

## Selected Functions of Narrative Structures in the Process of Social and Cultural Communication<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** The art of narrative stems from the art of rhetoric and modes of persuasion and in this meaning is understood not just as a form of entertainment but also as a tool of communication. Any narrative communicates and conveys a message. Narrative is an important aspect of culture and as a ubiquitous component of human communication is conveyed by different works of art (literature, music, painting, sculpture), and illustrates events, emotions, phenomena and occurrences. Narrative as a form of communication involves its participants, a teller and a receiver of the message. The relation and the distance between the participants of the narrative communication process may have a different configuration and presents different effect of closeness and distance in narrative. In this meaning narrative is not just the art of telling stories, but it serves various functions, it communicates information, expresses emotions and personal events, transmits morals and cultural knowledge, provides entertainment and also helps in many ways to depict thoughts and feelings, along with disclosing the beauty of language. Narrative knowledge and narrative perception of social and cultural processes, is one of the most natural ways for a human being to acquire and organize their knowledge about the world. The ability to create narratives leads to a better understanding of the surrounding reality, and significantly influences the interpretation of social and cultural relationships.

**Keywords:** narrative, culture, communication, narrative structures, relationship, distance, closeness.

Any narrative can be considered to be a representation of a much greater realm of human creativity than just those different literary forms which come to mind when narrative becomes the subject of discussion. Narrative can be expressed in a variety of cultural activities such as different literary forms, painting, photography, music, sculpture, dance, movies and many more. It has become a form of intercultural communication, which is a product of the human mind and its ability to create and shape reality and fiction. According to Wygotski ([1934] 1989: 23), speech is a tool of social communication and is also a means of expressing thoughts and

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understanding the surrounding reality. Language and speech as the basic elements of the communication process are the characteristic domains of the human race. The process of human communication is characterised by the ability to have complex and conscious thoughts and a creative imagination. Wygotski (*ibidem*) states that speech fulfils two functions; communication and thinking, and speech is a product of the human intellect. According to Jakobson's (1960: 350) theory of communicative functions, speech or a sign in the process of communication fulfils at least one of six functions; referential (contextual information), aesthetic or poetic (auto reflection), emotive (self expressive), conative, phatic or metalinguistic. On the basis of the above statement it can be concluded that any narrative is a logically organized unit of speech or any other imaginative and creative human activity and is the product of complex and conscious thought fulfilling various functions, and it can be considered not just a means of communication conveying a message, news or information, but also a perfect tool for creating a relationship between writer and reader, between members of a community and between cultures. This stems from the fact that human thoughts, and their content, frequently take the form of narrative stories. Psychology and psycholinguistics pay particular attention to narrative as a creative form of communication between people in the form of stories (Trzebiński 2002). Narrative is about sharing experiences and it is a huge part of a person's relationship with their friends and colleagues. Narrative is a form of perceiving reality and understanding it. Surrounding events, happenings and situations are understood as stories, and people are seen as the heroes and characters of these stories. According to Flanagan (1992) narrative is a method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses of events which actually occurred. It is a story that is created in a constructive format such as a work of speech, writing, song, film, television, photography, theatre, music or painting that describes a sequence of fictional or non-fictional events. The word story may be used as a synonym of narrative, but can also be used to refer to the sequence of events described in a narrative. An important part of narration is the narrative mode, the set of methods used to communicate the narrative through the process called narration. Broadly defined, narration is one of four rhetorical modes of discourse, next to exposition, argumentation and description. More narrowly defined, it is a fiction-writing mode whereby the narrator communicates directly to the reader. Any narrative is an important aspect of culture. Many works of art (music, painting, sculpture) and most works of literature tell stories. Narratives can be considered as ubiquitous components of human communication, used as parables and examples to illustrate events, emotions, phenomena and occurrences. Owen Flanagan, a leading consciousness researcher,

writes that evidence strongly suggests that humans in all countries come to cast their own identity in some sort of narrative form (Flanagan 1992: 198).

