

## **How to Do Things with Narrative**

# **Narratologia**

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## **Volume 60**

# How to Do Things with Narrative

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Cognitive and Diachronic Perspectives

Edited by  
Jan Alber and Greta Olson

In collaboration with  
Birte Christ

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Festschrift for Monika Fludernik  
on the occasion of her sixtieth birthday

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Jan Alber and Greta Olson

## Monika Fludernik and the Invitation to Do Things with Narrative

This collection of essays seeks to combine narratological analyses with an investigation of the ideological ramifications of the use of narrative strategies.<sup>1</sup> As the anthology's title indicates, the overarching question asked here is how to do things with narrative.<sup>2</sup> The essays that follow this introduction do not posit any intrinsic or stable connection between narrative techniques, on the one hand, and world views, on the other. Instead, the articles collected here demonstrate that world views are always expressed through specific formal strategies. This insight leads to the question of why these particular techniques (rather than others) are utilized. The contributors to this volume operate on the basis of the "Proteus Principle," which assumes "many-to-many correspondences between linguistic form and representational function[s]" (Sternberg 1982, 112).

All of the essays printed here emphasize the relevance of theoretical concepts that were developed by Monika Fludernik, who has been Professor of English Literature at the University of Freiburg in Germany since 1994. They focus either on her contributions to narrative theory or her books and articles that emphasize the extra-textual and political implications of narrative research. While some contributions deal with Fludernik's notion of experientiality (Caracciolo, Duffield) or the resulting development of a cognitive narratology (Müller, Schmid), others relate to her work on you-narratives and address the uses of the second-person singular pronoun in contemporary television series (Birke and Warhol). In addition, some essays respond to Fludernik's call for a diachronization of narratology and look at specific manifestations of narrative in the Middle Ages (von Contzen), the

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1 For Wolf Schmid, the ideological perspective of a narrative encompasses factors such as "knowledge, way of thinking, evaluative position and intellectual horizon" (2010, 101). In this anthology, we look at what Seymour Chatman would call the "attitudinal function[s]" or "slant[s]" (1986, 197) of Anglophone narratives. The term 'narrative strategies' cuts across the distinction between story (the *what?* of narrative) and discourse (the *how?* of narrative). The contributions all deal with the purpose or 'point' of the interactions between narrative content and narrative form.

2 Subsequent to the editors' conceptualization of this volume, Janine Utell's *Engagements with Narrative* (2016) was published, the introduction to which is entitled "How to do things with narrative." We wish to acknowledge the overlap and also to point out the similarly pragmatic spirit of Utell's work in considering how best to use narrative analysis to interpret textual as well as other forms of human activity.

Renaissance (Nandi), and the nineteenth century (Lanser). Philippe Carrard relates to Fludernik's work on factual narratives by zooming in on the specific connections between historiographic discourse and narratology.

Responding to the ideological implications of Fludernik's research, Ansgar and Vera Nünning investigate the overlap between the fields of narrative studies and what has come to be known as 'salutogenesis,' i.e., a focus on factors that support one's health and well-being. Benjamin Kohlmann traces the discursive afterlife of *Muße* (i.e., leisure understood as freedom from economic constraint and as a marker of social distinction) in nineteenth-century prose narratives. While Kerstin Fest investigates the central ambivalence of the concept of leisure in Frances Brooke's eighteenth-century novel *The Excursion* (1777), Margarete Rubik, by contrast, addresses the representation and role of imprisonment in Emma Donoghue's novel *Room* (2010). Collectively, the articles all employ Fludernik's concepts to illustrate how narratives function individually and in relation to their specific form-function strategies. Yet they also attend to the ideological functions of narrative elements by pointing to how narrative techniques shape all manner of human activity and forms of knowledge.

