

## **Narrative and Argumentative: Towards a Joint Framework for Examining Everyday Discourse**

*Mehmet Ali Üzelgün, Merve Aktar, Hossein Turner, Rahmi Oruç<sup>1</sup>*

Since what may be called the “narrative turn” in the 1980s, it is widely recognized that narrative constitutes a fundamental conceptual and analytical framework for the understanding of human experiences and existence (Bakhtin, 1981; Bruner, 1986; Culler, 1984; Fisher, 1984; Ricoeur, 1981). Accordingly, we not only make sense of and give order to our aleatoric and fragmented experiences through stories, but also maintain a coherent sense of self in the otherwise fragmented roles and positions in which we find ourselves.

As fundamental as the above are the relations and interactions we enter in our daily lives in constructing a sense of agency and identity, as well as in coordinating with others to reach otherwise unattainable goals. The exchange of positions in these interactions, and reasons justifying the adoption of those goals, are captured by another paramount conceptual and analytical framework of argument (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969; Toulmin, 1958).

This paper explores the links between the two fundamental discourse analytic perspectives - narrative and argumentative - and the possibilities of their combined analytic potential. The potential of their intersection, we cautiously contend, is greater when circumscribed within clearly identified boundaries. Hence the paper also aims to identify when a narrative argument or argumentative narration framework can prove more useful, and some of the ways it could reach its potential. This is done with the awareness that in many contexts, what is understood as narrative and argumentative are often blended together. Thus, it is critical that we start by distinguishing what is meant by an argumentative perspective and by a narrative perspective.

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# 1 The two perspectives: argumentative and narrative

## 1.1 Defining argument narrowly and broadly

The most basic defining feature of an argument is the relation between two statements, a claim (conclusion) and a reason (premise), where the latter warrants some justification for the former (Üzelgün, Küçükural, & Oruç, 2020). The relation is thus designated as “reasoned”, and reasoning is carried out to respond to some doubt or disagreement, by way of granting support to a particular conclusion. As a normative theory, argumentation is concerned not just with the salient patterns of relation between the two statements, but also with its cogency, i.e., “reasonableness” or “soundness”. The standards for assessing reasonableness in different patterns of an argument are continuously developed and revised in the scholarly community, suggesting that the standards are very much context and field-dependent (Toulmin, 1958; Walton, Macagno, and Reed, 2008).

Defined as above, little room is left for a consideration of the links between the argumentative and the narrative. As Kvernbekk (2003) as well as Govier and Ayers (2012) observe, the premise-conclusion structure, and the logical standards with which its cogency is assessed, do not grant stories— alongside their narrative formats— any such argumentative reasonableness. Instead, these authors associate narrative with non-functional *charm* and *vividness* brought into an otherwise sober weighing of options or alternatives, which, in both cases, are located outside argumentative cogency, at best decorative to its logical core (Tindale, 2017).

A second, broader definition of argument is then required. Argument— as a relation between two statements— was introduced above as context as well as field-dependent. This means that an argument’s internal structure is subject to change depending on where it takes place, and to whom it is addressed. In this interactional framework, an argument thus becomes more than a warranting structure: it now involves a process of persons – with preferences, criticisms, and histories – who need to be convinced by the reasoning involved in that structure. In other words, argument in the second sense is interactional and dynamic, comprising its rhetorical aspects otherwise left outside (Tindale, 2017). Here, argument – as a relation between two speakers – approximates a “disagreement” or “dissensual interaction” between contending parties. The first sense of argument becomes a (verbal) unit that is exchanged within a (social) interaction, a process, as its second sense (Lewinski & Mohammed, 2016).

Defined broadly as involving persons and situations, the second sense of argument entails regarding warrants as conceptions of value located in audiences (Kock, 2009). In this broader outlook, an argument and a storyline can have some intersecting properties. There are several steps that can be taken, and four modalities are identified in this paper to relate the two perspectives to natural language. Before moving forth with these, we first provide a context for understanding the “narrative”.

## 1.2 Defining narrative narrowly and broadly

Derived from the Latin “narrare:” “to tell<sup>2</sup>,” narrative in whatever medium or genre, and whether oral, visual, or verbal, is humankind’s principal means of expression and communication. The theoretical core of the ongoing debates on “narrative” and its myriad forms and dimensions is the first work of literary criticism recognized by the western literary tradition, Aristotle’s *Poetics* (347–342 B.C.), in which the Ancient Greek philosopher defined “poetry”, then understood to mean “literature”, as a natural phenomenon with an intrinsic worth and natural purpose– function– in human life. This function was two-fold: literature was a method of *producing*<sup>3</sup> alongside imparting knowledge, as well as being a source of pleasure owing to its imitation (mimesis) of life and the external world. As a term, narrative in this context specifically refers to the epic genre, the *prose* element in the holy trinity of tragedy (drama), epic (prose), and lyric (verse).

The ontological and epistemological significance of narrative-making carries across temporal and disciplinary boundaries, as it is the act of “assimilate”-ing diverse, fragmented experiences and information, of “describe(-ing) or explain(-ing) things they (humans) could not otherwise explain”.<sup>4</sup> In this sense, narrative as a noun is a container of ages of cultural-social knowledge, as well as a

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<sup>2</sup> Marcel Danesi (2000). *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Semiotics, Media, and Communications*. 157.

<sup>3</sup> From José Angel García Landa, “Introduction” to *Aristotle’s Poetics* (1987): “Poetry finds a place in Aristotle’s general scheme of human activity. He divides human activity into three areas: thought (theoría), action (práxis) and production (poíesis).<sup>2</sup> Poetry and the arts he includes under the head of imitation (mimesis) which is one of the divisions of production. In Book VIII of the *Politics*, Aristotle speaks of the educative value of visual, musical and verbal arts. Both the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics* can be considered to be expansions of this view. Poetry may have its own internal laws, but “for Aristotle as much as for Plato, it is an art to be praised or blamed, only in its relation to the whole human being of whom it is both the instrument and the reflection.” We might say that Aristotle sets literature free from Plato’s radical moralism and didacticism, while he still expects it to be conformable to a moral understanding of the world”. (pp. 2-3)

<sup>4</sup> Mythologist David Adams Leeming’s “Introduction” to his book, *The World of Myth* (1990).

structure of making sense of things as they happen in time and space. As a verb, narrative is the act of reasoning, of weaving causality and coherence into a (non-)continuous series of events. As Adams Leeming asserts, "in its explanatory or etiological aspect myth is also a form of history, philosophy, theology, or science. ... The anthropologist or sociologist will properly study a myth as the expression of a social ethos" (1990, p. 4). Of course, the intention here is not to conflate myth, epic, and narrative, but to provide a snippet-view of the taken-for-granted, buried-in-history roots of the socio-literary construct we take to be narrative and narrative discourse.