If life is considered a series of situations and occurrences which are remembered as stories, we report these events as our own experienced stories. Narrative is a perfect way of expressing and conveying abstract and non-narrative knowledge. Narrative structure helps to connect facts, events, and happenings in a logical way and present it as a reasonable argumentation. In order to understand narrative as a process, one needs to examine its structure. Narrative, in literary discourse, and in its linear form, depicts and describes a character and his intentions. The character comes across many difficulties that he has to overcome on his way to achieve his final goal. These difficulties are the result of different occurrences and circumstances happening around the hero, and they often become a threat to a successful mission. In the process of narrative research, many forms of the realization of the above narrative structure can be found in literary discourse. The coexistence of the hero's goals, and the difficulties he comes across on the way to accomplish his goals, seem to be the core elements of the narrative structure. There are many models for the structures of story, some of them are easy to apply to novels and feature-length films but hard to apply to short stories. The models presented below are sometimes described as the structure of a "complete" story. In a real sense, this sort of structure is what makes a narrative text a story, and not just an incident or a series of related scenes. In fact it is the reader that appreciates narrative texts as structured and complete stories. Since most narrative texts are structured, readers view them as stories. One model of short story structure is Algis Budrys's (1994) seven-point story structure presented below:

- a character;
- in a situation;
- with a problem;
- who tries repeatedly to solve his problem;
- but repeatedly fails, (usually making the problem worse);
- then, at the climax of the story, makes a final attempt (which might either succeed or fail, depending on what kind of story it is) , after which
- the result is "validated" in a way that makes it clear that what was seen is, in fact, the final result.

Another example of short story structure is Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey. Campbell ([1949] 2003) defined a classic sequence of actions that are found in many stories from around the world. It is also known as the *Monomyth*, a term Campbell coined from James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*.

- The hero is confronted with a challenge;
- rejects it;
- but then is forced (or allowed) to accept it;
- he travels along a road of trials;
- gathering powers and allies, and;
- confronts evil – only to be defeated;
- this leads to the dark night of the soul, after which;
- the hero makes a leap of faith that allows him to;
- confront evil again and be victorious;
- finally, the pupil becomes the master;

Campbell's (*ibidem*) narrative structure consists of three phases: **departure** (separation), **initiation** and **return**. Each phase includes several steps that bring the hero to the final destination. The first section of the story structure is about the separation of the hero from a familiar and well-known world. This separation symbolizes the hero's transition from the familiar to an abnormal world. The following steps lead the hero to the unknown, scary and frightening moment of transition.

**The call of adventure** – this is the point in the hero's life when he is given notice that everything is going to change, whether he knows and accepts it or not.

**Refusal of the call** – when the call is given, the hero refuses to heed it. This may be out of a sense of duty and obligation, fear, insecurity, a sense of inadequacy or any other range of reasons that hold the hero in his current circumstances.

**Supernatural aid** – once the hero has committed to the quest, consciously or unconsciously, his or her guide and magical helper appears, or becomes known.

**The crossing of the first threshold** – the point where the hero crosses into the field of adventure, leaving the known world and venturing into an unknown and dangerous realm.

**The belly of the whale** – this is the point where the hero is definitively separated from the familiar world and is transitioning between worlds. The experience of the new world begins and is very often symbolized by something dark, unknown and frightening. It is also the moment where the hero starts undergoing metamorphosis.

The next step in the Campbell's narrative structure is **initiation**. In this stage the hero's process of transformation enters its main phase. The hero meets a goddess and is very often tempted to abandon his quest. He experiences entirely new worlds and starts seeing himself in different way.

**The road of trials** – this is a series of tests, tasks, or ordeals that the hero must undergo to continue his transformation. It happens that the hero fails one or more of these tests, which usually occur in threes.