Let us explain the theoretical concepts on which the contributions are based in greater detail. In *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* (1996), Fludernik rejects all traditional plot-based concepts of narrativity and equates narrativity with experientiality.<sup>3</sup> For her, narrativity is situated in an organic frame of embodied and evaluative experientiality. Fludernik defines experientiality as "the quasi-mimetic evocation of 'real-life experience'" (1996, 12), and argues that it is "established by the reader in the reading process" (1996, 36). She points out that experientiality, like everything else in narrative, reflects a cognitive schema of embodiedness that relates to human existence and human concerns. In Fludernik's model, there can be narratives without plot, but there cannot be any narratives without a human experiencer. The fictional existence of an anthropomorphic experiencer is the *sine qua non* for the constitution of narrativity. Embodiment (or embodiedness) – our physical being in the world – constitutes the most basic feature of experientiality. Everything that happens in fictional narratives has its ultimate roots in someone's embodied experience of the world, which is necessarily situated in a specific time and space frame.

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3 In 1998, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* won the Perkins Prize for the book that makes the most significant contribution to the study of narrative. The prize is awarded by the International Society for the Study of Narrative (ISSN).

Fludernik also argues that readers narrativize texts on the basis of cognitive parameters that are derived from their real-world experiences.<sup>4</sup> They thereby establish experientiality in the reading process. The categories and criteria of ‘natural’ narratology are summarized in a four-level model. Fludernik’s *level I* includes the pretextual real-life schemata of action and experience such as the schema of agency as goal-oriented process or reaction to the unexpected, the configuration of experienced and evaluated occurrence, and the ‘natural’ comprehension of observed event processes as well as their supposed cause-and-effect explanations (1996, 43). Fludernik’s *level II* introduces parameters of narrative mediation that provide access to narratives. On this level she distinguishes between the real-world scripts of TELLING and REFLECTING, the real-world schema of VIEWING, and the access to one’s own experiences (EXPERIENCING).<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Fludernik situates the schema of ACTION or ACTING on *level II*. This schema includes not only understandings of goal-oriented human action, but, in the process of narrativization, additionally invokes the entire processuality of event and action series.

Fludernik’s *level III* constitutes a fine-tuning of *level II* through well-known ‘naturally’ occurring storytelling situations, generic criteria and narratological concepts. Generic models consist of the relationship between the teller and the audience as well as the told, including institutionalization, tradition as a memory trace, performance – as the most important constitutive feature of ‘natural’ narrative –, and the distinction between elaborated and simple oral storytelling. *Level III* also features generic parameters such as the concept of the Gothic novel (1996, 44–45). Finally, Fludernik’s *level IV* is that of narrativization, the level on which the parameters from *levels I* to *III* are utilized in order to grasp, and usually transform textual inconsistencies and oddities into a coherent whole (1996, 46).

*Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology* has played a crucial role in the development of a cognitive narratology, an approach that focusses specifically on “the mental states, capacities, and dispositions that provide grounds for – or conversely, are grounded in – narrative experiences” (Herman 2014, 46; see also Fludernik

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4 Frames and schemata are static cognitive parameters, whereas scripts are dynamic. “Frames basically deal with situations such as seeing a room or making a promise while scripts cover standard action sequences such as playing a game of football, going to a birthday party, or eating in a restaurant” (Jahn 2005, 69). Fludernik uses these three terms interchangeably because they all refer to cognitive parameters in which some kind of knowledge is stored.

5 The idea behind these scripts of narrative mediation is that we know what it is like to tell stories (TELLING), to reflect upon questions and problems (REFLECTING), to observe scenes and give neutral reports of them (VIEWING), and to live through pleasant and unpleasant experiences (EXPERIENCING).

2010c).<sup>6</sup> Fludernik's model also allows for a reconceptualization of traditional narratological concepts. For example, she argues that fictional first-person narratives have their roots in spontaneous oral stories of personal experience, while fictional third-person narratives go back to oral stories of vicarious experience. Furthermore, Fludernik rethinks classical narratological taxonomies on the basis of cognitive scripts such as TELLING (which plays a role in Stanzel's authorial as well as the first-person narrative situation), VIEWING (which is relevant in cases of what Genette calls external focalization), EXPERIENCING (which plays a role in Stanzel's reflector-mode narratives), and REFLECTING (which is relevant with regard to self-reflexive postmodernist narrators).

