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Mapping the world of discourse: The narrative vs. non-narrative distinction

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Beyond genre?

The endeavor to understand the complexities of discourse and the multiplicities involved in the ways language in use is employed, developed, produced and received has given prominence to notions like genre. Genre has become one of the most important concepts in discourse studies, occupying a central position in disciplines such as discourse analysis, text-linguistics, translation studies and stylistics. Its use underlines the view that linguistic communication is an integral part of human action and, as such, takes various forms and shapes, to which participants orient themselves in multiple ways. Every instance of discourse, rather than being an amorphous and undistinguished stream of language, is organized into wholes, which are characterized in everyday communication by such lay terms as telephone conversation, advertisement, talk show, poem, newspaper article, academic essay, e-mail message, etc. These wholes represent classes of communicative events and, at the same time, exhibit systematic co-patternings between their form, content, functions and overall context.

In capturing the dimension of discourse as action, genre constitutes a successful alternative to style, originally defined as 'the language habits shared by a group of people at one time' by Crystal and Davy (1969: 10). It also seems to encompass the linguistic notion of register, which refers to linguistic variation conditioned by use or situation, or, in Halliday's words, 'the configuration of semantic resources that the member of a culture typically associates with a situation type' (1978: 31).¹ Within social semiotic approaches (e.g., Hodge and Kress 1988), genre has been instrumental in the attempt to establish systematic links between the organization of language (realized by means of the ideational, interpersonal and textual meta-functions) and the organization of context (organized along the three dimensions of register, i.e., tenor, field, mode). At the same time, the

left virtually unexplored, despite the fact that, as a means of discourse typology, it is as old as any meta-language on discourse, traceable to Aristotle's *Poetics*. It has since then resurfaced in modern rhetorical theory and seems to be lurking in the shadows of text-linguistic research, at least in the continental tradition (van Dijk 1972; de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981). Recent reviews (Biber 1994; Trosborg 1997) point out that the dimension of mode has persisted throughout the history of discourse studies as a useful means of typology that cuts across genres. The implications, however, of this central role of the notions are not fully drawn.

This article is an attempt to explore the usefulness of rhetorical mode as a discourse analytic concept, by putting forth its most important insight about the ways in which meaning is created in linguistic communication. In our view, the construction of discourse can be seen as instantiating two crucial concerns, namely the re-construction of a narrative world and the modeling of a non-narrative discourse entity. We will refer to this fundamental dichotomy of rhetorical mode as the narrative versus non-narrative distinction. Our claim is that the distinction underlies every instance of discourse and can be productively employed to help us redraw discourse boundaries in well-motivated ways. Our aim in this article is critical and programmatic; we intend to make explicit latent implications of the notions as found in the literature within and outside linguistics and thus systematize discourse configurations for the purposes of analysis. We will specifically suggest that the distinction has been, at least implicitly, viewed along three axes, namely the referential, the textual and the contextual. We will also point to the *desiderata* of each of these three strands of research and the ways in which they can be fruitfully brought together in discourse-analytic terms. Finally, we will draw the implications of adopting the narrative vs. non-narrative distinction for an integrated description of the world of discourse.

Exploring discourse mode

Narrative vs. non-narrative: A latent distinction

Despite the volume of research on both narrative and non-narrative discourse, the distinction between the notions has not reached an adequate stage of formalization like that between spoken and written genres, referred to above. Studies of narrative and non-narrative have deplorably remained fragmented and artificially separated. This

lack of constructive dialogue has mainly been the result of the relative lagging behind of studies of non-narrative discourse, which has not presented itself as an autonomous, unified object of analysis. Narrative analysis, by contrast, is one of the best and most extensively researched areas of the multi-disciplinary study of discourse (Mischler 1995; van Dijk 1993).