**Meeting with a goddess** – this is the point where the person experiences the power and significance of the all-encompassing, unconditional love that only a fortunate infant may experience with its mother. It is also the point where the hero finds the other person that he or she loves most completely.

**Woman as temptress** – this is the point containing the temptations that may lead the hero to abandon or stay in his or quest. Woman here is a metaphor for the physical or material temptation of life, since the hero is often tempted away from his spiritual journey by lust.

**Atonement with the father** – this is the central point of the journey, all previous steps have been leading to this point, all that follows will emerge from it. This step is most frequently symbolized by an encounter with a male entity, or someone with incredible power. The hero confronts here, or is initiated into certain secrets by someone who holds ultimate power over his or her life. In many myths and stories this is the father, or a father figure who has the power of life and death. Here the hero undergoes the final stage of his transformation. He has to confront this ultimate power and is often "killed" so a new self can come into being. Sometimes the killing is literal and the earthly journey for the hero is either over, or it moves into a different world.

**Apotheosis** – When the hero dies a physical death or dies to self to live a spiritual life, he moves beyond the pair of opposites to a state of divine knowledge, love, compassion and bliss. This is a god-like state, the hero is in heaven and beyond all strife. This is a time of rest, peace and fulfillment before the hero begins the return.

**The ultimate boon** – this is the final achievement and the goal of the quest. It is what the hero went on the journey for. In many myths and stories the boon is something transcendent like an elixir of life, or a plant that supplies immortality, or the holy grail.

**The Return** is the final phase of narrative story structure. This is the stage where the goal of the quest has been achieved and the hero is ready to set off on the return journey.

**Refusal of the return** – when all has been achieved, the ambrosia has been drunk, and the hero has conversed with the gods, then there is the question of why the hero should return to normal life with all its cares and woes.

**The magic flight** – it may happen that the hero has to escape with the boon that has been jealously guarded by the gods. It can be just as adventurous and dangerous returning from the journey as it was to go on it.

**Rescue from without** – the return journey may not be an easy task to fulfill. Sometimes the hero needs a powerful rescuer or a guide to bring him back to his previous life, especially when the hero has been wounded or weakened by the experience. The hero has to realize that it is high time to return, because others may need the boon as well.

**The crossing of the return threshold** – it is the point where the hero has to find a way to retain the experience and wisdom gained on the quest and to integrate it into human life and share it with the rest of the world.

**Master of the two worlds** – this step is usually represented by a transcendental hero such as Jesus or Buddha. For a human hero it means achieving a balance between the material and spiritual spheres of life. The hero has to be familiar with, and competent in, both the inner and outer worlds.

**Freedom to live** – the mystery leads to freedom from the fear of death, which in return is the freedom to live. It may sometimes be referred to as living in the moment, either anticipating the future or regretting the past.

Nowadays, Campbell's classic story structure receives a fair share of criticism, typically that not all stories today follow the classic structure. His much-copied pattern has also been criticized as leading to safe story or movie-making, in which writers and directors use his structure as a template, thus leading to boring repeats, albeit in different clothes. The same has been said about Shakespeare and other

classic writers. But on the other hand such successful modern stories as *The Lord of the Rings* by Tolkien adopts this classic story structure.

Vladimir Propp ([1928] 2009) extended the Russian Formalist approach to the study of narrative structure. In the Formalist approach a sentence is taken apart into analyzable elements, or morphemes. Propp used this method by analogy to analyze Russian fairytales. By taking apart a large number of folk tales into their smallest narrative units, or narratemes, Propp was able to present a typology of narrative structure. Propp analyzed a collection of 115 Russian fairytales, looking particularly for recurring elements or features – constants, and random or unpredictable ones – and variables. He concluded that while the characters of a tale might superficially be quite variable, their function in the tales and the significance of their action as viewed from the point of view of the story's development were constant and predictable. Propp presented thirty-one functions, asserting that the number and sequence of the function is fixed (Toolan [1988] 2007: 17). Propp states that functions of character serve as stable, constant and independent elements in a tale, and they constitute the fundamental components of that tale. After the initial situation is depicted, the tale takes the following sequence of thirty-one functions.

