabic often present complex forms of embedding.

Barth’s novella begins where the frame story of the ancient text ends, with the double marriage of Scheherazade to the king and of her sister Dunyazade to the king’s brother, which marks for Scheherazade the successful conclusion (function I) of her long endeavor to amuse the king sufficiently with her storytelling to keep from being executed. Barth’s novella reinterprets the wedding as initiating, for Dunyazade, the function-a situation (after her 1001 nights listening and watching in Scheherazade’s bedroom, what bridal behavior is still available to Dunyazade?) that motivates his novella. A functionally polyvalent event (or events) often serves as the bridge between a familiar story and a Postmodern retelling.

15. Roy Jay Nelson defines causality in fiction as a hypothesis made by readers (“a readerly hypothesis about a relationship of derivativeness between two observed phenomena”), and in the larger context sees “causation as a subjective pattern, as a model of some practical utility in the specific situations of everyday life, but meaningless as a scientific or philosophical generality” (Causality and Narrative in French Fiction,
In general agreement with Nelson’s definitions, I have developed the idea of functions to be able to talk about and compare hypotheses about causality, both those made by readers of fiction (Nelson’s focus) and those that everyone makes in trying to understand the world we inhabit.

In contrast to both Nelson’s study and my own, the intellectual historian Stephen Kern’s *A Cultural History of Causality: Science, Murder Novels, and Systems of Thought* offers a comparative analysis of “the nature of causal explanation across two ages—Victorian to modern” (26). Although Kern draws some of his examples from murder novels (in addition to philosophy, the history of science, and other disciplines), for him the novels serve as sources of information about the explanations for criminal behavior commonly provided at a given historical moment: genetic inheritance, childhood experience, education, psychological state, social pressure, etc. Where Kern uses novels to analyze society’s shifting explanations of (generally) aberrant human behavior, I use novels and stories as representations of finite sets of specific events in order to analyze readers’ (and characters’ and narrators’) interpretations of causes and effects among events perceived as related. I am grateful to Brian McHale for bringing to my attention Kern’s study, which, in addition to its inherent interest, allows me to define my focus more precisely through the contrast with his.

16. Just as not every narrative (a sequential representation of sequential events) includes indications of causality, not every narrative is high in narrativity (“the degree . . . to which that narrative fulfills a receiver’s desire” [Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology*, 2nd ed., 65]). For Sternberg (see note 2 above), narrativity is an effect of the interplay between what I call the representation and the fabula, which generates prospection, retrospection, and recognition (“How Narrativity Makes a Difference,” 117). While information about what is going to happen (prospection) or what has happened (retrospection and recognition), which allows us to construct a chronological fabula, does not necessarily thereby reveal causal relations, I argue that one of the ways that narratives most readily satisfy our desire is by explaining, or at least suggesting, why one event follows another.

Notes to Chapter 2

1. Hans Christian Andersen published “The Princess and the Pea” (“Prindsessen paa aerten”) in 1835, in his first collection of stories. Although Andersen wrote original fairy tales as well as retellings of folk tales, he identifies “The Princess and the Pea” as one of the latter: a tale he “had heard as a child, either in the spinning room or during the harvesting of the hops” (“Notes,” 1171). Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm collected, edited, and published seven editions of fairy tales from 1812 to 1857. “The Pea Test” (“Die Erbsenprobe”) is included in the fifth edition, published in 1843. According to Jack Zipes, “The Pea Test” was
omitted from later editions because of its similarity to Andersen’s story (2: 396).

2. In order to analyze the functional polyvalence of events, I need to be able to differentiate between the events (included in a fabula) and the varying interpretations of the events (as functions) that multiple perspectives bring. To do this, I define fabula in my work as including the reported events, chronologically ordered, and the identity of the agents. I include as aspects of the representation, in addition to information about events and agents, both the disclosure of information about motivations and (characters’ and narrators’) speculations about motivations, as well as all other aspects of the shaping of the material and its manifestation (in words, for instance, or film).

3. Unless the pea has been stolen. In comments on an earlier version of this chapter, Peter J. Rabinowitz points out that “the stability of the equilibrium at the end of the story depends crucially on how seriously you take the possibility that the pea has been stolen. For if it has, the prince will not always have access to it.” In Rabinowitz’s reading, the story is being told during the prince’s lifetime; if the pea is stolen, the prince loses his access to it. In my reading, the reported events are being told long after they occurred; the possible (and recent) theft of the pea affects only the listeners, who would no longer be able to see it. Both readings seem to me valid and, by disagreeing, illustrate that gaps (in this case, about the relation between the time of the telling and the time of the reported events) are filled in differently by different readers. In both readings, equilibrium in the narrative world has been achieved. But in Rabinowitz’s reading—unlike mine—a potential disruption has been foreseen. The effects of temporary and permanent gaps on function analysis will be considered in chapters 5 and 6.

4. Gérard Genette (Narrative Discourse) distinguishes three categories of relations between a sequential representation and the chronological fabula that perceivers construct from it. In addition to order (the sequence in which events are reported in relation to the chronological sequence of fabula), and duration (the relation between the percent of a report devoted to a given event, and the percent of time in a complete fabula that the event occurs), the third is frequency (the relation between the number of times an event is reported and the number of times the event occurs in the fabula). In Andersen’s story, the importance accorded to the prince’s real efforts to find a princess is de-emphasized by the reduction in the representation to a single summarized account (in the first paragraph) of the many occasions in the fabula in which the prince found princesses who were not real princesses.

Notes to Chapter 3

1. The distinction between focalization and voice, which was introduced by Gérard Genette (Narrative Discourse, primarily chapters 4 and 5), has been the subject of much commentary. As I use the terms, the voice is the source of the words we read (e.g., a narrator); the focaliza-
tion is the source of the perceptions and conceptions (e.g., the character whose perceptions and resultant conceptions the voice reports). According to the description of Genette’s position by Gerald Prince, from whom I learned in a conversation many years ago how to use this distinction, focalization is “the perceptual or conceptual position in terms of which . . . the narrated situations and events are rendered” (Dictionary, 31). Genette’s idea of subdividing perspective (the older term, perhaps more familiar to nonspecialists) into its components, voice and focalization, is particularly useful in two situations: (1) in narratives like “The Assignation,” in which, as we shall see, the words (the voice) and the perceptions and conceptions (the focalization) are those of the same character (the narrator) but at different times in his life span; and (2) in narratives like many of Henry James’s in which one character’s perceptions and conceptions (focalization) are represented in the words of someone else—in James’s case, a narrator who is not the focalizer. According to the definition of fabula and representation that I use, focalization is an element of the representation in any medium; voice is a component of the representation in media that incorporate language.

2. For the narrator and for first-time readers, Aphrodite’s words to the stranger at this early point in the story are incomprehensible. After watching the ensuing events play out, both the narrator and (much more slowly) readers come to understand the message that Aphrodite, by speaking these words, communicates to the stranger. Moreover, perhaps much later, readers recognize that the stranger immediately understands the message that Aphrodite’s words convey—and that he could not do so unless the two of them had had an earlier conversation in which the stranger proposed (“thou hast conquered,” she says; my emphasis) that a joint suicide was the only way they would be able to be together. Apparently Aphrodite demurred, perhaps suggesting that they wait to see if some other solution became available; she is telling him now that she will do what he has asked. Only if a conversation on this topic has occurred can the stranger understand from Aphrodite’s words that she is going to poison herself the next morning. For readers, the stranger’s understanding of Aphrodite’s message is an important part of the evidence that the relationship between the stranger and Aphrodite precedes the scene in which the stranger saves the child.

3. Both focalization and voice are retrospective in the opening paragraph, but split in the second paragraph: the source of the words remains at the later time of retrospection; the focalization shifts (through a very heightened form of memory) from the narrator’s “confused recollection” (Poe, 193) to his perceptions and conceptions at the time of the events. Because the initial indications of retrospection are so clearly established, however, and the split so subtly crafted, few readers will be aware of it, the first time they read the story, until the final paragraph.