This imbalance is itself an implicit recognition of the primacy of narrative mode in discourse construction. This is also evidenced in the fact that narrative appears in all classificatory frameworks, while there does not seem to be a consensus on exactly what and how many the other classes of texts should be. Hence, some models include description, argumentation, and/or exposition (e.g., Chatman 1991; Kinneavy 1971; Werlich 1976), while others allow for distinct persuasive, poetic or scientific modes (e.g., Moffett 1968; Britton et al. 1975), or the categories of explanation (Adam 1992) and instruction or procedure (Werlich 1976). A first remark that can be made in relation to these models is that they tend to list different types without explicitly stating the relation of one to the other. As a result, narrative texts are placed on the same level as technical manuals or recipes, without any indication about the relative importance of these texts.

Mainly developed for pedagogical purposes, models that classify texts according to mode have mostly relied on intuition and, in general, have shunned the formulation of precise linguistic criteria. An important exception is Longacre's (1976) taxonomy of 'notional' genres (i.e., ideal text-types instantiated in texts), which combines criteria of 'surface' and 'deep' levels referring to criteria such as chronological linkage and the presence of prescription (instructions or injunctions for something to be done), on the one hand, and the succession of elements and the presence of time as projected (e.g., in future plans and wishes) or not, on the other. These criteria reflect on specific linguistic choices such as the use of pronouns (e.g., *you* in procedural texts), modality, tenses and cohesion. On the basis of these criteria, Longacre distinguishes between narrative, expository, hortatory and procedural genres.

Longacre's classification attempts to relate textual with contextual features and distinguish between discourse genres in an economical way. However, as has been observed (Reddick 1992), its definitions are largely negative: thus, expository genres are those which are *not* chronological, *not* prescriptive, *not* based on succession, etc. The postulation of four modes is, thus, a fine example of what we noted above, that is, a symmetrical view of discourse which takes no account of the relative primacy of one mode over another. Longacre's model does not adequately reflect the fact that some genres are more important or

fundamental than others and, in this sense, obscures the relation of narrative to minor genres, such as the hortatory.

The lack of an explicit hierarchical division is by and large typical of rhetorical and text-linguistic models of text-types. Certain models have, however, implicitly recognized the fundamental distinction of discourse in the two modes of narrative and non-narrative: Moffett (1968), for instance, mentions fictive vs. non-fictive 'kinds' of texts and Britton et al. (1975) distinguish between expressive and informative functions in discourse. Kinneavy (1971) also distinguishes between 'static' and 'dynamic' text types, whose function is to describe or classify and to narrate or evaluate, respectively. More recent linguistic studies point out that narratives constitute some kind of a pre- or meta-genre that cannot be put on the same level as 'ordinary' genres (Swales 1990; cf. Grabe and Kaplan 1996: 139). Narrative is also seen as a basic text-type underlying different surface, textual forms. In other words, it can realize but cannot be realized by other text-types, such as argument, description and exposition: for example, we can tell a story in order to present an argument, but the discourse function or goal of narrating cannot be realized by argumentative texts (Virtanen 1992; cf. Genette 1980).

In a similar vein, research in the teaching of writing has pointed to the fundamental gap separating narrative and expository genres and the opposing demands they make on the students' abilities (Martin 1985; Bereiter and Scardamalia 1987). The narrative vs. non-narrative distinction is also included among the dimensions of text classification in recent linguistic studies based on the statistical analysis of sets of variable features, either explicitly (Biber 1988), or in the form of fictional vs. informative text types (Grabe 1987). These multi-dimensional approaches reflect a well-established use in disciplines outside linguistics, for example, film and media studies, art history, biblical studies (Foley 1995), historiography (Burke 1991), literary and cultural studies. The use of the lay terms 'fiction' and 'non-fiction' in the world of book publishing is a further recognition of a basic dichotomy between narrative and non-narrative discourse. This use is also followed by van Dijk (1972) in his typology of literary texts. Finally, the distinction has been one of the major points of contention in the philosophical discussion of postmodernism, argued by scholars such as Jean-François Lyotard and Hayden White (Nash 1990).