**Absentation** – one of the members of family absents himself from a secure home, further on it can be the hero or some other member of the family that the hero will later need to save.

**Interdiction** – this is the step where the hero is addressed and given an interdiction (“don't go there, don't do that”) in which the hero is warned against some action.

**Violation of interdiction** – at this step the interdiction is violated and the villain enters the story, although not necessary confronting the hero.

**Reconnaissance** – the villain makes an attempt at reconnaissance, tries to find the children, jewels or valuable and makes an active attempt at seeking information, searching for something or trying to capture someone. The villain may speak with a family member who innocently divulges information.

**Delivery** – here the villain gains information about the victim and his previous effort in seeking information bears fruit. He acquires some form of knowledge about the hero or victim. Some other information can be gained, say about a map or location of treasure.

**Trickery** – the villain attempts to deceive the victim to take possession of the victim or his belongings. Once the villain wins the victim’s confidence, he moves further in trying to deceive the hero or victim, often appearing in disguise.

**Complicity** – the victim is taken in by deception and unwittingly helps the enemy. The trickery of the villain now works and the hero or victim naively acts in a way that helps the villain.

**Villainy or lack** – the villain causes harm or injury to a member of the hero’s family (defined as “villainy”), by abduction, theft of a magical agent, spoiling crops, committing murder or imprisoning someone, providing nightly torments or other evil deed. There are two options for this function. In the first one, the villain causes some kind of harm, for example carrying away a victim or a desired magical object. In the second option a sense of lack is identified, for instance in the hero’s family or within the community, whereby something is identified as lost or something becomes desirable for some reason.

**Mediation** – the misfortune or lack is made known. The hero is dispatched and hears the call for help. The hero now discovers the act of villainy or lack, perhaps finding his family or community devastated or caught up in a state of anguish and woe.

**Beginning counter-action** – the hero agrees to, or decides upon counter-action. From this moment on he decides to act in a way that will resolve the lack and will find the needed magical item or rescue those who are captured or defeat the villain. This is a turning point for the hero as his decision sets the course of future actions and is the means by which a previously ordinary person takes on the mantle of heroism.

**Departure** – the hero leaves home.

**First function of the donor** – the hero is tested, interrogated, attacked. He is preparing the way for receiving the magical agent or helper (donor).

**Hero’s reaction** – the hero reacts to the action of the future donor. He withstands or fails the test, frees the captive, reconciles the disputants, uses his adversary’s power against him.

**Receipt of magical agent** – the hero acquires the use of a magical agent.

**Guidance** – the hero is transferred, delivered or led to the whereabouts of the object of the search.



**Struggle** – the hero and the villain engage in direct combat.

**Branding** – the hero is branded, wounded or marked and receives a ring or scarf.

**Victory** – the villain is defeated. He is killed in combat, defeated in combat, killed while asleep or banished.

**Liquidation** – the initial misfortune or lack is resolved. The object of the search is distributed, the spell is broken, the slain person revived or the captive is freed.

**Return** – the hero returns.

**Pursuit** – the hero is pursued. The pursuer tries to kill the hero or undermine him.

**Rescue** – the hero is rescued from the pursuit.

**Unrecognized arrival** – the hero, unrecognized, arrives home or in another country.

**Unfounded claims** – a false hero presents unfounded claims.

**Difficult task** – a difficult task is proposed to the hero, for instance: trial by ordeal, riddles, test of strength or endurance.

**Solution** – the task is resolved.

**Recognition** – the hero is recognized by a mark, brand or thing given to him.

**Exposure** – the false hero or villain is exposed.

**Transfiguration** – the hero is given a new appearance.

**Punishment** – the villain is punished.

**Wedding** – the hero is married and ascends the throne.

Propp's narrative text structure seems to be more complex than the one proposed by Campbell. Certain functions clearly go together as pairs or groups, for instance: a prohibition and violation, struggle and victory, pursuit and deliverance. And clusters of functions can be made in groups under the following headings. Functions 1–7 can be potentially recognized as preparation, functions 8–10 are complications and subsequently the groups may include transference, struggle, return and recognition.