I am indebted to James Phelan, who accepted an early version of this analysis of “The Assignation” (which was also my first presentation outside the classroom of function analysis) for a session sponsored by the Society for the Study of Narrative Literature at the 1991 MLA
Conjunction, both for his interest in the theory I was developing and for
guiding my understanding of the “paradox in the retrospective nature of
the telling. The knowledge that the narrator achieves at the end of the
time of the action, which is of course before the time of the narration,
doesn’t inform that narration” (letter dated April 5, 1991).

4. In every classroom and conference session in which I have partici-
pated in a discussion of “The Assignation,” someone has suggested that
Aphrodite intentionally drops the baby in the water to test the stranger.
As I understand the story, this is a possible but not a necessary reading.
My own preference is to consider the means by which the baby “slip[s] from
the arms of its own mother” (194) as being equally unimportant as
the baby apparently is to everyone in the story, except perhaps the narra-
tor. Whether Aphrodite drops the baby intentionally or unintentionally,
her gaze that is “riveted” on the “gloomy niches” of the building that
“yawns right opposite her chamber window” (195) indicates that she
assumes (or knows, or hopes) that the stranger is there, and that she
expects him to try to save the baby. In other words, as I read the story,
by staring at the stranger’s hiding place Aphrodite is testing him (func-
tion D), whether she has dropped the baby intentionally or not. A second
question that often arises is whether the father of the child is Aphrodite’s
husband, the Marchese Mentoni, or the stranger. On this issue, the story
seems to me ambiguous.

5. The narratee is the one whom the narrator addresses, overtly (as
here) or otherwise, conceived as in the text and at the ontological level
of the narrator. The term was introduced by Gerald Prince (“Introduction
to the Study of the Narratee”).

6. In a dramatic monologue, the restriction of voice and focalization
to one character requires readers to “adopt [the speaker’s] viewpoint as
our entry into the poem,” as Robert Langbaum notes as early as 1957
(The Poetry of Experience, 78). Langbaum’s recognition of a causal rela-
tionship between, on the one hand, one of the defining characteristics of
the genre, and, on the other, the experience of readers as they read the
opening lines, is not invalidated by arguments against his further claim
that the genre incites sympathy for the speaker to the degree that readers
“suspend moral judgement” (83), which, as Wayne Booth perceives,
“seriously underplays the extent to which moral judgment remains even
after psychological vividness has done its work” (The Rhetoric of Fiction,
250n6).

7. Tamar Yacobi draws attention to the effect of the even longer delay
before readers are told the identity of the narratee. In response to Robert
Langbaum’s assertion that “the duke determines the arrangement and
relative subordination of the parts” (83) of the poem, Yacobi argues convic-
tingly that “the Duke deserves credit for engineering the gradual and
indirect emergence of the message, but surely not for (say) the shock
given us by the last-minute discovery of the messenger’s identity [since the
Duke] of course knows all along whom he is addressing” (“Narrative
Structure,” 344).

8. In comments on an earlier version of this chapter, James Phelan
argues that “the Duke isn’t worried about negotiating [with the narratee the] terms for his next marriage . . . Rather than negotiating terms, the Duke is sending a warning to the next Duchess via the narratee because sending the warning himself would be stooping and ‘I choose never to stoop.’” I find Phelan’s reading ingenious and think that like all good readings it enriches the poem. But I insist that nominally the Duke is negotiating his marriage contract, whatever individual readers think his covert purposes are. One of the reasons that readings vary as much as they do is that readers each fill gaps in their own ways—and often without recognizing which elements of our reading we have been given and which are our assumptions based on information we have been given. In this case, whether we interpret as function H the Duke’s negotiating (my reading) or the Duke’s sending a message (Phelan’s reading), Phelan and I agree that the Duke’s confidence indicates that he will succeed (function I), even if success may mean that the Duke will marry (my reading, which is bad enough) or that the Duke will marry a bride who has been warned that her life depends on reserving her smiles for her husband (Phelan’s reading, which of course is worse).

9. The Russian terms can be transliterated as sju et and fabula. According to the accounts I have read, credit for introducing the term sju et is given to Viktor Shklovsky, and for developing definitions to distinguish between the two trajectories primarily to Boris Tomashevsky and Juri Tynyanov. (See Tzvetan Todorov, “Some Approaches to Russian Formalism,” and D. W. Fokkema and Elrud Kunne-Ibsch, Theories of Literature in the Twentieth Century.)

10. My view of narrative is that it is a semiotic system structured like language. As Ferdinand de Saussure discerned (in lectures from 1906–11, published posthumously under the title Course in General Linguistics), the sound of the word “horse” (the signifier) is meaningless except to those who, when they hear it, think about their concept (the signified) of what a horse is like. The two together—the sound and the concept, the signifier and the signified—comprise a two-part sign that represents a horse. Similarly, a narrative representation (written, oral, filmed, danced) guides readers (listeners, viewers) to construct (some would say “reconstruct”) a fabula. The two together—the representation that has material form and the fabula that exists only as a concept in a perceiver’s mind—represent a narrative world. Nonfiction represents our world, fiction represents a fictional world.

In taking this position I am arguing against Dorrit Cohn’s theory (The Distinction of Fiction, particularly chapter 7, “Signposts of Fictionality”) that historical accounts differ from fiction in that only the former have a referential level (they refer to our world). In disagreeing with Cohn on this point by maintaining that fictional narratives represent fictional worlds, I am influenced by possible worlds theory, particularly Marie-Laure Ryan’s Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory.

11. Seymour Chatman recognizes and explains that the paired trajectories of narrative are illuminated by—and enable—the translation of a fab-
ula from one medium to another: “One of the most important observations to come out of narratology is that narrative itself is a deep structure quite independent of its medium. In other words, narrative is basically a kind of text organization, and that organization, that schema, needs to be actualized: in written words, as in stories and novels; in spoken words, combined with the movements of actors imitating characters against sets which imitate places, as in plays and films; in drawings; in comic strips; in dance movements, as in narrative ballet and in mime; and even in music, at least in program music of the order of Till Eulenspiegel and Peter and the Wolf.

“A salient property of narrative is double time structuring. That is, all narratives, in whatever medium, combine the time sequence of plot events, the time of the histoire [fabula] with the time of the presentation of those events in the text, which we call ‘discourse-time’ [representation]. What is fundamental to narrative, regardless of medium, is that these two time orders are independent. . . . This is true in any medium: flashbacks are just as possible in ballet or mime or opera as they are in a film or novel. Thus, in theory at least, any narrative can be actualized by any medium which can communicate the two time orders” (“What Novels Can Do That Films Can’t,” 121–22).

12. Seymour Chatman, writing in response to Culler’s argument, emphasizes that “[f]rom the theoretical point of view, narratology is resolutely synchronic. It does not assume that either telling or told ‘precede’ each other: they are coexistent, cotemporal parts of the model” (“On Deconstructing Narratology,” 14). Ruth Ronen considers the possibility that the status of fabula is different in fiction and nonfiction: “In extrawestern contexts chronology is an essentialist concept accounting for the ‘natural’ concatenation of events independent of any perspectival interference (whether such a chronology of events in reality is accessible or not is a question of a different sort); in fictional contexts the chronology of reported events is the outcome of the order and mode of their presentation. There is no order prior to the perspectively determined mode of telling. . . . Fictional discourse constructs temporal relations in the narrative world, it does not reveal these relations” (Possible Worlds in Literary Theory, 215–16, 217; her emphasis).