While there are different disciplinary and methodological approaches to answering the question of what constitutes a narrative, the basic contention is that there is the presence of a meaningful sequence of events, and there is the telling of this meaningful sequence of events in a particular way; i.e., the story and the discourse. In this section, the issue of narrative logic— if we may call it that— will be discussed through theorists and philosophers who not only focus on the methods and drives rather than the structures or forms of narrative, their works resonate in terms of narrative's relation to truth-value and the real<sup>5</sup>.

A concise, critical breakdown of the term is attributable to narratologist Gérard Genette, who begins the "Introduction" of *Narrative Discourse* (1980) with a breakdown of its myriad senses:

A first meaning—the one nowadays most evident and most central in common usage—has *narrative* refer to the narrative statement, the oral or written discourse that undertakes to tell of an event or a series of events:

...

A second meaning, less widespread but current today among analysts and theoreticians of narrative content, has *narrative* refer to the succession of events, real or fictitious, that are the subjects of this discourse, and to their several relations of linking, opposition, repetition, etc. ...

A third meaning, apparently the oldest, has *narrative* refer once more to an event: not, however, the event that is recounted, but the event that consists of someone recounting something: the act of narrating taken in itself (1980, p. 25–26).

The first and third meanings that Genette offers is central both to his analysis and to the study at hand, dealing with the style and means of "telling" a sequence of events, as well as who told them how, in what order. He observes that "(w)ithout a narrating act, therefore, there is no statement, and sometimes even no narrative content" (p. 26), questioning how past criticism almost

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<sup>5</sup> The "real" or "reality" here is used in a general sense to constitute the external physical world of being and action, as differentiated from the subjective experiences and mental constructions of individuals.

exclusively focused on content as the main thing worth analyzing. This occupies the second meaning provided, narrative as content, rather than the “medium” (p. 26), while the third and last refers to the individual act of elocution, telling, or commentary.

Genette, his predecessor and influence, French (post-)structuralist philosopher Roland Barthes, as well as Genette’s American contemporary, literary critic Jonathan Culler, are major names (among more) who hone in on the formative element of the ways of telling, in addressing the gap in the dominant understanding of narrative posed by the Russian Formalists. Associated with the scientific investigation of “the distinction between *fabula* (“story-stuff”<sup>6</sup>, mainly thematic) and *sjuzet* (plot), and ... the deconstruction of *fabula* into a series of narrative motifs and functions”<sup>7</sup> (2006), the Formalists worked to map out a universal theory of story structures with a neo-Aristotelian emphasis on plot, at the expense of its medium, or what Genette distinguishes as the “narrative situation or its instance”<sup>8</sup> (p. 37).

Narrative situation as the holistic set of conditions in which events are elocuted is defined by Barthes in a more reader-response approach (1987), as a “body of protocols according to which the narrative is consumed” (p. 264–265). This shifting emphasis on how narrative language orients as well as re-captures its recipients has its manifestation in contemporary discourse analysis. According to Kjersti Flottum and Oyvind Gjerstad (2017), narrative has two senses: 1- Telling of events in the past or an imaginative future. In its first sense the narrative has a story and a form. The story is the content, while the form is the way it is told. 2- In its second sense narrative is a kind of plastic term employed to “refer to various kinds of language representations of some length” (2017).

The hermeneutic significance of these representations is most clearly delineated by Culler, who explains that what “readers actually encounter ... is the discourse of a text: the plot is something readers *infer* from the text, and the idea of elementary events out of which this plot was formed is also an inference or construction of the reader. If we talk about events that have been shaped into a plot, it is to highlight the meaningfulness and organization of the plot” (1997). Similarly to Barthes and Genette, Culler follows up on discourse methods by listing and explaining, first, the main elements of the narration: “who speaks”... “to whom,” “when,” “what language,” “with what authority.” And second, the

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<sup>6</sup> Quoted from Boris Eichenbaum, “The Formal Method” (1926), page 12, as it appeared in *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (2004), eds. Rivkin and Ryan.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted from Umberto Eco, *On Literature* (2006). Page 244.

<sup>8</sup> A footnote is provided for this term, which is quoted partially here: “The narrating instance, then, refers to something like the narrating situation, the narrative matrix—the entire set of conditions (human, temporal, spatial) out of which a narrative statement is produced.” (37).

"focalization" of the text: "temporal," "distance and speed," "limitations of knowledge" (1997).

Culler elaborates on the distinction between narrative discourse and scientific discourse specifically– as it is characterized by the rules of logic, and informs the structure of our traditional understanding of arguments and argumentation– in terms of their relation to the flow of human life:

Literary and cultural theory have increasingly claimed cultural centrality for narrative. Stories, the argument goes, are the main way we make sense of things, whether in thinking of our lives as a progression leading somewhere or in telling ourselves what is happening in the world. Scientific explanation makes sense of things by placing them under laws – whenever *a* and *b* obtains, *c* will occur – but life is generally not like that. It follows not a scientific logic of cause and effect but the logic of story, where to understand is to conceive of how one thing leads to another, how something might have come about: how Maggie ended up selling software in Singapore, how George's father came to give him a car (ibid).

To start, the concept of narrative is observed to follow the (il-)logic of "life–" that messy flux of our existence that remains incomplete and unknowable until the moment of death. While formal arguments or syllogisms may operate relatively independently of context, circumstance, and the dynamics of interaction, the narratives we create and recreate are designed to make sense of moments of time and experience– how our lives are "progressing" and ultimately "leading (us) somewhere" through a series of "one thing leads to another;" in other words, a narrative chain of causality. As will be dealt with shortly, this narrative chain of causality– what Fisher (1987) calls "narrative coherence," is an issue in itself. And, in this scheme of things, Culler maintains that history and historical explanation likewise adheres to the realm of narrative and the "basic human drive" of making meaning (1997).

This phenomenon is examined from a cognitive perspective, for example, by the renowned psychologist Jerome Bruner in the early nineties, beginning with his article, "The Narrative Construction of Reality." In so far as it directly relates to clarifying the current topic, Bruner asks "how it (narrative) operates as an instrument of mind in the construction of reality" (1991, p. 6). This reality includes the realm of both anthropological and historical accounts of temporal and cultural phenomena. Ten characteristics are identified and elaborated in terms of understanding narrative as method rather than structure.

Bruner begins by distinguishing this method from the scientific, as expected, and like the preceding and contemporary literary scholars and philosophers, posits that "(n)arratives, then, are a version of reality whose acceptability is governed by convention and "narrative necessity" rather than by empirical verification and logical requiredness, although ironically we have no compunction about calling

stories true or false" (Bruner, 1991, p. 4-5). Narrative necessity is important to note here, coupled with the concept of "narrative banalization" (p. 9) as they are derived from the work of Barthes, and resonate across the board. Basically, stories are largely constituted by temporally as well as culturally established, accepted conventions so that readers are cognitively primed towards certain plot and story structures. What Barthes, Bruner, Brooks et al. draw critical attention to is the fallacy, if not interpretive danger, of this priming – the necessity of the coherence of experience and meaning.