In addition to the thirty-one functions, Propp identifies seven basic character types or roles:

- The villain – struggles against the hero.
- The dispatcher – a character who makes the lack known and sends the hero off.

- The magical helper – provides the hero with help in the quest.
- The princess or prize – the hero deserves her throughout the story but is unable to marry her because of an unfair evil (the villain).
- Her father – gives the task to the hero, identifies the false hero.
- The donor – prepares the hero or gives him a magical object of some kind.
- The hero or victim – reacts to the donor and marries the princess.
- False hero – takes credit for the hero's action or tries to marry the princess.

Some characters may fill more than one role, for example one individual in the story may be both villain and false hero or a father could send his son on the quest and give him a sword, acting as both dispatcher and donor. And of course one role might be distributed among several individuals, as the hero kills the evil dragon, and the dragon's sisters take on the villainous role of chasing him.

Propp's (*ibidem*) narrative structure can be easily applied to any composed narrative, starting with *The Iliad* and the Bible to Hollywood action movies or TV series and children's stories. To take an example from popular culture, the *Star Wars* film trilogy can be considered in this light, and the characters from that story can easily fill six of the seven core roles presented by Propp (*ibidem*) in his morphology:

Villain: Darth Vader

Dispatcher: Luke's uncle

Donor or provider: Obi Wan Kenobi (magical power provided is the force)

Helper: Yoda

Hero: Luke Skywalker

Princess: Leila

The whole plot of the story can be applied to Propp's narrative structure and most of the functions of his morphology can be identified in this trilogy.

However, Propp's (*ibidem*) approach toward narrative structure has been criticized for removing all verbal consideration from his analysis, even though any folktale's form is almost always oral, and also all consideration of tone, mood, character, and anything that differentiates one fairy tale from another. One of the most prominent critics of Propp's analysis is French Structuralist Claude Lévi-Strauss ([1976] 1983). He used Propp's monogram on the morphology of the Folktale to point out the

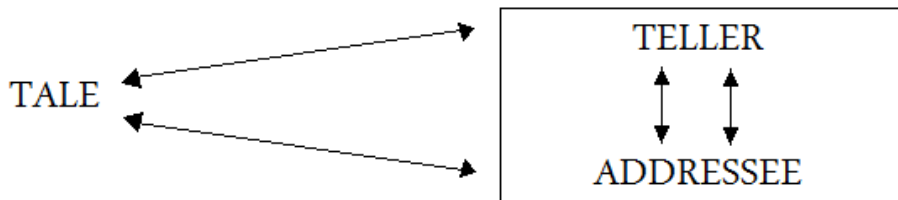
shortcomings of the Formalist approach and demonstrate the superiority of Structuralists' approach. On the other hand, Propp's approach was neither intended to explore meaning in the fairytales he examined, as in the case of Structuralist analysis, nor to find the elements that differentiate one tale from another, but to point out the basic elements that form narrative structure.

Before written and printed texts, sounds, pictures and films formed the sources of information in everyday life; people attempted to record and convey information in the form of cave sketches and pictures. In conjunction with the development of civilization, the forms of conveying information improved. Before writing became a common form of transferring information, verbally conveying and passing information from one generation to another was the only available form of communication. The situation in which the verbal form of communication and conveying information is the only practiced form at the beginnings of civilization, still exists in the communities of New Guinea.