13. Roy Jay Nelson, in his fine book on causality in fiction (Causality and Narrative in French Fiction), provides the clearest statement I have seen of the two related but separable causal sequences that I have come to think that Culler in this instance has confused. Whereas Culler’s methodology is to attempt to weaken the fabula at the expense of the representation, Nelson retains the two traditional trajectories and includes in addition the third element that Gérard Genette calls narration (often translated as “narrating”; Genette, Narrative Discourse, 27 and 27n2). In Nelson’s definition, “narration, as the productive act per se, is the realm of the author[] not a persona but rather those elements of a supposed authorial thought process or intention which can be inferred from the existence and nature of texts themselves” (13; I reiterate that Nelson is analyzing narrative fiction). Nelson discerns that readers of fiction
infer causes and effects at all three levels. Like most theorists, he sees that
the sequence of the representation reveals, rather than contradicts, the
chronological sequence of fabula. In the process of planning a narrative,
he recognizes, decisions about an outcome do often precede decisions
about the events and situations that will allow that outcome to seem
appropriate. In Nelson’s words, “If . . . ‘realistic’ fiction [is impelled] to
provide the causes before revealing the effects in the récit [representation]
and the histoire [fabula], the narration has the effect ‘in mind,’ and
invents the cause afterward so that the effect may occur” (93).

Of course, as Nelson well understands, nothing in this account sub-
verts the relation between chronology and causality. If it may seem at first
thought that the same set of events—but in a different sequence, and with
different causal interrelations—occurs in the authorial thought process
and in the characters’ lives, I argue that the events at the two sites are not
the same. The two sets of events cannot be the same events because they
take place in ontologically disparate realms: one set in the mental world
in which the authorial thought process occurs, and one set in the repre-
sented world in which the characters act. Functional polyvalence explains
that interpretations of causality depend on the configuration in which an
event is perceived and its chronological position in that configuration.
Since the events take place in configurations in different worlds, and the
sequence of events in the authorial process is most often different from
the sequence in which the characters act, there is no reason that interpre-
tations of the causality of the events can be expected to be the same in the
two configurations.

14. Although Prince’s categories are pertinent in the instances I cite, the
distinction between the relation that in this instance he is analyzing
(between a narrative text and the narrative world that it describes) and
the relation I am analyzing (between a representation [e.g., Poe’s and
Browning’s narrative texts] and the fabula that readers construct in
response to it) is important to maintain.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. In the terms of function analysis, doers whose actions are motiva-
ted by someone else are donors, whose actions (function F) empower C-
actants to achieve their objectives. In the case of armed forces, the gov-
ernment or individual who acquires their services is the C-actant who
determines their objective. In the case of chain gangs, the governing body
or the individuals who manage the prison are the C-actants who deter-
mine their objectives.

2. I am grateful to David Herman, who drew my attention to the par-
allels between Turner’s argument and my own.

3. Broadcast on the local NPR station on May 21, 1996. Because I did
not hear the beginning of the commentary and the speaker was not iden-
tified during the portion I heard, I do not know who was speaking.

4. In “In a Grove,” one of the two stories by Akutagawa on which the
film *Rashomon* is based, the wife says that she “plunged the dagger through his [her husband’s] blue kimono and into his chest” (176). She claims responsibility for killing her husband, however, only in the story. In the film, Kurosawa softens the wife’s role in the version she narrates: she approaches her husband dagger in hand, but claims that she faints then, and that he is dead when she regains consciousness. In both the story and the film, the bandit and the husband each declare themselves responsible.

5. The comments by Thomas Pavel that I cite are part of an argument he develops about the history of structures: a “gradual specialization of genres [that he envisions], thanks to which tragedy begins to eliminate its epic openings.” Drama, he proposes, develops from narrated accounts of events: “just as Renaissance comedy is still under the influence of medieval romances and pastoral prose, so the tragedies still bear the unmistakable stamp of the historical narrative, the folktale and the novel-la” (“Racinian Spaces,” 120–21).

6. Citations of *Hamlet* are from the Arden edition, edited by Harold Jenkins.

7. One might interpret Polonius’s death as itself a function-A event, rather than as merely ensuring Hamlet’s already probable forced departure from Denmark. According to that interpretation, Polonius’s death would be the one function-A event that Hamlet causes, however unintentionally. From the perspective of an interpreter considering the play in its entirety, including its ending, it would be easy to argue that Polonius’s death, avenged by Laertes, is the cause of Hamlet’s death. I have not included Polonius’s death as a function-A event because I think that as we watch or read the play, we tend to interpret the function of events as Hamlet does. As I interpret Hamlet’s interpretation, Polonius’s death does not disrupt his situation in the way that all the function-A events I list do.

8. Laertes, who wants to kill Hamlet to avenge his father’s and his sister’s deaths, and Claudius, who has been plotting against Hamlet since Act 2, conspire to use against Hamlet a poisoned sword and poisoned drink. A function analysis from the perspective of Claudius and Laertes (at the end of Act 4) looks like this:

A Hamlet must die (for Claudius, to protect his throne; for Laertes, for revenge)
C Claudius and Laertes decide to kill Hamlet
C’ Claudius and Laertes make plans to murder Hamlet
F1 Laertes has “bought an unction of a mountebank” (4.7.140)
F2 Claudius counts on a servant or courtier (“I’ll have prepar’d him / A chalice” [4.7.158–59; my emphasis])
G the duel that Claudius will organize is the time and place where Hamlet is to be killed

9. Here and throughout, I cite the translation of Racine’s *Phèdre* by John Cairncross: *Phaedra*. Because Cairncross’s translation has the same
number of lines as Racine’s French, anyone wanting to locate the passages in French can do so easily. (By convention in French classical drama, lines are numbered consecutively throughout the play. Because scenes are shorter in French drama than in English drama—in French drama, a new scene begins whenever someone enters or leaves the stage—reference to a scene is generally sufficient information to locate a specific passage.)

10. Racine’s sources include, in addition to Euripides’ *Hippolytus*, the accounts in Greek mythology of Phaedra and her family. When Phaedra refers to the torments visited by Venus on her “race” (*sang* [literally, “blood”]; 1.3.278), in the passage I cite, one thinks among other examples of the experience of her mother Pasiphaë, who, after her Venus-driven encounter with the white bull presented by Neptune to her husband Minos, gave birth to the half-bull, half-human monster known as the Minotaur.

11. In the Preface to *Phaedra*, Racine describes her as “involved by her destiny, and by the anger of the gods, in an unlawful passion” (Racine, translated by Cairncross, p. 145).

12. Roland Barthes explains that “Oenone’s ruse consists not in retracting Phaedra’s confession, in annulling it, which is impossible; but in reversing it: Phaedra will accuse Hippolytus of the very crime she herself is guilty of; speech will remain intact, simply transferred from one character to the other” (On Racine, 120–21).

13. Since Hippolytus has not previously demonstrated interest in any women (nor does he in Euripides’ play), Phaedra has not assumed that he loved her, but she has not even considered that he might love someone else. Although Racine does not invent the character Aricia, who appears in several ancient accounts, the subplot in his play of a relationship between Hippolytus and Aricia that torments Phaedra is not an element in Euripides’ play.

14. Careful readers may recognize that this function analysis is less detailed than many in this book. In analyzing *Phaedra*, my goal is to show as clearly as possible the causal chain that leads from an initial function-A situation to Phaedra’s function-C decision intended to resolve it, but which leads to action that causes a further function-A situation, etc., throughout the play. To do this I have not bracketed the three functions that interpret events preceding the opening scene of the play (functions $A_1$, $C_1$, $C'$), and I have eliminated donor functions and function-H events by characters other than Phaedra. In a function analysis as in any form of analysis, sometimes detail is useful and sometimes not.

For readers interested in the process of function analysis I draw attention to function $a_5$ as a good example of a lower-case function-a event. The narrative world has not changed; Hippolytus loves Aricia (and playgoers know it) when the play begins. But for Phaedra the information is new—and disruptive; it changes her interpretation of the narrative world.

15. In fact, as James Phelan points out in comments on an earlier version of this chapter, a C-actant’s decision, in instances when it puts the C-actant in peril, regularly incites in viewers (readers, listeners) a variety of emotions quite other than comfort—anxiety and fear, for example.
Moreover, as Phelan perceptively notes, “[t]he degree and kind of discomfort [that perceivers feel] is related to the audience’s inferences about the genre of the particular narrative. Scary movies go for one kind of discomfort, tragedies another, romantic comedies still another.”