Bruner especially dwells on this danger when explicating the tenth characteristic, "narrative accrual" (1991, p. 19), wherein he italicizes the ideas of "bogus *historical-causal entailment*" and "*coherence by contemporaneity*" (ibid). In other words, the cases wherein storytellers, readers, anthropologists, historians, and, well, basically humans, unanimously tend to attribute a sequence of major events to one individual cause (the former), and to equate the correlation of events with their causation (the latter). Brooks calls this "retrospective prophecy"<sup>9</sup> (1984), while Felski (2015) provocatively develops on this concept in terms of literary criticism as itself a manifestation of detective fiction. In other words, literary critics dig through narrative evidence to excavate and rather judgmentally point a finger at the ideological purpose or function of a text.

Barthes, however, is the thematic and eloquent precursor in exposing the artificiality– if not fallacy– of narrative causality within the time and sequential order of events presented. He states that "there is a strong presumption that the mainspring of the narrative activity is to be traced to that very confusion between consecutiveness and consequence, what-comes-*after* being read in a narrative as what-is-*caused-by*. Narrative would then be a systematic application of the logical fallacy denounced by scholasticism under the formula *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, which may well be the motto of Destiny whose "language," after all, finds its expression in narrative; and this "telescoping" of logic and temporality is mainly achieved by the framework of cardinal functions" (Barthes, 1987, p. 248). According to Barthes, function refers to small details, or "units" (p. 248) in texts that cannot stand alone but when accumulated, contribute to building the force of the plot's formative action; for example, the color of a sweater, the age and appearance of a character, a seemingly nonchalant reference to a prop (ibid).

To return to and wrap up Culler's perspective at this crucial point: the core of the issue is that in a narrative text, it is easy to conflate what 'really' happened

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<sup>9</sup> The point that a self-contained, complete narrative is only possible when the action and events in questions are complete, and the narration figuratively looks back at it has since long been established. Kvernbekk (2003) reminds readers of this in treatment of narrative: "One crucially important fact about narratives that virtually all narrativists agree about is that the emplotment or configurational act takes place in hindsight" (p. 6).

with what the narrative plot lays out through minor and seemingly “cardinal” details as cause and effect. Primarily using the infamous example of *Oedipus Rex*, Culler exposes how “the convergence of discursive forces makes it essential that he (Oedipus) become the murderer of Laius, and he yields to this force of meaning. ... Here meaning is not the effect of a prior cause but its cause” (Culler, 1984, p. 121). This article presents how close reading of the tragic play yields the fact that the issue of Oedipus’s guilt is never actually proven, but that both Oedipus and the viewer or reader succumb to the necessity of “narrative coherence” (p. 121), arriving– or jumping– to the conclusion that Oedipus is the murderer.

The combined forces of Apollo’s prophecies concerning both characters, Oedipus’s admission to having killed an old man, and the fact that Laius is his father, exert a momentum that makes it ‘natural’ that the story ends this way; it is a form of historical-causal entailment. This is the power of “discursive forces” as opposed to narrative genres, which code the way an audience receives a text, as the way the story is told follows particular, culturally established patterns that account for how things happen<sup>10</sup> (think of the play’s genre, tragedy, and of other genres like comedies, epics, and epistolary forms). Narrative discourse cognitively and culturally primes the mind throughout the plot course, in the most seemingly natural way, towards a particular way of seeing things, people, and meaning.

Barthes and Bruner explicitly draw attention to the naturalizing force of the codes and discourses combined, with the former noting that his “society tends to de-emphasize the coding of the narrative situation as much as possible: there are innumerable narrational devices which try to naturalize the ongoing narrative, artfully presenting it as the product of natural circumstances, and divesting it, as it were, of its decorum (1987). There is thus the curated likeness of a reasoned relationship between time, events, people and the motivations that they carry. In a less decorous vein, Culler bluntly states that “(t)hrough the knowledge they present, narratives police” (1997).

It is worthwhile, here, to reference Paula Olmos’s relatively recent study, “Narration as Argument,” as it investigates to what extent narrative discourse acts as argumentative discourse, from a philosophical perspective that replicates the dominant approach towards narrative. It is telling that on the first page, “non-explicitly-argumentative discourse” is broken down to mean “(merely) narrative” (2013, *emphasis added*). The implication is of narrative as non-substantive in the face of the substance of formal argumentation. But, her critique brings rhetorical nuance to the subject of how narrative discourse can nevertheless serve to convince:

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<sup>10</sup>The work of Russian Formalists, such as Todorov, Shklovsky, and Bakhtin, provide useful references as to the foundational structure patterns of literary and popular stories.



The specific means of persuasion used by exposition (description, narration) when presented in the adequate pragmatic situation for argumentative purposes is its manifest (intended, proposed and emphasized by the arguer; expected and scrutinized by her audience) *probabilitas*, credibility or plausibility (2013).

*Probabilitas* constitutes the power of the codes and discourse of *Oedipus Rex*, for example. We latch on to culturally embedded structures and mediums because they approximate what we perceive to be real. Since Classical thought, mimesis or the narrative mimicry of the real has been evaluated not only as persuasive, but as innately pleasurable.

According to Culler, this "pleasure of narrative is linked to desire. Plots tell of desire and what befalls it, but the movement of narrative itself is driven by desire in the form of 'epistemophilia', a desire to know: we want to discover secrets, to know the end, to find the truth" (1997). It is at this point that there is a complex, unstable contact between argument and narrative, which is the pursuit of truth.

Culler probes the core issue of truth towards the end of his discussion, saying that "the basic question for theory in the domain of narrative is this: is narrative a fundamental form of knowledge (giving knowledge of the world through its sense-making) or is it a rhetorical structure that distorts as much as it reveals?" (1997). The problem in attempting to answer this question is, as Culler acknowledges, is whether it is actually possible to distinguish between the world and the constructs of language: "But whether there is such authoritative knowledge separate from narrative is precisely what's at stake in the question of whether narrative is a source of knowledge or of illusion. So it seems likely that we cannot answer this question, if indeed it has an answer" (ibid). Given the embeddedness of human language and experience in what is called narrative, it is now relevant to reexamine how an argument and a storyline can have intersecting properties of knowledge and persuasion.