The main criticisms of Fludernik's cognitive model concern the universality of the proposed set-up and the diachronic aspect of narrativization, i.e., the interplay of cognitive frames and scripts and the development of new forms of literary fiction (see Fludernik 2003b and 2010d). At the same time, however, 'natural' narratology sparked off new developments such as unnatural narratology (see Alber 2016b) and second-generation cognitive narratology. Narratologists such as Jan Alber, Stefan Iversen, Maria Mäkelä, Henrik Skov Nielsen, and Brian Richardson try to come to terms with unnatural textual phenomena that transcend our real-world experience, but they also all explicitly state that they are "inspired by and indebted to Fludernik's approach" (Alber et al. 2012, 371).<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Karin Kukkonen and Marco Caracciolo acknowledge that what they call their "second-generation" cognitive work, which emphasizes the "enactive, embedded, embodied, and extended qualities of the mind" (2014, 261), is based on "first-generation" cognitive narratologists like Fludernik (2014, 263). To put this slightly differently, the recent foci on evaluative enactment, the embodied mind, the experiential feel, sensorimotor skills, and practical engagements concerning the question of 'what it is like' to have a certain experience, develop the already existing cognitive groundwork further (see also Caracciolo 2014, 47–48).<sup>8</sup>

Even though Fludernik successfully developed a comprehensive new narratological model by redefining narrativity in terms of experientiality, she has never

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6 The term *cognitive narratology* was first used by Manfred Jahn (1997). Further representatives of this approach are Jan Alber, Marco Caracciolo, Richard Gerrig, David Herman, Patrick Colm Hogan, Karin Kukkonen, Alan Palmer, Ralf Schneider, Peter Stockwell, Sven Strasen, and Lisa Zunshine.

7 See also the debate about the unnatural in the journal *Narrative* (Fludernik 2012).

8 Fludernik is not entirely happy with the dichotomy between first- and second-generation cognitive narratology. Instead, she argues that Kukkonen and Caracciolo "foreground *one* (original) strand in the cognitive science" (2014a, 406) while there are also many others.



lost sight of the particular and special qualities of specific narratives.<sup>9</sup> Fludernik maintains a strong interest in odd, weird, or otherwise outstanding narrative phenomena, as her studies on the historical present tense (1991), free indirect discourse (1993a), you-narratives (1993b, 1994a, 1994b, and 2011b), we-narratives (2011b), they-narratives (2017b), metalepsis (2003c), descriptive lists and list descriptions (2016), as well as narratological postmodernisms (1996, 269–310; 2000a; 2001) attest. In this context, we would also like to mention her work on the narrativity of drama (2008b).

Moreover, Fludernik's narratological thinking is outspokenly diachronic. She is interested in the historical development of narrative forms. In her article "The Diachronization of Narratology," for instance, she writes that "a reorientation of narratology in the direction of diachronic inquiry is now on the cards – no longer as a weird antiquarian interest but as a vital and exciting new area of research." Fludernik then goes on to offer her own "programme for diachronic narratological study" by providing "some guidelines for the prospectors keen to participate in this paradigm shift" (2003a, 332). More specifically, she investigates changes in narrative beginnings as well as metafictional commentary and attendant scene shifts from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century (see also Fludernik 2011a, 2011d, 2014b, and 2014c).

A final narratological area of expertise concerns the relationship between factual and fictional narratives. It is not easy to define factual narratives. Thus Jean-Marie Schaeffer proposes the following three ways to distinguish between the two. According to the semantic definition, "factual narrative *is* referential whereas fictional narrative has no reference (at least not in 'our' world)"; according to the syntactic one, "factual narrative and fictional narrative can be distinguished by their logico-linguistic syntax"; and, according to the pragmatic definition, "factual narrative advances *claims* of referential truthfulness whereas fictional narrative advances no such claims" (2014, 179). In contrast to Schaeffer, Fludernik refuses to conceptualize the relationship between fictional and factual narratives in terms of a strict binary opposition. Instead, she proposes a more flexible and sliding-scale range between the two. As she writes: "rather than sending fictionality into narratological exile from factual narratives, the opportunity provided by studying factual storytelling should result in a grasp of the overlaps, continuities, and hybridizations, aligned with the factuality/fictionality continuum" (2013, 134; see also Fludernik et al. 2015). She is primarily