The process of creating narrative, as a form of conveying information, requires each participant (teller and addressee) to play one of the following two roles: speaker or listener. According to Michael Toolan ([1998] 2007), the process of narrative involves at least three basic components: a story (tale), narrator (teller), and addressee (receiver). In stories told orally, the narrator can be heard and seen by the audience and at the same time adds layers of meaning to the text non-verbally (facial expressions, emotions conveyed through posture or tone of voice, gestures), and it makes each narrative different, especially extended spoken ones. The teller is particularly noticeable as he unfolds a tale that ostensibly attracts the audience's attention. As a result, readers or listeners may feel that their attention is divided between two objects of interest: the events and individuals in the story and the individual telling the story. The effect of divided attention exploits a basic characteristic of narrative. Because narrative involves a recounting of spatiotemporally distant things, three different types of relation between tale, teller and addressee (reader or listener) can be drawn to present the effect of closeness and distance in narrative (Toolan [1988] 2007: 1). The distance and relation between the teller and addressee is relevant for efficient and successful communication. The process of communication is meant to convey information. Narrative, like any other process of communication, requires each participant (teller or addressee) to play one of the following roles: speaker or listener. The relation between the participants of the communication process is relevant for the whole process and may have different configurations. The distance between the participants depends on factors such as the

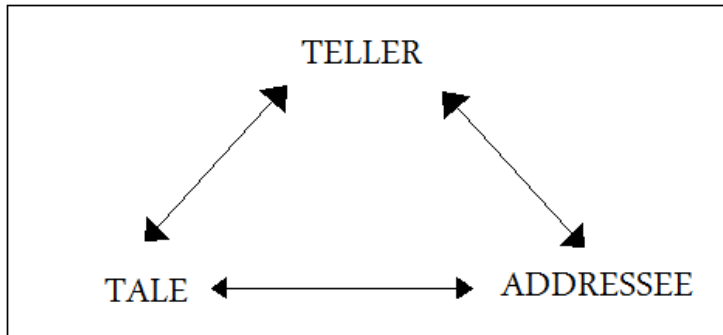
subject of the narration (self-experienced events), or the degree of personal involvement (the degree is higher when the subject of the narration is a self-experienced event or occurrence). The distance between the participants influences the means and quality of information conveyed. In the process of reporting a person's own experience(s), the non-verbal reinforcement and emotional involvement is higher.

The graph below depicts the situation in which the distance between the teller and the addressee is seemingly close in terms of emotional involvement (reader or listener), and there at a distance is the tale and its topic. It illustrates the situation where the addressee's main attention is held by the teller and the tale is in the background.



Toolan ([1988] 2007: 2)

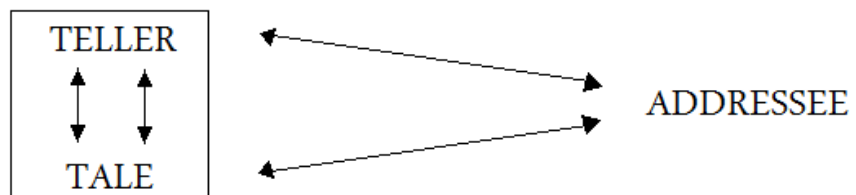
However, since the teller is the sole means of access to the distant topic, there is a sense, too, in which narrative entails making what is distant and absent uncommonly present: a three-way merging rather than a division. Diagrammatically this merging-and-immediacy can be represented as shown in the graph below:



Toolan ([1988] 2007: 2)

All three elements of the narrative process are of equal distance and importance to each other.

However, since the teller can become intensely absorbed in their self-generated sense of the distant topic he is relating, addressee sometimes has the impression that the teller has withdrawn from him, has taken leave, so as to be more fully involved in the removed scene. This third type of relation between tale, teller, and addressee (a withdrawing and merging) might be depicted graphically as:



Toolan ([1988] 2007: 2)

Summarizing the above argumentation, narratives always involve a tale, a teller, and an addressee, and these are placed at different degrees of mutual proximity or distance. Jeremy Hawthorn (1985) discloses these issues, taking a painting by John Everett Millais, *The Boyhood of Raleigh*, as capturing something essential to narrative. In that painting an old seaman, with his back to the viewer, appears to be addressing two young boys who are evidently fascinated and absorbed by what he

tells them. The old man is using his whole arm to point out to the sea, visible in the distance. But the boys' eyes are on the man and his gesturing arm, not any distant scene he may be designating (Toolan [1988] 2007: 2). Jeremy Hawthorn (1984) depicts the power of narration and narrative stories and its influence on our mind and consciousness.