In a nutshell, it would seem that the distinction between narrative and non-narrative is latent in a great variety of studies both within and outside linguistics. The persistence of the notions of rhetorical mode and narrative indicates the usefulness of the distinctions they imply. What is needed is clearly a well-developed account of their operation that

will capture their fundamental insights and apply them to the analysis of discourse.

The primacy of narrative

Although existing systems of taxonomy seem to imply a 'flat', undifferentiated relation between narrative and other kinds of discourse, a vast array of studies recognize the fundamental role of narrative. Nash aptly summarizes current views, by stating that narrative is deemed to be 'central to our essential cognitive activities (Ricoeur), to historical thinking (White), to psychological analysis and practice (Lacan), to political critique and praxis (Lyotard)' (1990: xi). Narrative discourse is widely regarded as having an unquestionable primacy in our everyday social lives, forming a constitutive element of them, as well as a fundamental principle of organizing and making sense of our experience. The centrality of narrative as a mode of knowing, (inter)acting, feeling and interpreting the world is also increasingly recognized by new approaches in personality studies and psychoanalysis. It has been argued that the only way to discover ourselves is by recollecting and possessing the narrative of ourselves (Johnstone 1990). Engaging in narrating one's stories is a process of apprehending our subjective reality, of integrating our lives in time and providing them with coherence and unity. Psychologists have gone so far as to argue that our very selves are the byproduct of storytelling, of our capacity to 'story' ourselves (Kerby 1991; Polkinghorne 1991). Bruner's view of cultural psychology also considers narrative as a key concept in the construction of reality. As Bruner has asserted, 'we organize our experience and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative — stories, excuses, myths, reasons for doing and not doing and so on' (1991: 4).

Furthermore, there is both an ontogenetic and a historical preference for narrative. Both traditional and modern societies rely upon the narrative mode for children's socialization into a specific cultural reality (Heath 1983). Narrative, or the lay term 'story', constitutes a universal category in cultures and societies across the space and time dimensions. In its various forms and shapes (ranging from traditional oral tales and legends to modern stories in electronic media), the making and appreciation of shared narratives is recognized as a particularly crucial component for the cohesion of a culture (Lakoff 1997). The importance of narratives as an anthropological characteristic of the human kind has been documented to such an extent that Fisher (1987) talks of 'homo narrans'.

In light of the above, it is reasonable to suggest that there is a categorization of discourse by mode in all communities that is independent of the medium in which discourse is produced. In this categorization, narrative seems to hold a primary position, although it can be expected that different contexts and cultures will capitalize on its use in different ways and will present different preferences. This narrative primacy brings to the fore the significance of the distinction by mode and, at the same time, implies its asymmetrical nature, in a way, however, that has essentially been left undetermined. The category 'narrative' itself has been used to describe a deceptively homogeneous set of genres, ranging from jokes to historical texts and from nursery rhymes to life stories. The application of a general term is, no doubt, an effect of standardization which owes its existence to the long tradition of studying narratives. Currently, the all-encompassing power of narrative is all but diminishing: narrative manages to play host to an increasing number of genres as an umbrella-concept. For instance, according to Chatman (1991), narrative in this broad sense encapsulates both the enacted presentational mode (drama or 'mimesis') and the recounted mode (narrative in a narrow sense or 'diegesis').

None of the above can be claimed about non-narrative genres, which have always been studied in isolation of each other. This has not only resulted in the identification of controversial categories like exposition (see critique in Chatman 1991; Goutsos 1997, among others). It has also obscured the similarities between different kinds of non-narrative texts, which, as in the case of narrative genres, lie in their function in discourse construction rather than in any other intrinsic or extrinsic property. In our view, this fragmentary picture of the study of text-types other than narrative constitutes a stumbling block in any attempt to take systematic advantage of the mode of discourse as an analytic construct. What is needed, instead, is to subsume different genres, traditionally viewed as separate instances of rhetorical modes, under the working concept of non-narrative discourse. Non-narrative will thus act as an umbrella-term that brings different kinds of text together in the same way as 'narrative'. Our choice of the term non-narrative, instead of, for example, 'paradigmatic', which Bruner (1991) suggests, or any other term, is deliberate and reflects the asymmetric relation of the two modes, i.e., the primacy of the notion of narrativity, as explained above. In addition, as already pointed out, the term, though lacking in wide currency within linguistics, is well standardized in neighboring disciplines (e.g., literary and cultural studies). The terminological acknowledgment of a mode which can be juxtaposed to narrative is, as will be shown in the following, well-motivated and, in many respects, an explicit recognition of an