16. Although I adopt for my analysis of *Daisy Miller* two of Tamar Yacobi’s findings about the novella—the division among readers in the protagonist they identify and the fact that that division occurs along historical lines—in the present context I cannot do justice to the complexity of the process she demonstrates that we engage in in determining a protagonist. I encourage readers to consult her important article (“Hero or Heroine?”).

17. Throughout this section on interpretations of *Daisy Miller*, in which I analyze and indicate as functions the causal relations that I think that other writers’ recorded interpretations reveal, only I can be held responsible. To interpret an interpretation, and in a terminology unknown to the initial interpreter, is dangerously close to attempting to portray how Rembrandt’s artworks would have looked if he had worked, for instance, in a digital medium.

18. One could argue, moreover, that Winterbourne’s inaction is less the result of his inability to decide whether he wants a relationship with Daisy, than to determine what kind of offer it is appropriate to make her. I cite in support of this reading the passage in which Winterbourne thinks that if it were “impossible to regard her as a wholly unspotted flower [it would] much simplify the situation to be able to treat her as the subject of one of the visitations known to romancers as ‘lawless passions’” (59).

19. In fact, their ability to communicate deteriorates as their relationship progresses. Daisy’s first request is that Winterbourne stay with her brother Randolph so that she and her mother can visit the Château de Chillon, to which Winterbourne manages to respond by indicating that he would prefer to accompany Daisy to Chillon (19). Two results ensue: the trip to Chillon, but also Mrs. Costello’s refusal to meet Daisy. When Daisy makes her second request to Winterbourne that evening, that he take her boating, she has already learned from him that his aunt refuses to meet her. Although neither Winterbourne nor readers have access to Daisy’s motivations beyond what she says and what she does, we can speculate that this social rebuff may motivate Daisy, who walks away after Winterbourne offers to go boating, with no explanation except that she wanted “a little fuss” (38).

Thereafter, Winterbourne’s responses to her requests seem increasingly rude. At Chillon, when Daisy suggests that Winterbourne join their party and travel with them, Winterbourne responds that he has prior engagements. When she asks him to visit her in Rome, he tells her he is going to Rome to visit his aunt, and when Daisy insists, “I want you just to come for me” (44), he refuses to say more than that “at any rate he would certainly come” (44). In Rome, although readers are informed that Winterbourne has traveled there with “the zeal of an admirer” (51), Daisy, who meets him at Mrs. Walker’s by chance, is not. When she asks him to escort her to meet Giovanelli he agrees, but he leaves her when
Mrs. Walker demands that he get into her carriage (63). Their final misunderstanding is the recurring conversation in the final pages of the novella about whether Daisy is engaged to Giovanelli (84, 88–89, 91).

20. Roman Jakobson’s analysis of the constituent elements of verbal communication (“Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics”) is fundamental to my understanding of what is required for a message to be received.

21. By “relatively traditional” I indicate what (as I understand him) Roland Barthes calls the “moderately plural (i.e., merely polysemous)” (S/Z: An Essay, 6), exemplified by Balzac’s Sarrasine: one can construct a fabula from the information that the representation provides. For analysis of less traditional forms on the narrative borderlands, see chapter 8. I also draw attention to Yacobi’s suggestion that James may have been “trying out not just a new, ‘international’ matter but also a new manner: the consistently self-limited mode of narration” (“Hero or Heroine?” 31).

Notes to Chapter 5

1. Gérard Genette’s terms voice and focalization (Narrative Discourse, esp. chapters 4 and 5) differentiate, but more clearly, what James differentiates by redefining the word narrator and creating the term center of consciousness: two distinct activities, both of which, in many narratives, are assigned to a narrator who is the source of language but also of perceptions and conceptions.

2. My reading of Strether’s behavior in Paris, in light of its consequences, as function F reflects recent scholarship on The Ambassadors in which Strether’s personal growth is a recurrent theme. James Phelan analyzes the decisive role of language in “the way James describes Strether’s internal action [which] enables us to see and participate in the complex moral and psychological growth Strether experiences” (Worlds from Words, 58). Marianna Torgovnick finds that the contrast between Strether’s behavior in the early scenes and the deftness he displays in the final scene, in which “he is Maria’s equal in conversation . . . supports the reading of the novel that finds Strether, at novel’s end, a more mature, sensitive, self-aware man than he had earlier been” (Closure in the Novel, 140). According to Joyce A. Rowe, “[a]t fifty-five, Strether has completed his initiation” (Equivocal Endings in Classic American Novels, 77). For Jeanne Campbell Reesman, the conclusion “firmly suggest[s]” that Strether has “nothing but knowledge by the end” although, in her opinion, “this knowledge is very dangerous” (American Designs, xiii).

Readers of fairy tales will remember that the characteristic triplification is often seen at exactly this point in the sequence. The hero is tested, responds to the test, and gains (or fails to gain) empowerment, and then all three stages are repeated a second and a third time. If we represent the triple testing of many fairy tales as (D E F)3, then Strether’s testing should be represented as (D E F)n to indicate that each of countless experiences draws from him a response that enhances his personal growth.
3. The exposition of *The Ambassadors*—the events that are prior chronologically to “that point in time which marks the beginning of the fictive present” in the representation (Meir Sternberg, *Expositional Modes*, 21)—includes everything that happens prior to Strether’s inquiry at the hotel about Waymarsh (the initial scene of the representation). This means that the material that James’s representation relegates to exposition includes the events that in the novel’s fabula express the primary motivating event (function A) and the initial actions of the C-actant (functions C and C’). Although *The Ambassadors* is by no means the first narrative, nor James the first writer to consign primary motivating events to exposition, I draw attention to this feature of the novel because it is the major element in the construction of the text that leads readers to shift their interpretation of the opening scene so many times.

4. Lubomír Dolečel distinguishes between the absolute authentication authority of the anonymous third-person narrator and the lower degree of authentication authority of the first-person narrator. In Dolečel’s theory, “[a]uthentication [in fiction] is a special illocutionary force analogous to the force of performative speech acts described by [J. L.] Austin [in *How to Do Things with Words*]. The analogy is based on the fact that the performative illocutionary force is carried only by speech acts uttered by speakers who have the necessary authority.” Dolečel cites as one of Austin’s examples of a performative speech act the naming of a ship, which only the person authorized to do the naming can accomplish. In fiction, Dolečel argues, “the ‘speaker’ properly authorized to authenticate motifs is the anonymous Er-form [third-person] narrator.” The first-person narrator, like the anonymous third-person narrator, Dolečel recognizes, “assumes the role of constructing the narrative world. However, the theory of authentication should assign a lower degree of authentica-

5. Jeanne Campbell Reesman, who perceptively discerns that Maria Gostrey’s “frequent repetition of Strether’s words forces him to reexamine them in a dialogical context,” draws attention to the correlations between Maria Gostrey’s role and the reader’s: “She is enacting the same process the reader is experiencing, the attempt to understand Strether, and her allowing Strether his personal freedom to develop his thoughts becomes the reader’s hermeneutic model as well” (*American Designs*, 79).

6. Marianna Torgovnick, whose discussion of conventional endings and James’s “delightfully pejorative” comments on them (*Closure in the Novel*, 122) has influenced my thinking, concludes, “Where [Strether] is’ at novel’s end is obscure neither to Strether, nor . . . to the reader, despite
some readers’ feelings that he ought to be somewhere else—for instance, preparing to stay in Paris and marry Maria” (140–41). Although I too regret that Maria Gostrey should be made to relinquish a future that she envisions as enhanced by Strether’s presence, I am arguing, in agreement with Torgovnick, that Strether’s logic, in the final scene, leaves his view of the appropriateness of his departure in no doubt. Moreover, for us to know “where Strether is” at the end of the novel requires, as James Phelan perceptively recognizes, that the final scene be represented in dialogue, which permits Maria to speak in her own voice. According to Phelan, “[I]f we are to interpret Strether’s refusal [of Maria’s offer] as a final victory, James must plausibly represent Maria herself acknowledging it as a victory” (Worlds from Words, 60). This she does—although the pain she is suppressing in doing so is left to the reader to imagine.