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<sup>9</sup> In terms of overviews of narratological developments, see Fludernik 2005a and 2009 and Alber and Fludernik 2010.

interested in literary factual narratives that involve an aesthetic-stylistic appreciation (such as certain letters, diaries, autobiographies, and histories).

Monika Fludernik is best known for her paradigm-breaking work on ‘natural’ narratology, her reconceptualization of narrative on the basis of experientiality, and her insistence on understanding narrative within a diachronic framework. Yet we wish to argue that the extra-textual and political trajectories of her scholarship should not be underestimated. Here, her research stands in synecdochically for a larger trend in the humanities and social sciences, in particular, but also to a lesser degree in the natural sciences. This is to understand and analyze the entire range of human activities as well as forms of world-making as governed by processes of narrativization. A narrative-based concept of knowledge formation has led to what has been called the ‘narrative turn,’ which began in the 1980s and continues until this day. Fludernik’s quite substantial work on a narrative conceptualization of law and legal practice, including punishment, is indicative of this trend (Fludernik and Olson 2004a and 2004b, Fludernik 2008a and 2014d). In particular, Fludernik has examined the implications of narrative and metaphorical representations of imprisonment and crime from the medieval period forward in fictional and non-fictional texts (2004a, 2005b, 2005c, 2010, 2017a). This includes not only an interest in written texts but also an investigation of the cultural-political work that televisual texts concerning crime have on attitudes towards punitivity (Fludernik 2004b; Fludernik and Brandenstein 2009). As she demonstrates in *Imagining the Prison: Carceral Metaphors in Fact, Fiction, and Fantasy* (under review), images of imprisonment in narrative and metaphor play central roles in shaping attitudes relating to punitivity, imprisonment, trust in given legal cultures, and ethnicity/race- and gender-related forms of social confinement.

Taking a closer look at this extensive study and some of the earlier texts that contributed to its development helps to demonstrate how narrative and form-focused analyses such as those performed by Fludernik can contribute to various kinds of social critique. In a central move, Fludernik’s *Imagining the Prison* goes beyond the Foucauldian periodization that says that prior to roughly 1800 the emphasis was on punishing the criminalized person’s body publicly, whereas afterwards the emphasis shifted to forms of imprisonment based on surveillance and self-surveillance. As in Foucault’s reading of Bentham’s Panopticon, self-surveillance serves as a metaphor for the self-disciplining techniques that individuals now practice on themselves (Foucault 1979 [1975]). In an emphasis on continuity between forms of punishment in the old gaol and new penitentiary types of prison institutions, Fludernik shows that prisons remain effective tools with

which the state exercises violent control over the disempowered, and this violence reflects on dominant class structures within a given society.

As in her earlier work on the carceral imaginary (Fludernik 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2005b, 2005c), *Imagining the Prison* reveals how images of prison unveil larger attitudes about imprisonment, individual rights, and their legitimacy within a given legal environment. Significantly, the author draws readers' attention to the ideological work of representations of imprisonment in both narrative and metaphor. In another hallmark of her original work, Fludernik's prison study demonstrates overlaps between narrative and metaphorical language use and topoi (see also Fludernik 2010a) to show how the real conditions of imprisonment in various historical settings often stand in radical contradiction to the topoi with which these conditions are presented in fictional and non-fictional literary texts.