## 2 Narrative Argumentation

Identifying five generic patterns - description, explication, instruction, argumentation, and narration - with sufficiently distinct communicative functions, Reisigl (2020) warns that "we lose a lot of our analytical and practical potential if we do not recognize the differences between these patterns with their distinctive functions" (p. 2). The distinction between narrative and argument, specifically, has indeed been well-established. For example, according to Bruner (1991), audiences construe information in two different cognitive modes: the paradigmatic and the narrative. The paradigmatic mode is about

understanding facts, weighing evidence, and evaluating arguments, whereas the narrative mode is about understanding causes and the succession of events and experiences. Accordingly, while the audience of an argument will encounter “factual”, “evidential”, or “logical” connections, the audience of a narrative will find the events as connected chronologically as well as the actors connecting them, with their motives.

However, as mentioned in the introduction, the rigidity of the boundary depends on the definitions of the two terms - how broadly each is defined. The “logical” being reserved for argumentation, and the “motives” being reserved for narration cannot be too strictly applied; narratives have a logic, and some arguments comprise motives. While we concur with Reisigl (2020) that the distinct patterns and perspectives of argumentation and narration should be used where they fit, we also observe that the boundaries between the two are crossed in natural language use on many occasions. There are a number of boundary cases that cannot be avoided as fringe, and which can motivate research into the rhetorical aspect of narratives and the contextual, field-dependent aspects of argumentation.

According to Plumer (2017), there is a “huge theoretical obstacle standing in the way of regarding a nonfictional narration as an argument” (p. 64). This is because such narratives are concerned with veracity only, i.e., they simply relate to a particular thing that happened in a past time. Fictional narratives, on the other hand, possess a creativity and a concern with universals rather than the particulars of relating actual events. Yet, focusing mainly on nonfictional narratives, as we do throughout this paper, one may point out that argument from example, or argument from analogy resort essentially to the same pattern. Rather than collapsing the two perspectives, our point here is that whether a piece of text is regarded as narration or argumentation will depend on the very perspective with which the analyst examines the text and its context. That is, narrative and argument are distinct and co-existing entities, and an utterance can be regarded both as part of an argumentation and part of a narration.

Seen this way, several options are available in the consideration of the relationship between the argumentative and the narrative. In this section they are summarized in the the following five subsections:

2.1 *The argument encapsulates the narrative.* A story constitutes part of an argument, with its elements that function as premises.

2.2 *The argument encapsulates the narrative.* Narration and argumentation are co-existing forms in that the narrative is an inherently argumentative, rhetorical format.

2.3 *The narrative encapsulates the argument.* An argument may be part of a narrative in the sense that the argument has a certain role to play in the storyline.

2.4 *The narrative encapsulates the argument.* Arguments and narratives are omnipresent in each social encounter in that each argument is a reiteration of previous positions over the bedrock of social imaginaries that is narrative in form.

2.5 Narrative as a paradigm that overarches and subsumes the argumentative (Fisher, 1984).

## 2.1 Narrative as a premise in an argument

One of the most obvious ways in which the two perspectives may meet is when a story is narrated in the context of a disagreement, in order to support a particular conclusion. In this modality, argumentation is the broader term, and the narration features as part of an argument, namely one of its premises. The narrative here becomes a vehicle of persuasion, through which speakers evoke and illustrate various cultural norms and values in an effort to indicate a particular course of action or preference of value (Bex & Bench-Capon, 2017).

It is possible to see what Olmos (2015) calls “digressive stories” as one of the instances of a narrative being offered for a certain (argumentative) conclusion. As Olmos states, here the paradigm cases are argument from analogy, argument from example, and argument from precedent (Walton, Reed, & Macagno, 2008, cf. 314). In bringing similar, particular, and precedent cases to a discussion, the speaker carries the burden of linking those stories to the discussion, showing how they apply to a particular conclusion. As Olmos observes, the “moral” of the story can both be expressed explicitly, and be left to the audience to draw (see next Section).

There are, of course, contentions with respect to offering narratives as premises. Govier and Ayers (2012), in their analysis of parables, uncover two argumentative strategies that can potentially be employed: analogy and instantiation. However, they find issues and limitations in employing each strategy. Analogies involve comparisons of two entities which may involve differences that affect an argument’s cogency. Instantiation has the problem of being a poor or highly limited representation of a broader class. At least in the case of parables, accordingly, there appears to be no clear benefit from the argument assuming the form of a narrative. In the view of Govier and Ayers, the “form and interest” of the story distract the recipient from “attempting any task of logical assessment”, and narrative forms do not contribute to the cogency of the argument and the role of such forms is simply to add “vividness and appeal”.

According to Phelan (2017), narrative means “somebody telling somebody else on some occasion and for some purpose(s) that something happened”. Thus, the use of narrative is rhetorical in nature: Phelan considers narrative as an act which has a specified goal attached to it. A narrative is told with a particular aim

in mind. According to Phelan, such a definition "sidesteps the opposition between narrative-as-process and narrative-as-product". Narrative can function as a premise within an argument or a supplement to it. It can also function as "argument by another means". When this second form is employed, it implicitly shows that the arguer - and narrator - finds that narrative is a better way of persuasion than traditional analytical reasoning. We attend to this second use of narrative in the next section.

## 2.2 The (moral of a) story as an argumentative device

Once the second modality is established as a legitimate interface between the narrative and argumentative, the third comes as an extension to it: if stories serve as justifications or reasons for particular conclusions, this means they possess the potential to imply or convey those conclusions without them being in question or stated explicitly. Olmos introduces the three main types of expository rhetorical devices "in this sense (that there are) three "degrees" of exposition verging towards argument. A speaker, a writer, can use "structurally" discursive exposition in order to: a) please an audience; b) *simply* to develop a sequence of events or finally c) to seek conviction through the manifest plausibility of what is presented; and this is called *probabilis expositio*" (Olmos, 2013, p. 6-7). In other words, most - if not all - stories are delivered to a pragmatic context in which they acquire their meaning, and which can be explored to identify "an implicit meta-argument about the coincidence between discourse and reality via their own internal plausibility" (p. 12).

It can even be said that, in the mundane succession of events, a narrative is something that invites us to its completion - its link to the next event, its dialogicality. In this sense, whenever a story seems to hang in itself - without any morals or lessons featured by its narrator or derived from it in the immediate pragmatic context - it speaks to the present with particular conclusions through its mobilization of cultural values and norms. In other words, many narratives that cover the intersubjective realm have an enthymematic aspect: their power of depiction as well as persuasion depends on the extent to which they "fit" the lifeworld and cultural vocabulary of their audience. A specific narrative format that epitomizes a paradigm case in this regard is called the pending narrative (Törrönen, 2000, 2021). Pending narratives operate in rendering unknown and uncertain future pathways into more predictable and controllable ones, simultaneously inviting their audiences to take part in such definition and control (see Section 3.2).