7. Dorothea Krook, who defines “Jamesian ambiguity” as “leav[ing] the reader faced with two and only two interpretations of the data” (“The Ambassadors: Two Types of Ambiguity,” 154), agrees that “The Ambassadors as a whole is by no means ambiguous,” although she discovers “one great ‘pocket’ of this kind of ambiguity” (151): the status of Chad’s transformation. Arguing that “Chad cannot both be and not be transformed,” she traces “the evidence of the witnesses, which may be read both ways, as confirming one interpretation (Strether’s—that Chad is transformed) and disconfirming the other (the Pococks’—that Chad is not transformed), or confirming the Pococks’ and disconfirming Strether’s” (154). In chapter 6 I take up the issue of Jamesian ambiguity again.

8. Although Kafka incorporates the text of “Vor dem Gesetz” in the penultimate chapter of Der Prozeß (The Trial), the completeness of the story as a narrative unit is not affected because the story is embedded in the novel in its entirety and as a narrated text, in the form of an exemplum that the priest tells K. Moreover, since the ensuing conversation between the priest and K. includes conflicting exegeses for which no hierarchy is established, the embedding of the story in the novel invites, more than it precludes, analysis of the story as a separate unit.

On the other hand, whereas a very short story may seem a less appropriate choice for comparison to The Ambassadors than Kafka’s novel Das Schloß (The Castle), which also opens with the arrival of the protagonist at the locus of the action, the novel is unfinished, and, even though Max Brod provides a summary of the concluding situation as Kafka described it to him, an unfinished narrative does not lend itself to a function analysis. The final pages of The Ambassadors demonstrate the degree to which the specific words of a completed representation can govern readers’ interpretations of the function of events.

9. The translations of “Vor dem Gesetz” that I cite are by Willa and Edwin Muir.

10. See chapter 7 for a consideration of the effect of indexical information on readers’ and viewers’ interpretations of the function of events and situations.

11. For this pertinent citation from Jurij Lotman’s study of plot typolo-
gy, I am indebted to Teresa de Lauretis, who cites the passage I cite, along with Lotman’s further specification that “closed space [in] the elementary sequence of events in myth . . . can be interpreted as ‘a cave,’ ‘the grave,’ ‘a house,’ ‘woman,’ [and] entry into it is interpreted on various levels as ‘death,’ ‘conception,’ ‘return home’ and so on; moreover all these acts are thought of as mutually identical” (“The Origin of Plot,” 168). In a particularly famous passage in the canon of feminist narrative studies, de Lauretis concludes: “In this mythical-textual mechanics, then, the hero must be male, regardless of the gender of the text-image, because the obstacle, whatever its personification, is morphologically female and indeed, simply, the womb” (Alice Doesn’t, 118–19).

12. McHale’s argument is that Postmodern fiction can be distinguished from Modernist fiction by the greater importance of ontological issues in the former and of epistemological issues in the latter (see esp. chapter 1).

13. Similarly, in both “The Assignation” and “My Last Duchess” (as we saw in chapter 3), information about causal events that are chronologically prior to the initial event in the representation is temporarily withheld, although, as in The Ambassadors, information that permits readers to identify the events and to interpret their functions is gradually revealed. The difference to which I draw attention between the two narratives analyzed in chapter 3 and The Ambassadors is that in the latter the sequence is cut off before it concludes, whereas in Poe’s story the events to complete the sequence—and in Browning’s poem the events to complete the primary sequence—are revealed. As a result, while the representations of Poe’s and Browning’s narratives effectively produce in readers an emotional response, they do not finally (after one has read and analyzed them) create the epistemological doubt that James’s novel and, even more so, Kafka’s story do.

14. Gerald Prince’s path-breaking analysis in “The Disnarrated” of areas of disjuncture between a representation and the world it represents has guided my analysis of the status of events and functions in the segments that precede and follow the two representations, and underlies my idea of empty functions and negative functions. In his terms, the events that precede the man’s arrival are, I suggest, “unnarrated”—events that are omitted because of the focalizer’s concentration on the task at hand.

15. Admittedly, the suppression of the events (particularly the events to fill functions A and C) encourages multiple interpretations in a way that the information we learn in The Ambassadors—that Strether has agreed to go to Europe to bring Chad home—does not. Peter J. Rabinowitz points out, for instance, in comments on an earlier version of this chapter, that “it’s possible that the story begins in equilibrium (the man lives in a world where, in the normal state of affairs, people can go to the law whenever they want); in this case, it’s the doorkeeper’s refusal that’s the motivating disruptive event.” In that case, depending on one’s interpretation of “waiting,” one might read the man’s response either as (1) function $C_{neg}$ (the man does not decide to act) or as (2) a decision to wait (function $C$) followed by the act of waiting (function $C'$). In either case, nothing is accomplished. If the doorkeeper’s refusal is the motivating disruptive event, the man does not succeed in overcoming it.
16. The “double-bind” that Jacques Derrida perceives in this story is, similarly, a motivated not-doing, which in my terminology, could be interpreted as a function $E_{\neg g}$ or $H_{\neg g}$, depending on its consequences: “The [doorkeeper’s] discourse operates, not directly to prohibit, but to interrupt and defer passage, or permission to pass. The man has at his disposal the natural or physical liberty to enter the premises, if not the law. So he must . . . forbid himself to enter. He must constrain himself, issue to himself, not the order to assent to the law, but the order not to ascend [accéder] to the law, which, in short, has him informed or lets him know: do not come to me, I command that you do not yet come to me. It is there and therein that I am the law and that you will accede [accéderas] to my demand. By not having access [accéder] to me” (183; my translation).

Notes to Chapter 6

1. Gérard Genette, who notes with approval Sternberg’s use of these two terms to distinguish between types of omniscient narrators, adds that the terms are equally applicable to “focalized narratives” (Narrative Discourse Revisited, 78n8), which of course they are.

2. The two books address different issues: Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan defines a specific form of structural ambiguity available to narrative, which she locates in certain late works by Henry James, and Meir Sternberg explores the artistic effects of the placement of expositional material in a representation. The similarity between the two books, and between the two theorists’ work, is that both theorists analyze relations between representations and fabulas to explain the effects of specific narratives, and both illuminate relations between representations and fabulas by investigating gaps.

3. In later work Sternberg discerns that, for readers, temporary gaps and permanent gaps raise disparate questions. In response to a temporary gap, readers ask these questions, he writes: “Why has the narrative chosen to distribute the information that belongs together, to deform a coherent plot only to reform it into proper chronology at a later stage? In short, why fabricate an ambiguity destined for resolution, and why conceal and reveal the truth at exactly these stages?” But in response to a permanent gap, readers ask a different question—in his words: “Why has the narrator chosen to omit this information altogether?” (The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, 240).

4. The historian Peter Burke perceives that “[a] narrative history of the First World War, for example, will give one impression if the story ends at Versailles in 1919, another if the narrative is extended to 1933 or 1939,” and suggests that it “might be worth following the example of certain novelists, such as John Fowles, and providing alternative endings” (“History of Events and the Revival of Narrative,” 240).

5. The set of functions that Propp discerned includes preparatory functions that represent events which by changing a preliminary situation weaken its stability and enable a subsequent and more serious function-
A event to occur. Among these “preliminary” misfortunes is the departure or death of a family member. By extension, then, the death of a king can be interpreted either as a function-A event in itself or as merely a preliminary event that leaves the kingdom vulnerable to a function-A event. I have not included preliminary functions in my model, largely because living beings are always so very vulnerable to disruptive events, and yet the specific vulnerability that will lead to disaster can be determined only in hindsight, after the disruptive event has occurred. In contrast, the ameliorative move (from a function-A situation to a new equilibrium) can be perceived as it develops, whether or not it is successful. In addition to the reasons proposed in chapter 4, perhaps this too is a reason that literary narratives and narratives about events in our world so often trace the ameliorative move.