*Narrative focuses our attention on to story, a sequence of events, through the direct mediation of a "telling" which we both stare at and through, which is at once central and peripheral to the experience of the story, both absent and present in the consciousness of those being told the story. Like the two young boys we stare at the "telling" while our minds are fixed upon what that telling points towards. We look at the pointing arm but our minds are fixed upon what is pointed at. (Hawthorn 1985: vii)*

It can be concluded from the above citation that the role and position of the teller and his relation toward the tale and addressee is a distinctive characteristic of narrative. The addressees stare at the teller rather than interacting with him as they would if they were in conversation. At the same time, in literary narrative especially, that narrator is often impersonalized, and attended to as a disembodied voice. Narrators are usually trusted by their addressees and assert their authority to tell, take up the role of knower, or entertainer, or producer, in relation to the addressees' adopted role of learner or consumer. To narrate is to hold a kind of power to affect people's lives. Sometimes the narratives told by journalists, politicians, colleagues, employers, friends, parents, siblings, children, all those who have power over us, authority, or influence, can crucially affect our lives (Toolan [1988] 2007). Concluding from the above text, it can be said that the art of narration stems from the art of rhetoric. The ability of successful story telling is key to persuasion.

Narrative, as a way of conveying information, can be expressed in a variety of forms, for instance, verbal transfer as a means of conversation or monologue, text message, audio-visual message, different forms of art, painting, music, pantomime, and dance. Art is the perfect form for depicting different events, happenings, and phenomena, and in this way, often adopts a narrative form for conveying a message.

Narrative, as a way of learning about and understanding the world, accompanies people from early childhood. The surrounding reality is often understood by people as a stream of occurrences. People's ability to create stories leads to a better understanding of the world, and greatly influences the interpretation of social and cultural events, along with helping people to determine their identity. Life is a series of past, present and future events through which a man is perceived as the hero of

his own story. Narrative knowledge, and the narrative perception of the world, is one of the earliest ways of acquiring and organizing knowledge about the world by human beings. Narratives are the means of conveying information about real and fictitious worlds to children in the form of narrative texts (stories). Narratives greatly influence the building of a child's imagination and their way of perceiving and understanding the world. In many American schools, children are encouraged to participate in classes in which they are encouraged to create stories on the basis of different events or objects they brought from home. Brenda K. Gorman Ph. D.<sup>1</sup> from Marquette University carried out research on first and second grade students from three different ethnic groups; African-American, Latino and Caucasian. The main focus of the research was children's narrative production on the basis of pictures they were presented with. The research proved that the process of creating and building narrative stories is more productive in terms of using grammar, vocabulary and background knowledge than any other activity intended to improve communication skills. A perfect way to make children create narrative stories on their own is to provide them with a wordless book and ask them to generate narratives on the basis of a series of pictures presented in the book. The research has also proved that narratives are influenced by culture and ethnic origin. Children of different ethnic groups, African-American, Latino and Caucasian, looking at the same pictures generated narrative stories using different modes and emphasized different aspects of the story. The generated stories had a similar structure with a beginning, middle and an end. So they were fairly linear structures. The differences lay in the content and function of the story. It was found that African-American children seemed to use more direct dialogues which is very engaging for audiences. They also used more fantasy and suspense in their stories. Latino children tended to name their characters more often than other children. Caucasian children tended to discuss the nature of characters' relationships significantly more often than other groups. It definitely demonstrates that narratives serve different functions in the process of social communication. The ability to create narrative speech are important elements of human life. The ability to create a complete and logical speech is particularly helpful in the courtroom. During trials, lawyers and witnesses try to create a credible story to convince the jury of their version of a past event. The number of ways of applying narratives to everyday life seems to have no limits.