For Phelan (2017), tellers and audiences are the constants of a narrative, while the rest are adjusted to these constants as necessary for their purposes. Thus, depending on the context and audience, the plot may be more important, or the character. The teller may have a certain purpose and audience which affects

their way of depicting causality, e.g., through cause-effect, analogy, etc. Narrative in Phelan's rhetorical schema has three components: Mimetic, Thematic, and Synthetic. The first concerns the way characters and events are represented. The second is the way different narrative elements– such as the characters, events– represent certain ideas or themes. And finally, the third, synthetic, refers to how the represented elements of a narrative perform their function<sup>11</sup>. While all three have repercussions for how narrative is performed and experienced, the third component is decisive in a story being told and construed argumentatively.

As soon as a storyline offered to account for something or implicitly in support of a conclusion is markedly challenged, the narrative becomes part of a disagreement, and thus explored argumentatively. In the next two sections we attend to how narratives turn to embrace disagreements and embody arguments.

## 2.3 Critical reasons and reactions within narratives

Look at op-eds, essay-films, documentaries, campaign ads– all formats typically associated with arguments and delivering messages. You will find, first of all, a story, characters, and within their relations, some lessons, criticisms, or a series of conclusions building a position. No text with a vision of social change will deliver arguments as a series of propositions from the get-go. Instead, they will embed them in a storyline, use the power of depicting the context, and provide a frame for the audience to look through. This does not mean that narration is inherently argumentative (see Section 2.2), but that the story provided works its way with a succession of arguments, or argumentative features.

In the third modality, narrative is thus conceived of in a broad sense and arguments play as its particulars. This type of relation follows from the the basic idea that a narrative may contain within it certain argumentative features: claims, criticisms, propositions evoking traditional argument forms (Dahlstrom, 2010; Hoeken & Hustinx, 2009; Schank & Berman, 2002). When a narrative contains these features, the question becomes whether they appear in a premise-conclusion format or whether the argumentative relations are inferable more or less directly from the story background.

According to Ayers (2010), a narrative's rhetorical extension can be construed as either (i) "an argument overtly offered by a story" or (ii) "an argument that the narrative as a whole expresses in a form or structure possibly unique to narratives" (pp. 2, 36-37). The second type is indirectly expressed in the story

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<sup>11</sup> Notice the similarities of Phelan's (2017) triadic schema and Bamberg's (2020) three levels of narrative positioning.

as a whole and thus needs to be interpreted and inferred by the respective audience. It thus overlaps with the modality discussed in 2.3 above. An example of the first type defined by Ayers would be a character in a novel becoming the mouthpiece conveying the claims or criticisms of the author. Two examples are the "gorilla" in Daniel Quinn's novel *Ishmael*, Howard Roark in Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*. Here the distinguishing factor from the modality above is that the argument(s) are incorporated in the story, be them criticisms, refutations, premises, as well as conclusions - the story is, so to say, made up of them, rather than making an argument itself.

## 2.4 Counter-narratives underlying argumentation

As in the section above, in this modality too, narratives are conceived broadly (such as meta-narratives) and arguments specifically: arguments arise within narratives – more precisely, between conflicting narratives. While in the modality above argumentation occurs within the telling of a story, here argumentation takes place in relation to a framing of the issue at hand by another narrative. That is, narratives approximate what discursive psychology calls interpretative repertoires (Wetherell, 1998), constituting the bedrock of the disagreement negotiated. In other words, following a particular narrative in looking at a certain event or phenomenon is akin to framing, in that it helps identify problems, indicate causes, responsibilities, and courses of action (Flottum and Gjerstad, 2017). While narrative provides the interpretative framework through which meaning and values are distributed among constituent actions, events and characters, argument becomes just one of the modes through which a narrative is reproduced, contested, adapted, and consolidated.

Due to such a conception being widespread, examples abound: In the context of the future imaginaries associated with the climate crisis, for instance, Segovia (2021) regards apocalyptic narratives as "fundamental objects through which we can think about our future" (p. 48). In a similar vein, Bowman and Germaine (2022) examine youth action on the climate crisis as "often mediated through cultural narratives", and see "intergenerational narratives" as regulating young people's political subjectivities (p. 7). When we think of narratives as constituting – or mediating – the language games and life-world of individuals, it is easy to see that people thinking within or through narratives are likely to disagree, and deeply at that. Üzelgün (2022) argues that, indeed, the notion of deep disagreement (Fogelin, 1985) that is recently stirring considerable scholarly debate in argumentation theory, can be readily grasped in relation to a narrative bedrock of social imagination and interpretation.

In social settings, we typically encounter official narratives and their alternatives, such as the official COVID-19 narrative backed by the World Health Organization, and various conspiracy narratives. In contesting the official

narrative, adherents of a counter-narrative can be more or less conscious about the narrative they attempt to deconstruct and delegitimize. Thus, this modality bears similarities to what Olmos (2015) calls arguments *about* narratives. These, in her words, are “assertions regarding narrative accounts of disputed facts”, and take the form of “what really happened is...”, involving considerations of source reliability (Olmos, 2015, p. 2). In terms of argument schemes, Olmos observes, this modality would typically involve arguments from a position to know, and arguments from witness testimony (p. 310).

The repeating argumentative elements such as claims, criticisms, and testimonies constitute a counter narrative only when some coherence among those elements is established (see Section 2.5). Only then they would have the force to challenge a master narrative. And to establish a narrative coherence of their own, such elements assume a whole range of forms and “tropes involving irony, intertextuality, inversion, reframing, double entendres, killer facts and many other techniques (Gabriel, 2016, p. 210).

## 2.5 Stories dispensing “good reasons”: The narrative paradigm

In the subfield of research that focuses on the relationship between narratives and arguments, a prominent figure is Fisher (1987), who developed a paradigmatic approach to argumentation in which he distinguished the “narrative paradigm” from what he termed the “rational world paradigm”. According to Fisher, the reasons given to justify certain thoughts, acts and feelings are the result of narratives that pertain to particular cultures, traditions, and societies. The process of reason-giving, even in scientific discourse for example, is influenced by the values, such as precision, efficiency, usefulness, that underpin the process of scientific enquiry (Fisher, 1994). Values in turn, according to Fisher, are derived from narratives which provide a society with “good reasons” for pursuing a certain type of activity, action, or line of thought. Fisher states that “good reasons” are the elements “that provide *warrants* for accepting or adhering to advice fostered by any form of communication that can be considered rhetorical” (Fisher, 1987, p. 57, our emphasis). This particular manifestation of reasoning is not limited to “clear-cut inferential or implicative structures” and moves beyond the confines of the rational world paradigm in which the process of reasoning is deemed restrictive to certain logical constructs that privilege more reasonable experts over most of society.