6. The other two modes that Mink proposes in his early and very interesting essay on the relations between history and fiction are the theoretical (in which a number of objects are comprehended “as instances of the same generalization”) and the categorial (in which a number of objects are comprehended “as examples of the same category”) ("History and Fiction as Modes of Comprehension," 550).

7. Mink argues that the distinction between anticipation and retrospection may be more than the mere difference in temporal perspective: “We know that the difference between past and future is crucial in the case of moral and affective attitudes; we do not fear something that is over and done with, nor feel regret for something not yet undertaken. My thesis is that the difference is crucial as well for cognition: at least in the case of human actions and changes, to know an event by retrospection is categorically . . . different from knowing it by prediction or anticipation. It cannot even, in any strict sense, be called the ‘same’ event, for in the former case the descriptions under which it is known are governed by a story to which it belongs, and there is no story of the future” (546).

8. Although the governess writes her account after the fact, in a past tense, the focalization is hers at the time that the events are occurring.

9. An uninterpreted event (a specified event whose causes and consequences have not been interpreted) stands in contrast to an empty function (an interpretation of the causes and consequences of an unspecified event).

10. Gérard Genette comments that “to [his] knowledge . . . the situation of a double narrator occurs only . . . in Sarrasine.” In his terminology, “the extradiegetic narrator [of the framing narrative] himself becomes intradiegetic narrator [of the contained narrative] when he tells his companion the story of Zambinella” (Narrative Discourse, 229n42).

11. In agreement with Barthes, Ross Chambers comments that “in Sarrasine, the contract is as close to being explicit as decorum allows: in accepting the very intimate circumstances of the rendezvous in which the narrator reveals the secret she wishes to learn . . . Mme de Rochefide accepts her part of the bargain” ("Sarrasine and the Impact of Art," 218). The setting that Mme de Rochefide arranges—a small salon in her home, softly lit and with a fire in the fireplace; she is seated on a sofa, the
narrator on cushions at her feet—indicates to me both that she has agreed to the bargain and that the narrator, who describes the setting, interprets the setting as signifying her agreement.

But then, like many, I come to Sarrasine through Barthes; my reading of the story is strongly influenced by his. A recent study by Claude Bremond and Thomas Pavel, *De Barthes à Balzac*, takes as its highly appropriate aim “to extricate Sarrasine from Barthes’s grasp in order to defend it and to emphasize precisely the aspect that Barthes did his utmost to undervalue: its intelligibility” (“de dégager Sarrasine de l’étreinte barthésienne pour en dégager et mettre en valeur précisément le trait que Barthes s’évertuait à déprécier: son intelligibilité” [10]). In their reading, “the interpretation that would have the transaction between the narrator and the young woman be an exchange (a night of love for a good story) betrays both the spirit and the letter of the text. The narrator is not in a position to negotiate these stakes” (“l’interprétation qui veut que l’objet de la négociation entre le narrateur et la jeune femme soit un troc [une nuit d’amour contre une belle histoire] trahit aussi bien l’esprit que la lettre du texte. Le narrateur n’est pas en position de négocier un tel enjeu.” [254]). In support of this position they cite lexia #144 (the narrator has just offered to call the next evening to reveal the mystery): “She smiled and we parted; she just as proud, just as forbidding, and I just as ridiculous as ever. She had the audacity to waltz with a young aide-de-camp; and I was left in turn angry, pouting, admiring, loving, jealous” (Balzac, 234, #144; quoted by Bremond and Pavel, 253). Bremond and Pavel conclude, “In a fit of fleeting lucidity, the narrator knows at that moment that he has lost the wager” (“Dans un accès de lucidité passagère, le narrateur sait à ce moment qu’il a perdu la parti.” [253]).

Although the narrator’s thoughts at that moment are far less transparent to me than to Bremond and Pavel, particularly since in the next lexia Mme de Rochefide parts from the narrator saying “till tomorrow” (Balzac, 234, #145), their larger argument—that the narrator gravely misunderstands the young woman's character, thinking her more a coquette than a serious thinker (253–54)—forces a reconsideration of the story (a reconsideration that is useful in the present context because it indicates how differently Mme de Rochefide’s response at the end of the story can be interpreted when viewed in a configuration that includes all of Balzac’s fiction and traditional readings of his work, than when viewed—as Barthes does—ahistorically and without reference to Balzac’s corpus.

According to Bremond’s and Pavel’s interpretation, Mme de Rochefide is a spokesperson for Balzac, and the judgment she pronounces at the end of the story reflects “one option, the rejection of the world, whose legitimacy Balzac understands and respects” (“une option, le rejet du monde, dont Balzac comprend et respecte la légitimité” [260]): “From the scandalously happy fate of the Lanty family, the young Parisian woman passed judgment on the Paris of 1830; from the scandalously unhappy fate of the sculptor Sarrasine, she passed judgment on the passions and particularly, to be sure, on love” (“Du destin scandaleusement
heureux de la famille Lanty, la jeune Parisienne conclut en effet à la condamnation du Paris de 1830; du destin scandaleusement malheureux du sculpteur Sarrasine, elle conclut à la condamnation des passions et surtout, bien sûr, de l’amour" [194]).

12. I cite passages from Sarrasine in English translation only, and give page numbers that refer to the fine translation by Richard Miller that is part of his translation of Roland Barthes’s S/Z. But to facilitate locating citations in French, I also include the lexia numbers (preceded by an asterisk) that Barthes assigns to the fragments I cite.

13. Whether the information that the narrator reveals is indeed about events he knows to have occurred, or whether he begins at this moment to invent a story to tell his companion, to earn her gratitude, is another question. Readers of Balzac’s story who have seen the film L’Année dernière à Marienbad (Last Year at Marienbad), with screenplay and dialogue by Alain Robbe-Grillet, may find suspicious the narrator’s pause—his hesitation before he provides even the most general information.

Henrik Ibsen’s The Master Builder raises similar suspicions in the scene near the end of Act I when Solness finally acquiesces to Hilda’s claim that he kissed her ten years before, then asks what happened next. In all three works a character attempts a seduction by telling a story about previous events that may or may not have occurred in the potential seducer’s world.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, we cannot escape the effects of “reading backwards” when we return to nineteenth-century narratives. While I cannot read Ibsen’s play or Balzac’s story without wondering whether Hilda and the narrator of Sarrasine are storytellers who use their stories to accomplish their goals, both narratives are ambiguous in this respect and can be read—or in the nineteenth century could have been read—with less skepticism.

14. Although my emphasis here is on the ways in which this passage defers readers’ understanding of the narrator’s desire for Mme de Rochefide, her primary role in this extremely beautifully constructed story is, I suggest, to serve as a lens through which to show how horrifying the events of the narrator’s story appear to a first-time listener.

15. As Ross Chambers discerns, the narration is not fully restricted to Sarrasine’s focalization all the way to the end of the telling. Chambers locates the change as beginning after the narrator’s companion’s second interruption, after which she and readers are “free[d] . . . from absolute subjugation to Sarrasine’s point of view” (“Sarrasine and the Impact of Art,” 228). His example, two paragraphs later in Balzac’s text, is the response to Vitagliani’s telling Sarrasine, “Go ahead; you need fear no rivals here” (Balzac, 243, *331). Chambers perceives, and draws attention to, “the shift in narrative point of view which is now able to notice (although Sarrasine does not) the malicious smiles which accompany Vitagliani’s equivocal remark” (Chambers, 229).

Sarrasine illustrates both situations in which the distinction between voice and focalization seems most useful: where one character’s conceptions and perceptions are revealed in someone else’s words (in
Sarrasine, in the contained narrative), and where a character’s perceptions and conceptions at the time of an ongoing set of events are revealed in that character’s words at a later time (in Sarrasine, in the framing narrative, in which the narrator maintains suspense by revealing no more than he knew at the time of the events he describes).