Yet it is not only in the fields of critical legal studies, crime, and prison research that Fludernik has shown how narrative analysis has repercussions for critical analyses of unjust power relations. Her work on postcolonial fictions has importantly led to a revision of concepts of hybridity (1998a, 1998b, 2000b, 2002 [1998], Fludernik and Nandi 2001) as well as those surrounding alterity (2003d, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2004d). In general, she has demonstrated how narrative perspective, particularly within colonial scenarios and their aftermaths, reflect, reproduce, and conversely may also challenge prevailing power relations. Thus narrative situatedness bespeaks a speaker's or focalizer's relative state of empowerment or disempowerment within a given communicative system (1999, 2003d, 2011c). In this way Fludernik's work relates to that of Susan Lanser and others, who have pointed out that one's narrative stance may represent an anti-hegemonic response to power (Lanser 1981, 1992). It is not then incidental that Fludernik has called for a better articulation of postcolonial narratology (1996). Further, her work on metaphor as a form of ideological articulation has also been pioneering. Since the editors of this volume are also engaged in using narratological insights to perform social critique (Olson and Copland 2016, Alber 2016a), we assert that the political aspect of Fludernik's work may ultimately have as large an impact on scholarship as her more classic narratological research.

No single volume, no matter how ambitious in scope, could do justice to the breadth of Monika Fludernik's scholarly pursuits. Specifically, Fludernik's research in the fields of linguistics and stylistics is not adequately represented in the contributions to this volume, although her foundation in linguistics forms the backbone of her work on narrative, metaphor, and cognition. Fludernik's attention to the smallest units of language, for instance, her work on pronouns, address, deixis, and discourse markers, has informed her nuanced reexaminations

of narratological models in general and her refinement of conceptualizations of focalization and free indirect discourse in particular.

We would like to close this introduction by summarizing the individual articles in this volume. Several of the contributions focus on experientiality or the cognitive project as a whole. This includes Marco Caracciolo who, for instance, extends Fludernik's focus on experientiality by dealing with the question of how narratives can elicit distinct moods. Specifically, he shows how two crucial features of experientiality – namely, evaluative dynamics and embodiment – influence the affective dimension of narrative engagements. For Caracciolo, mood serves as a 'protointerpretation,' an equivalent – in the affective domain – to the more sophisticated interpretations that we produce and exchange through language. Hilary Duffield, in turn, elaborates on Fludernik's notion of experientiality from a different angle. She looks at three films by Hitchcock – *Spellbound* (1945), *Vertigo* (1958), and *Marnie* (1964) – to investigate what she calls 'enigmatic experientiality,' i.e., cases in which we can see the experiential result of somebody's trauma visualized on the screen, but do not know its story-based cause. Wolfgang G. Müller analyzes the uses of irony in Jane Austen's *oeuvre* from a cognitive-narratological perspective to demonstrate how Austen's large-scale use of free indirect discourse is strongly gendered and thereby privileges female consciousness. Finally, Wolf Schmid provides an in-depth discussion of the ways in which cognitive narratologists deal with fictional minds. He argues that they often overemphasize the importance of mental functioning and thus calls for a renewed focus on events and actions.

Other contributors to this volume respond to Fludernik's call for a diachronization of narratology. Eva von Contzen, for example, analyzes speech and consciousness representations in ancient and medieval narratives. She demonstrates that there are hardly any passages that provide insight into the minds of the characters in premodern texts. Von Contzen develops a new model of analysis that also takes the fact into consideration that many characters in premodern narratives are taken from previous literary and cultural traditions. Miriam Nandi deals with the interplay between narrative and identity in early modern diaries by Lady Anne Clifford, Ralph Josselin, and Samuel Pepys. She shows that diaries are not coherent, teleological narratives; rather, they typically construct serial, sequential 'mini-narratives' that are open-ended and lack closure. Yet they still create concordance and durability and bring the disparate elements of life together in a 'synthetic' whole. Susan Lanser, in turn, looks at the diachronization of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847). More specifically, she addresses Brontë's creation of a narratee that evokes a "new culture in which telling one's story to strangers becomes the vehicle not only for the novel as an instrument of social change." With

references to the interpellation of the reader-figure in *Jane Eyre* and references to her earlier work on the gendering of personal voice in fiction, Lanser makes a case for how diachronic narratology involves an awareness of ideology as well as an intersectional approach to materialist histories of narrative: “In short, we can put into narratological practice the truism that no text, however recent, lives outside history.” Concluding this group of essays, Philippe Carrard continues Fludernik’s analyses of factual narratives by looking at current scholarly historiography. He attends to the question of which features of classical narratology can be preserved and which ones can be discarded or marginalized in the context of such an analysis.