Fisher provides a set of critical questions that are used to scrutinize the values that lie within a particular narrative. The questions are concerned with whether:

- the values in a message are explicit or implicit
- the values are relevant to the decision that the message is asking the recipient to consider

- the consequence of adopting the values in terms of personal, interpersonal and social impacts
- the values are “confirmed or validated in one’s personal experiences, in the lives or statements of others whom one admires and respects, and in a conception of the best audience that one can conceive?”
- these values constitute “the ideal basis for human conduct?” (Fisher, 1987, p. 109).

These latter critical questions comprise the concept of “narrative fidelity” that Fisher applies to any particular discourse. This comprises one of the two criteria that constitute narrative rationality. The second criterion is known as “narrative coherence” and is concerned more with the formal features of a story.

Narrative coherence is measured via three main criteria. Structural coherence, material coherence, and characterological coherence. The first analyses the internal consistency of a story with respect to its plot and whether the elements of the story “hang together”. The second criterion, material coherence, is concerned with how a story or a form of discourse compares with other discourses, as well as how it compares with what lies in the audiences’ existing knowledge. If an audience has certain expectations about reality then the story is more likely to be believed. Yet, if certain relevant facts or important details are omitted, or if rival narratives or counter-arguments are ignored, or if other pertinent issues are brushed over then this means that the story is failing the test of material coherence. It has not accounted for all of its parts, be they explicit or implicit. Finally, characterological coherence is concerned with the reliability of the narrators and other characters present in the narrative or discourse. The decisions that a character makes impact his credibility or believability. If the actions that a character takes are contradictory or happen to change in unaccounted-for ways, then question marks may arise with respect to the credibility of those characters or agents. An important issue with respect to characterological coherence is the question of motive, as well as how motive interplays with the values that they reflect.

The narrative paradigm proposed in the 1980s that all discourse, no matter how rigorously presented, is essentially grounded in a historical and cultural context and coloured by human goals, values and beliefs. Logos and mythos are brought together under this paradigm, rather than partitioned into alternative modes of reasoning. Fisher’s approach became the subject of mixed scholarly reaction, with the paradigm subject to considerable criticism (e.g. Warnick, 1987; Rowland, 1988). Scholars of rhetoric, communication and argumentation have in recent years, however, come to incorporate some of Fisher’s ideas on narrative, though many reject Fisher’s over-arching paradigmatic approach (for e.g., see Bubikova-Moan, 2020; Olmos, 2015).



In sum, Fisher's narrative paradigm has huge rhetorical import in that it allows considering arguments and narratives together. We now continue by discussing four modalities through which argumentative and narrative perspectives can mutually benefit and enhance each other. While not exhaustive, the following are the fruitful possibilities emergent in our review of the literature on narrative argumentation.

## 3 Paths for future research

In this section we discuss some specific paths that future research on the relation between the narrative and the argumentative may take. What follows does not try to be an exhaustive list of pathways, rather we think they can be among the most fruitful in exploring the relation between the two perspectives.

### 3.1 Practical argument scheme: towards a narrative arrangement?

Practical argument – one of the most salient argument schemes – is the type of argument that has an action-relevant conclusion (e.g. consume less water) supported by some consideration of sorts (e.g. cheaper, good for the environment). Just like the prototypical narrative form, it centers on an action to be evaluated (van der Hoven, 2017). The last two decades have witnessed the efforts to render the practical argument an argument scheme that takes into account the discursive context in more and better ways (Audi, 2006; Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012; Lewinski, 2017; Rodrigues et al. 2019). For instance, the model for Political Discourse Analysis by Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) incorporates three more units to the typical *conclusion* (action) and *premise* (goal) structure: *circumstances*, *values*, and *means-goal*.

It is precisely by creating an interval between the *circumstances* (the agent is in today) and the *goal* (where the agent wants to be in some future), the model embraces an aspect of temporality in the structure of practical argument. While this is probably its most important aspect for the present purposes, the model also incorporates *values* as underpinning or justifying the *goal* premise, thereby accounting for relevant cultural aspects. Furthermore, the model also incorporates a *means-goal* premise that links the *goal* and the action-relevant *conclusion*, thereby making explicit the place of agency and choice between the (present) *circumstances* and (future) *goals*.

What seems left for a narrative perspective to take over seems merely to call the “agent” the “main character”. But let us highlight one detail drawing on Culler’s (1984) description of “the logic of story”. Accordingly, unlike a logic of cause-effect relations, the story logic is a place ...

... where to understand is to conceive of *how* one thing leads to another, *how* something might have come about: *how* Maggie ended up selling software in Singapore, *how* George’s father came to give him a car (Culler, 1984, p. 82, our emphases).

The crucial question of *how*, in the narrative paradigm, concerns understanding the reasons motivating the agents amongst the reasons and deeds of others, i.e., how the story unfolds. The Political Discourse Analysis model, described above, enables the analyst to capture the understanding of one’s reasons among alternative reasons; i.e., the *means-goal* is the analytic unit that registers how the agent is supposed to proceed from her *circumstances* to her *goals*. Further, one may insist, the question of *how*, as put by Culler above, is not just about the various means, alternatives, and choices, but rather about the underlying motives of the agents – ostensibly a deeper level of understanding involving the character’s continuity. If the question of how comprises the question of why, and the motivating reasons beyond the practical considerations, these reasons could be registered in the *values* premise substantiating the *goal* premise. It is thus possible to capture at least some aspects of the narrative logic in the revised models of practical argument.

The short discussion above does not mean to suggest that all narrative features readily submit themselves to the practical argumentation scheme. Neither does it suggest that the practical argument scheme should be transformed into a narrative model in order to better account for public political discourse and everyday communication. It does mean to suggest an affinity between the study of public political arguments that incorporates ever more context-dependent features, attending further into “informal” public logics, and the study of personal narratives that incorporates ever more normative and interactional features.

### 3.2 Pending narratives: transforming a reader or viewer into a character

As mentioned in Section 2.2, pending narratives (Törrönen, 2000, 2021) can be examined as a paradigm of rhetorical narrative formats. Pending narratives operate in transforming the unknown and uncanny future pathways into more predictable and controllable ones, simultaneously inviting their audience to take part in the relations of definition and control. The invitation constituted through a pending narrative hinges on a particular rendition of the state of affairs, which culminates in and depends on a decision to be taken by the audience. In other

words, pending narratives are essentially a tool to persuade social actors to participate in a particular (call for) action, and thus be characters or actors in a specific historical setting that is not yet fully closed.

*De te fabula narratur* - "of you the tale is told" summarizes an essential aspect of the pending narrative. That is, a story is pending as much as it invites or motivates its reader or viewer's participation as a character in the story. And, the more its recipients assume the role and positions ascribed to them in the actions and pathways that are pending, the more such narratives acquire normative strength and the power to transform social relations as well as the status quo.

The invitation – to particular kinds of audience – to become a character in a certain storyline is indeed a powerful rhetorical move that has enormous agential, political, psychological, ethical potential. Arguably, in a world in which the citizen's agency converges to absolute zero, while simultaneously mundane choices of the common person become the only viable political action, transforming blazé consumers into active subjects of history is one of the most crucial strategies.