The main subject of the research carried out here is to analyse narrative structures and modes in literary discourse on the basis of nineteenth and twentieth century

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<sup>1</sup> [www.youtube.com/watch?](http://www.youtube.com/watch?) (accessed September 25, 2012)

short narrative forms such as novels and short stories by Hemingway, Faulkner, Woolf, Poe and others. Among other elements of narrative text, the relation between the narrator and reader is particularly relevant in the process of narration. The relation may take many forms in practice, and depend on different factors, such as the degree of narrator involvement (direct or indirect) in the subject of the report, and the distance that has been created between the narrator and the reader. The degree of mutual involvement, in the process of narrative account, seems to be higher when the narrator reports events that he experienced in his own life. The distance between the narrator and the related story influences the intensity of non-verbal reinforcement in the process of narration. Non-verbal reinforcement and emotional involvement is greater when personal experience becomes the subject of the narrative report. Another relevant element in the narrative process is the distance between the narrator and the reader. The shorter the distance, the higher the degree and intensity of the transfer, emotional involvement and non-verbal reinforcement is. Applying and shifting the narrative modes such as description, report, speech and comment can achieve the effect of a close distance and high degree of mutual involvement. The narrative modes and structures are fundamental categories of narration. The categories are glasses through which not only general law but also the particular phenomenon of narrative can be discovered. The art of narrative stems from the art of rhetoric and modes of persuasion and, in this meaning, is understood not just as a form of entertainment but also as a tool of communication. The power of narrative derives from persuasion and is achieved by the author's ability to deliver interesting, convincing, persuasive text and by his creativity, and credibility. According to Aristotle, the three modes of persuasion ethos, pathos and logos are an inevitable part of convincing and successful narration.

Perceiving reality through narrative plays a major role in the process of social communication. It helps to understand different social processes and habits embedded in a given culture and society. A good example is Thanksgiving, celebrated in North-American society to commemorate the well-known story of the early immigrants to North America. The knowledge about the surrounding reality and the world that is acquired from narrative texts creates narrative scripts. Narrative scripts are often copied from narrative structures which can take the following form: a character faces difficulties and tries to overcome them on his way to achieve the final goal. This structure is commonly applied in literary discourse, where a character faces many obstacles, which to varying degrees, put his mission in danger. Keeping in mind the above narrative scripts and structures helps to understand that in real life one may face a series of difficulties and numerous obstacles along the



way. In this way, narrative may become the perfect tool for perceiving and understanding reality on the basis of previously acquired narrative scripts that are often copied in real life. The basic function of narrative scripts is to govern the process of making decisions on the basis of incoming facts. The other function of narrative scripts is to help the human mind create, interpret and understand reality. Reality is very often interpreted by the human mind as a sequence of events which actually occurred. Good examples of this are the reports we often give to our relatives or colleagues on recent occurrences and events that we happened to witness or experience during the day. As a result, reality is often perceived and understood as a continuous narrative. Every day brings new experiences, occurrences and events that become the context and the content for our life's stories. Narrative is not the only way of perceiving and understanding reality, but it seems to be a very natural one, and it plays a crucial role in the process of developing human consciousness.

Summing up this discussion of selected narrative functions in the process of social communication, it can be concluded that narrative is not only the art of telling stories, but it serves various functions, it communicates information, expresses emotions and personal events, transmits morals and cultural knowledge, provides entertainment and also helps in many ways to depict thoughts and feelings, along with disclosing the beauty of language. Narrative knowledge and narrative perception of social and cultural processes, is one of the most natural ways for a human being to acquire and organize their knowledge about the world. The ability to create narratives leads to a better understanding of the surrounding reality, and significantly influences the interpretation of social and cultural relationships.

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