Rooted in Fludernik’s work on you-narratives, Dorothee Birke and Robyn Warhol’s essay on the use of direct address in recent television series has implications that go beyond a critical medial reception of narratological insights into second-person address. Their essay demonstrates that direct address is also employed to signal the sophisticated self-referential televisual strategies of what has not unproblematically been categorized as ‘quality’ television. Ansgar and Vera Nünning show that narratives and storytelling have a number of tangible health benefits; there is a considerable conceptual overlap between the fields of narrative studies and ‘salutogenesis.’ Benjamin Kohlmann and Kerstin Fest investigate how eighteenth- and nineteenth-century prose narratives negotiate the ambivalent phenomenon of *Muße* (leisure). Margarete Rubik draws on Fludernik’s tools for the analysis of prison narratives by looking at Emma Donoghue’s novel *Room* (2010). In his epilogue to this volume, Franz K. Stanzel praises the ways in which Fludernik’s cognitive narratology further develops tools and concepts of structuralist narratology.

This volume documents Monika Fludernik’s work in narratology and in narrative and metaphor analysis as a platform for societal critique. Her work has been central to advancing both cognitive and diachronic trajectories within narratological research. Yet it also intersects with developments in intermedial narratology, narratology and affect, and, for instance, new conceptualizations of fictionality. As the last part of this introduction has argued, we view Fludernik’s extensive work on the topoi and narratives of imprisonment and crime to be centrally important to comprehending affective responses to these phenomena. We understand both strands of Monika Fludernik’s work to be indicative of the many things one can do with narrative, and we offer this volume as an invitation to our sister and fellow narratologists to consider ever more things worth doing.

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# Perspectives on Narrative and Mood

## 1 Introduction

In *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology*, Monika Fludernik defines the experientiality of narrative as “the quasi-mimetic evocation of ‘real-life experience’” (1996, 9). The term “evocation” is less clear-cut than ‘representation,’ and subtly shifts the emphasis from the narrative itself (where “real-life experience” would be represented) to the narrative’s effects on its readers (or viewers, listeners, etc.). When something is represented, we know what it is and where to pinpoint it; when something is evoked, it hovers intangibly between the evoker, the evoked object, and the audience of the evocation. That intangibility is one of the defining traits of mood – my topic in this chapter – and a phenomenon that, I will argue, plays a significant role in our encounters with narrative.<sup>1</sup>

Two further features of experientiality, both articulated in the introduction to *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology*, pave the way for the approach to mood that I will offer in the following pages. Experientiality, we read, “includes this sense of moving with time, of the *now* of experience, but this almost static level of temporal experience is supplemented by more dynamic and evaluative factors” (1996, 21). The “sense of moving with time” is more than a matter of narrative representation: it arises in the interaction between the text itself and the audience, whose experience is temporally patterned via “dynamic and evaluative factors.” Finally, experientiality goes hand in hand with the embodiment of our cognitive makeup: “Embodiedness evokes all the parameters of a real-life schema of existence which always has to be situated in a specific time and space frame, and the motivational and experiential aspects of human actionality likewise relate to the knowledge about one’s physical presence in the world” (Fludernik 1996, 22). We have, again, the evocation of the “parameters of a real-life schema of existence,” which reflect the inextricable link between human cognition and the physical structure of our bodies.

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<sup>1</sup> I discuss mood as a psychological phenomenon and not in the sense of Gérard Genette’s category of “narrative mood” (1980, Ch. 4). In broad strokes, I will be defining mood as a relatively stable emotional tone that has no clear-cut intentional object (see below).