Social change is an essential aspect of pending narratives in that they work best in contexts of crisis such as the COVID-19 Pandemic, and by moralizing the message or instilling it with emotion. In the words of Törrönen (2021), to enhance audience engagement to the pending action, the teller may "specify the kind of emotion that drives it, such as fear, anger, hate, pain, hope, fairness, love, solidarity, compassion, responsibility or gratitude" (p. 3).

The interactional level of a pending narrative is thus crucial in its success of persuading its audience to the role ascribed to them in the story. This also suggests the import of the reception process of pending narratives: their rhetorical success means the adequate construal of, alignment with, and adoption of the role ascribed to the audience. Following this line of thinking, in their study of narrative evaluations, Üzelgün and Oruç (2022) treat interview participants simultaneously as the critical audience of pending narratives, and as characters in the stories evaluated. This crucial but largely avoided aspect of argumentative discourse is addressed more closely in the next section.

### 3.3 Reception of narrative arguments

According to Bex and colleagues (2014), authorial intention<sup>12</sup> largely determines whether the story be considered as argumentation, explanation, entertainment

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<sup>12</sup> Authorial intention, of course, goes against the grain of post-structuralist criticism, closely associated with Barthes, which considers the notion – within textual analysis – a fallacy. It is impossible and regressive to fathom the motivations and goals of the writer

or some other type of discourse. Yet, at least for stories conveyed within certain social contexts, there is the dialectical element that both precedes and succeeds the telling of the story, which impacts the extent to which it is employed as argument as well as how it is received as argument. There is, in other words, the reception of a discourse pattern that contributes to its being classified as argumentative or narrative.

It is common knowledge that audiences do not receive messages passively. Readers, listeners, and viewers derive meaning, attribute beliefs, preferences, commitments, and sometimes construe stories or practical conclusions with the elements provided, by drawing on their personal and community history as well as the immediate situation (Tindale, 2015; Üzelgün, Fernandes-Jesus, & Küçükural, 2022; Wilson and Sperber, 1996). Among the practitioners of discourse reception, comprehension and meaning-production, cognitive psychologists have been amongst the most prominent. Accordingly, readers of narratives construct a variety of inferences concerning the possible meanings of the text that they encounter. These inferences form part of a referential situation model (Tapiero, 2007, p.189-90) that represents the attempts to coherently explain why certain situations, actions and events are present in the text.

To build their models, recipients of a text attempt to construct a representation that addresses the reader's goals, as coherent at both local and global levels, and that explains why actions, events, and states are mentioned in the text. Graesser et al (1994) define several levels that are constructed by audiences while interpreting narratives. These levels are linguistic and pertain to discourse:

The first level - the surface code - is concerned with the preservation of lexicon, syntax, intonation patterns, and so forth. Thus the word composition at this level looks at details down to syllables, morphemes, tense, aspect. In reality, the reader can only keep the surface code in their memory for a few seconds until the fine detail is lost and in its stead, a new form of meaning-interpretation arises.

This constitutes the second level – the text-base – and is essentially a reduced form of the surface code where the semantic meaning is preserved but the details are lost. Here the text is subject to a form of mental representation in the form of a series of structured propositions, which contain relationships between various objects, subjects, and predicates concerning events and actions in the storyworld.

The third level, or the situation model, is concerned with looking at the setting as well as the sequence of events in the narrative. A situation model may be applied to a particular story through the well-established concept of a plot

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or author. Rather, the focus shifts to the text or narrative and its recipient, wherein levels or horizons of meaning and signification may interact. This critique is embedded in our commentary.

structure. There are at least five proposed elements: Conflict, Goal, Action, Outcome, Consequence (Graesser et al, 2002; see also Burke, 1945). The situation model involves explicit and inferred information that fleshes out the plot and adds finer details such as spatial setting, the style and procedure of actions, props, objects, properties of objects, and traits of agents. Hence this is basically about the chronological order of episodes that is developed as a "mental microworld".

The fourth level, or the thematic point, is known as "the moral" or main message that emerges from the story. In discourse psychology there has been some difficulty in understanding the systematic process by which the thematic point of a story arises amidst the structural elements of the plot (for e.g., actions, goals, conflicts, consequences).

The fifth level, or agent perspective, is sometimes also called the character perspective in that each character views the storyworld from her point of view. Here crucial differences emanate from subtle choices in personal narrations. For example, while in the first-person perspective the narrator assumes the perspective of one of the agents, the third-person perspective creates a boundary between the characters and the omniscient narrator – an agent operating at the junction of the events, actions, states, and an imaginary audience.

The sixth level, genre or code, involves the classification of an interaction through which the story is told. A narrative is typically composed of numerous elements that constitute specific genres whose conventional features are known and recognised by audiences. Genre primes readers to certain processes, such as the mystery genre where there is an expectation held by the audience that the narrator will create narrative suspense, delaying to mention the culprit for as long as possible.

However, genres are broad, overgeneralizing categories, and the classification of . Semioticians like Barthes declare that "we must renounce structuring ... (a) text in large masses, as was done by classical rhetoric and by secondary-school explication" (1974, p. 11–12). He coins the term "codes" in his seminal essay, *S/Z* (1974), wherein he identifies and explicates the five universal semiotic elements that are common across genres and texts: the Hermeneutic (formal methods of identifying and deciphering or "disclosing" a textual "enigma"), Proairetic (elements of action that structure the plot), Semantic (the realm of implication and connotation, non-sequential; elements that show rather than tell information throughout text), Symbolic, and the Cultural ("references to a science or a body of knowledge (physical, physiological, medical, psychological, literary, historical, etc.) referred to, without going so far as to construct (or reconstruct) the culture they express") codes (p. 18–20).

The seventh and final level (the pragmatic context) concerns how the conveyance of the narrative is framed by the context in which it is told– what we may consider as the Cultural Code.

In this crucial delimitation of the possible meanings and messages of a story, the media of interaction acquires a more significant role. For example, if a story is conveyed in oral conversation then both the speaker and the audience can be clearly identified. However, if a story is produced in written form, then there is a temporal and spatial discrepancy between the author and the readers. In oral conversation, both of the respective rhetors are in a sense experiencing the story in the same location and at the same time. This is not the case with written narrative.

The process of telling a story is mainly concerned with how a speaker intends to convey it, as well her motivations in doing so. Yet, the audience is equally involved in the conveyance of a story, if not with intentions and motivations concerning their cognitive environment (Wilson and Sperber, 1996), and with the active construction of codes, models, genres, and messages. A story may thus undergo significant changes in content and form depending on the composition and type of its audience, and this constitutes a promising area of study of narrative rhetoric. This track of research is particularly relevant in working on social issues and on narratives of change– more specifically, pending narratives.