16. Meir Sternberg, in his analysis of the interplay between narrative’s two sequences (representation and fabula), discerns three possible effects: suspense, curiosity, and surprise. The latter two, he notes, “involve manipulations of the past, which the tale communicates in a sequence discontinuous with the happening. Perceptibly so, for curiosity: knowing that we do not know, we go forward with our mind on the gapped antecedents . . . For surprise, however, the narrative first unobtrusively gaps or twists its chronology, then unexpectedly discloses to us our misreading and enforces a corrective rereading in late re-cognition” (“How Narrativity Makes a Difference,” 117). The long-deferred information about la Zambinella’s early life exemplifies “surprise.”

17. I cite the early version of this essay because in the revised version (in Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering [1978, 218]) Sternberg leaves out the phrase in which he suggests that a quasi-mimetic explanation for gaps may be motivated by a desire to keep readers satisfied, which is an important idea in the argument I am developing.

18. Often, in plays and films, a character tells a story, or the contents of a letter, a diary, or a message left on an answering machine are revealed (examples of what Perry describes as “a block of information transmitted from one character to another” [39–40]). Sometimes, in plays and films, characters who identify themselves as narrators appear in the opening scene (indicating that everything subsequent is narrated) or in the concluding scene (indicating that everything preceding has been narrated). In addition to relatively simple examples like these, the ontological status of the source of the narration in film and drama, as well as specific strategies for skewing information from one character’s perspective rather than another, has received much sophisticated treatment and been the subject of arguments that I need not enter here.

19. For an analysis of borderline cases—sequels and prequels, characters who migrate from one writer’s novel to another writer’s novel—see, for example, “Epilogue: Fictional Worlds in Transduction: Postmodern Rewrites” in Lubomír Doleček’s Heterocosmica.

20. Perry continues: “it is not only the relative weight of items in the following stages which is affected. . . . The details of the sequel are assimilated as best they can into a prepared framework where they undergo an assimilative change of meaning: had this material stood on its own it would have had other implications than those now activated” (“Literary Dynamics,” 50; his emphasis). An “assimilative change of meaning,” I suggest, is a way of describing the effect of a configuration on interpretations of events that are perceived in relation to it.

Roy Jay Nelson describes a process of decision-making that affects further decision-making even at later stages in one’s reading: “In mid-novel, already a sizable portion of the histoire [fabula] exists for readers,
while a large segment of the récit [representation] is still ‘inexistent,’ unknown to them. The histoire which exists for us at the midpoint of a novel is, of course, still fluid, subject to revision as we alter our hypotheses on the basis of later data. But all our efforts will be bent toward making it congeal, and to that end we will be building a lecture [interpretation], also fluid, hypothetical, aimed at grasping the purposes behind the histoire. . . . To be sure, the lecture needs the data from [the fabula we construct] to exist, but it does not require all the data and may begin growing from a very few early events. As it begins to solidify, making the reader ‘closed-minded,’ it influences the mental elaboration of the histoire (Causality and Narrative in French Fiction, 222).

21. There is of course also a recency effect, but its influence seems more readily understood, and thus less pernicious, than that of the primacy effect.

22. In a study that looks at how readers of news reports update information in response to subsequent reports of the same event, Herre van Oostendorp cites earlier researchers’ findings indicating that “audiences tend to hear what they want to hear” and that “readers have difficulty eliminating incorrect or obsolete information,” and summarizes the results of his own research which “suggest that it is very difficult to completely discredit an old perspective, and to exchange that for a new perspective. Readers seem to prefer to skip the information that is needed in order to update their old model or perspective” (“Holding onto Established Viewpoints,” 175, 187).

23. Per Nykrog asks in addition two related questions: for whom does the narrator write, and why does the narrator give Mme de Rochefide the last word (“On Seeing and Nothingness: Balzac’s Sarrasine,” 439)? Of course Nykrog recognizes (as do I) that the story we read was written not by the narrator but by Balzac, which in no way lessens the interesting speculation his questions raise about the character narrator’s motivation.

24. “Un roman: c’est un miroir qu’on promène le long d’un chemin,” cited by Henri Beyle, who published his major novels under the pseudonym “Stendhal,” as the epigraph to chapter 13 of his novel Le Rouge et le noir (1830). Although Stendhal attributes the epigraph to “Saint-Réal,” scholars have been unable to locate the source and generally assume that Stendhal wrote it himself.

25. In The Postmodern Condition, Jean-François Lyotard posits and analyzes “grand” narratives of legitimation. These master-narratives (abstract but pervasive sets of judgments or worldviews) can influence readers’ interpretations of written narratives, as well as individuals’ interpretations of events perceived in the world.

26. The primacy effect may even come into play to preserve the new interpretation. The psychoanalyst Donald P. Spence points to the effects of formulating an interpretation in words as a way to explain that a memory—even an altered memory or a memory of an event that did not occur—once accepted as factual often persists, even if further pertinent information is acquired: “[T]he analyst’s construction of a childhood
event can lead the patient to remember it differently if he remembered it at all; and if he had no access to the event, to form a new memory for the first time. Within his private domain, the newly remembered event acts and feels like any other memory; thus it becomes true. Once this kind of memory has been created, its roots in the patient’s historical past become almost irrelevant, and even if it were objectively disconfirmed (by, for example, discovering an old letter or hearing from a long-lost neighbor), its subjective truth value would probably continue” (Narrative Truth and Historical Truth, 166–67).

27. See Marie-Laure Ryan’s Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory, especially chapter 6. Ryan introduces the idea that narrative worlds are modally stratified and include, in addition to the domain regarded as actual by the characters, the modalized worlds (wishes, dreams, etc.) of individual characters. Ryan’s recognition of these strata guides my understanding of what readers (listeners, viewers) need to be able to distinguish to construct a fabula.

Notes to Chapter 7

1. Not all the novels that make it impossible for readers to construct a chronological fabula include images or narrativized accounts of images. See, for example, the catalog that Brian Richardson offers in “Between Story and Discourse” of strategies that violate realistic temporality. Richardson concludes his analysis by proposing that “[t]he most urgent task of narrative theory is to construct a poetics of nonmimetic fiction that can finally do full justice to the literature of our time” (59). My hope is that the theory I introduce in this chapter and the next will contribute to that endeavor.

2. In other words I am analyzing a single discrete image (rather than a film, a collection of photographs, or a photonovel) that represents one event or situation (rather than a multi-episodic artwork—a painting or drawing that depicts on one surface two or more events). For a fine analysis of the narrativity of multi-episodic paintings, see Wendy Steiner’s Pictures of Romance.

3. In an earlier article I argued that the single scene that a painting or photograph offers can be understood as a compressed discourse (or “compressed sju et” in the terminology of that article) because it influences interpretations even more strongly than the initial scene in a narrative does. In a narrative, the importance of the first scene is heightened for interpreters through the primacy effect: our tendency to accept as valid the information we are initially given, even when that information is contradicted later in the same message (see chapter 6). When we read narratives, however, the effect of the initial information may gradually weaken as we amass further information during our progress through the text. Because paintings and photographs, in contrast, remain frozen before our gaze, the primacy of the visually represented moment retains a dominance that cannot be undermined by information presented subsequently, since
the information a painting offers is presented in its entirety all at once ("Implications of Narrative in Painting and Photography").

4. Göran Sonesson describes, as one among other varieties of pictorial narrativity, the “single, static picture [that is] recognizable as a possible intermediary scene of whole classes of (usually trivial) \textit{action schemes}.” Further, in his fine article on the discrete image considered from the perspective of narrative theory, he argues that several of the features that have been thought to enhance narrativity (that make us judge a story a \textit{good} story) are displayed at least as effectively through visual as through verbal representation: external rather than internal events, actions rather than happenings, events involving an agent and a patient, even disnarrated elements (events that could have happened but did not—since images in a series can lead viewers to understand what is happening in one scene in a way that a later scene indicates retrospectively to have been inaccurate) ("Mute Narratives," 245, 246)

Werner Wolf explains that captions can refer to “a cultural ‘script’ which supplies the temporal dimension necessary for a narrative interpretation.” An example he offers is “the script ‘Saint Nicholas’s Feast.’ As an expression of the Christian concept of personal responsibility for one’s acts to a metaphysical agency it involves a pre-history (the previous year), an expectation and an ‘event,’ in which the reward for, and/or punishment of, the behaviour in the ‘pre-history’ is administered by the ‘saint’—and hence this script contains the central narratemes in the field of ‘narrative forms of experience’: chronology, causality and teleology.” ("Narrative and Narrativity," 191)

5. See also Mark D. Stansbury-O’Donnell’s analysis of how Barthes’s concept of indices proper and informants translate to visual art (\textit{Pictorial Narrative in Ancient Greek Art}, 20–21). Stansbury-O’Donnell’s book offers an excellent detailed analysis of the process of responding to a visual artwork by constructing a narrative—and then often reconstructing it differently if new information becomes available or because cultural expectations change.