### 3.4 Normative Import of Narrative Argument for Argumentation Theory

In this paper, we attend to the narrative and the argumentative as *perspectives*. This means that narratology and argumentation make parts of a toolset available to the analyst. However, as each perspective comes with its own normative baggage, their unreflexive fusion may have drawbacks. In this section, we specifically acknowledge that the fusion of these normative baggages would both reward and trouble us with a novel normative import. The reward and the problem go both ways: from argumentation theory to narratology, and from narratology to argumentation theory.

Here, we focus mainly on the virtue approach to argumentation. We reckon that future research may show that the virtue approach will benefit from a “narrative turn” in argumentation studies, as the narrative turn necessitates the concern with character, which the virtue approach seeks to embrace both as a descriptive and a normative element of argumentation (Aberdein, 2010).

The virtue approach to argumentation holds that the arguing agent has conceptual priority over her acts (i.e., in producing an argument or partaking in a discussion). The conceptual priority thesis, therefore, leads to the idea that

when evaluating an argument, we should not confine ourselves to logical product or the dialogical interaction, but to turn to the agent (Aberdein and Cohen, 2016). The contention is that a good argument is the argument of a virtuous person. This vague description, however, draws two main critiques:

1- The virtue approach is an open call for the analysts to commit the *ad hominem fallacy*. Meaning, if we are to analyze the agent rather than the argument or the argumentation, are we not dealing with character traits that are neither sufficient nor relevant to the discussion? (Bowell and Kingsbury, 2013)

2- The virtue approach does not offer any empirical assessment criteria for the analysis of argumentation. This second critique does not have a beef with the conceptual priority of the agent over the act, but it simply demands a method to empirically assess the virtue of the agent to determine the goodness of an argument (Oruç, Sadek & Küçükural, *in review*).

The proponents of the approach answer back in various ways, ranging from complete denial of argumentative cogency as a norm, to the complete denial of an argument assessment framework for the virtue approach (see Paglieri, 2015). Strangely though, tapping into insights from a narrative perspective, or exploring the intersections of the narrative and the argumentative has not come to fore. If we hold that a certain discourse can be simultaneously characterized as part of argument and narrative, criticism(s) to the virtue approach might be adequately dealt with.

In response to the first criticism, we can concede that when viewed in the minimal conception of argument as a premise-conclusion structure, dealing with the character rather than the act is indeed a fallacy. However, we can add that a discourse (or the actions the discourse refers to) can be examined also as components of a narrative. Therefore, in response to the *ad hominem fallacy* charge, the analyst might respond that characterological coherence and fidelity to values (see Section 2.1) (thus the virtues) are internal components of her analysis of argumentative virtues that attend to both narrative and argumentative features of discourse. The link between character analysis and argumentative virtues can thus be established as a resource for the virtue argumentation theorist to explore.

Once it is accepted that from a virtue argumentation approach, character analysis should be conceived not as *ad hominem fallacy* but a legitimate form of argument assessment, the second critique is addressed as well. The second criticism, as mentioned above, holds that the virtue approach does not provide any empirical assessment criteria to evaluate the virtues and vices involved in an argumentative encounter. Insights for criteria regarding character analysis may be present in the form of characterological coherence and value

assessment, with the presupposition that, just as the other voices in a story, the narrator's voice has to be constructed as an essential element of discourse.

The virtue approach to argumentation is not the only approach that may benefit from the normative import of narrative argument. The process-based accounts of argumentation, such as pragma-dialectics (Van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004), may also expand and enrich its normative guidance by involving in its conception of argumentation the (dis)continuity of – or coherence among – one's standpoints. Emerging as a rebellion to formal, product-based accounts, the process-based theories of argumentation hold that an argument can not be reduced to premise-conclusion pairs. During argumentation, the antagonist and protagonist do more than posit standpoints or come up with arguments. That is, assertive speech acts are only part of other speech acts (for e.g., declaratives, commissives) that demand, concede or give orders to the other party. However, what narrative argument teaches us is that "the process of argumentation" can be more than the immediate interaction between parties. The subjective histories of parties, along with their former interactions, also have a role in argumentation. Then, a reformulation of "process" will be beneficial.

As noted, the rewards of the normative import ensuing from the intersection of narrative and argumentative analysis are two-sided. Narrative analysis can also benefit from some insights in argumentation theory as well, especially from its empirical aspirations. While we might easily grant that human beings are *homo narrans* and have almost inborn traits of narrative evaluation, the prevalent assumption is that little is known about how audiences "get" the moral of a story and draw conclusions for themselves. Linguists and philosophers like Barthes offer intricate theories of textual elements that, when combined, act to create a web of meaning for the recipient of the text. These include minute "functional units" (Barthes, 1975, p. 245) such as "nuclei" (1975, p. 248) that constitute "actual hinges of the narrative (p. 247): moments when a real choice presents itself, wherein the protagonist's or narrator's decision will structurally change or determine the course of events. We say minute to this powerful element, because oftentimes life-altering events are caused by little moments– Barthes provides the example of a telephone ringing (p. 248). Certain actions and choices lead to certain events and consequences, in ways that are culturally determined and reproduced. Continual exposure to textual codes and functions serves to imprint information and morals, in a kind of spirit of the age.

Understanding narrative evaluation has bearing upon the contemporary issues of coherence in narrative and argument, for example, and a more specific path for joining the forces of narrative and argumentative discourses could be through better understanding the narrative logic of coherence and fidelity. The prevalent 'problem' of how you methodize an innately meta-logical phenomenon could be addressed by thinking about how narrative evaluation can be understood as less intuitive and more methodical, through careful development of argumentative



toolsets. Indeed, as Fisher (1987) argues, people use elements of coherence and fidelity assessments as warrants for narrative arguments, but their use is highly subjective, leaving the analyst without an objective framework. Perhaps the communicative potential of narratives would be hampered to some extent, but this may be the price paid for an analyst-independent framework.

## 5 Conclusion

In this paper, we explored the intersections between what is termed the argumentative and the narrative. While some argumentation scholars' approaches do not grant space for narratives to be argumentative (e.g. Govier and Ayers 2012), others consider narrative in and of itself as rhetorical, so much so that argumentative reasoning and discourse can be relegated to constitute part of narrative logic. Fisher (1984), for example, subsumes argumentation analysis in his narrative assessment of the criterion of *fidelity*, along with the values that the narrator or the audience adhere to. Besides these perspectives, we discussed four modalities wherein narratives and arguments serve as "particulars" of one another, conceived broadly. These modalities show that considering a certain piece of text "narrative" or "argumentative" is a matter of perspective. This leads to the conclusion that both narratology and argumentation can occupy our toolkit when dealing with everyday discourse.

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