6. For Roland Barthes, a depicted scene can suggest a fragmentary \textit{fabula} even without indications of a human or anthropomorphic being—if he can imagine himself in the scene: “For me, photographs of landscape (urban or country) must be \textit{habitable}, not visitable. This longing to inhabit . . . is fantasmatic, deriving from a kind of second sight which seems to bear me forward to a utopian time, or to carry me back to somewhere in myself . . . Looking at these landscapes of predilection, it is as if \textit{I were certain of having been there or of going there}” (\textit{Camera Lucida}, 39–40; Barthes’s italics).

7. Brian McHale draws attention, in comments on an earlier version of this chapter, to “a linguistic detail that [the poems by Yeats and Browning] share and that in both cases (though in different ways) reveals the speakers’ situations: ‘there’ in Yeats, ‘there’ vs. ‘this’ (‘this gaudy flower’) in Browning. Powerfully, though almost subliminally, the deictics establish the speakers’ positions relative to what once was (Browning) or what will be (Yeats) in an elsewhere that each poem specifies.”
8. As Peter J. Rabinowitz correctly notes in comments on an earlier version of this chapter, in White’s example a single event is viewed in different sequences, whereas in Twain’s example a single painting is interpreted as representing several different events. While the historian maintains the identity of the event, the novelist narrativizes the represented scene. Both nonetheless recognize the correlation between the meaning of an event and its position in a sequence.

9. Ruth Ronen draws upon possible-world theories to explain the range of possibilities fiction offers: “Fictional worlds allow, in principle at least, radical deviations from the regularities of time in the actual world. That is, fictional worlds do not necessarily obey rules of the physical operation of time in ‘the world as it is.’ Thus, fictional worlds can include time paradoxes where time is presented as reversible or bilateral” (Possible Worlds, 202). I am grateful to Brian Richardson for drawing my attention to this passage, part of which he cites (“Beyond Story and Discourse,” 48).

10. Tamar Yacobi draws attention to the prior representation that an ekphrastic account re-represents by speaking of ekphrasis as a re-presentation: “The one work’s representation of the world then becomes the other’s re-presentation, a mimesis in the second degree” (“Pictorial Models,” 600). On the effects of re-representing in one medium an artwork in another medium, see Kafalenos, “The Power of Double Coding.”

Notes to Chapter 8

1. Intriguingly, Spence explains in detail the stages of the interpretative process through which a patient transforms a visually remembered scene or a dream into the ekphrastic account told to the analyst. He reminds us that Barthes describes the photograph as a “continuous message”: a message that comes to us uninterpreted by the brush or pencil marks that already partition a drawing or painting into discrete units and thereby guide what viewers see (Barthes, “The Photographic Message,” 17–20; “Rhetoric of the Image,” 43). Patients’ visual memories of past events and of dreams, Spence suggests, resemble photographs. How the patient partitions the visual memory is “capricious and selective” and will affect the associations it suggests. Once a partitioned element is named, the word that is chosen will arouse its own network of associations. Moreover, these associations, Spence argues, “if they are sufficiently compelling, will tend to supplant the image” (Narrative Truth, 67, 57).

2. See Kafalenos, “Reading Visual Art.”

3. The page numbers of Robbe-Grillet’s novel that I cite here and subsequently are from the edition of Richard Howard’s translation presently in print: La Maison de Rendez-Vous and Djinn: Two Novels, published in one volume by Grove. Anyone having access to the first edition of the translation can find these passages on pp. 83, 66 (see also 11–12), 114–15, and 115. Those reading the initial French edition (Les Editions de Minuit, 1965) will find the equivalent passages on pp. 119–20, 97–98.
In my analysis of these passages I treat as interchangeable the names Lauren, Loraine, and Loreen, and the names Marchat and Marchant. In doing so I am oversimplifying a narrative world in which, as Jean Ricardou describes it (referring to La Maison de Rendez-vous and a novel by Pinget), “[w]hat is commonly unique (a given character, a given event) is subjected to the dislocation of contradictory variants; what is ordinarily diverse (several characters, several events) is subjected to the assimilation of odd resemblances. The fiction excludes perfect singularity as well as absolute plurality” (Pour une théorie, 262; my translation, Ricardou’s emphasis).


5. Brian McHale demonstrates moreover that still scenes, when animated, often illicitly transgress ontological boundaries. In La Maison de Rendez-vous, for instance, in one of McHale’s examples, “a magazine-cover illustration in the hands of a street-sweeper develops into an apparently ‘real’ scene at Lady Ava’s luxurious villa.” Similarly, he points out, “dynamic episodes which have evolved illicitly from static representations often collapse back into ‘stills’” (Postmodernist Fiction, 118). Lubomír Dole□el includes shifting ontological orders in his summary of the contradictions the novel constructs: “(1) one and the same event is introduced in several conflicting versions; (2) a place (Hong Kong) is and is not the setting of the novel; (3) the same events are ordered in reversed temporal sequence (A precedes B, B precedes A); and (4) one and the same world entity recurs in several modes of existence—as a literary fictional fact, as a theater performance, as a sculpture, as a painting” (Heterocosmica, 164).

6. In an analysis of hybrid messages that contain both images and words, Roland Barthes says that “all images are polysemous; they imply, underlying their signifiers, a ‘floating chain’ of signifieds, the reader able to choose some and ignore others.” The linguistic message, he continues, provides anchorage: “the text directs the reader through the signifieds of the image, causing him to avoid some and receive others; by means of an often-subtle dispatching, it remote-controls him towards a meaning chosen in advance” (“Rhetoric of the Image,” 39–40; Barthes’s emphasis).

7. Published in 1975 under the title La Belle Captive: roman (Brussels: Cosmos Textes), the French edition includes color reproductions of a number of Magritte’s paintings. In the English translation, published by the University of California Press in 1995, Magritte’s paintings are all in black and white. For detailed information about the making of this novel and Robbe-Grillet’s other collaborative hybrid works from the 1970s, as well as the so-called assemblage novels in which Robbe-Grillet republished the texts of the hybrid works but this time without the images, see Bruce Morrissette, Intertextual Assemblage in Robbe-Grillet from Topology to the Golden Triangle.

8. Logically, because the visual artworks in Sebald’s novel are photographs, rather than paintings or drawings, they cannot represent the same places, objects, and beings as the text of the novel does. As a result
of the photographic process and unlike other forms of visual representation, a photograph attests to the past existence in the same world of the referent of which it is an emanation. A photograph that we can see in our world requires a referent in our world; Sebald’s novel is said to be fiction—that is, a representation of a narrative world that is not our world. Thus the referents of the photographs and of the words exist in different worlds—our world for the photographs and a fictional world for the text. Even when the text describes a photograph of a girl with a dog in her lap, the photograph that follows it that shows a girl with a dog in her lap is not that photograph. The photograph that we see is of a girl who once existed in our world. The photograph described in the text is of a girl who once existed in the narrative world. In fiction, a photograph of a character (or an object or a place) in the narrative world can be viewed by characters in the narrative world; it can be represented in a novel through ekphrasis, but it cannot be viewed by readers in our world.

9. In Roland Barthes’s terms, the writer, like the bricoleur, sees the meaning [le sens] of events by relating them: “by trying fragments of events together . . . by tirelessly transforming these events into functions” (“Literature and Discontinuity,” 182; his emphasis). Narrative can be considered a procedure for interpreting events by perceiving them in a sequence.