implicit admission in the literature. Our discussion will further suggest some ways in which the defining characteristics of narrative and non-narrative discourse can be specified so that the distinction is sharpened. In Georgakopoulou and Goutsos (1997a), we present a first attempt at describing discourse mechanisms and strategies in their natural contexts by making use of the distinction between narrative and non-narrative. Here, we critically review the literature and outline the main specifications of the distinction, pointing a way to future research in the area as well as drawing attention to the benefits of the distinction for discourse studies.

Properties of narrative and non-narrative discourse

Our study of the literature on the narrative and non-narrative modes suggests that three basic kinds of properties have been specified for narrative and non-narrative discourse: referential, textual and contextual. Referential properties of the two modes deal with the organization of the world the discourse describes. Textual properties refer to the organization of the texts themselves in the two modes (cf. Martin's 1992 external vs. internal relations). Contextual properties of the two modes refer to the way the reconstructed or modeled world is viewed within the text. It is no accident that research on discourse modes can be traced to the above three axes. Referential, textual and contextual properties can be regarded as corresponding to Halliday's (1985) tripartite scheme of language metafunctions (ideational, textual, interpersonal), which has been widely applied in discourse studies.³

Referential properties

We have so far alluded to the basic distinctive feature of the narrative and the non-narrative modes, namely their perspective on the relation between world and discourse. The main import of the narrative vs. non-narrative distinction lies in the recognition of two fundamentally different ways of discursively (re)constituting and interacting with reality. This insight has been captured by Bruner (1986, 1990), who identifies two major ways of knowing, the 'narrative' and the 'paradigmatic' (or logico-semantic) mode, in his terms. The former is a way of encoding and interpreting human reality, experiences, beliefs, doubts and emotions. The latter deals with natural (physical) reality, truth, observation, analysis, proof and rationality.

We can refine Bruner's insight, if we consider discourse as a symbolic activity, i.e., an activity of relating to the world (cf. Corradi Fiumara 1992). In this view, the narrative and non-narrative modes achieve the symbolic function in two opposing ways: the former by recreating or reconstructing reality through a story ('taleworld', in Young's 1987 terms) and the latter by displaying or re-constituting reality through a model of verifiable (analytic and synthetic) relations. It must be emphasized that neither mode relies on simply reflecting entities and events in the 'outside' world. The question of representation, that is, the relation between the events represented and the structure of their representation, has been one of the most debated issues of narratology (for example, in the Russian formalists' distinction between *fabula* and *sujhet*), which has suggested that narratives are selections rather than reflections or accurate representations of past events.

Earlier studies tended to assume a correspondence or mirror relation between narrative and extra-textual worlds, or, in the case of fictional narrative, a relation of verisimilitude (Booth 1961). This was challenged by a constructionist view of narrative, heavily influenced by post-structuralism, by which stories are (re)playings and (re)constructions of signifieds, rather than reflections and accurate representations of a world-out-there. As such, their tellings are shifting, dynamic and contextually grounded, rather than given and pre-determined (Herrnstein-Smith 1981). They are produced as part of social interactions in specific situations and for specific purposes. In this way, they are cast in a particular perspective that fits into the narrative's context of occurrence. The same can be said about non-narrative texts: from simple iconic descriptions to sophisticated presentations of arguments or injunctions, texts of this mode are not mere reflections of an external world, but active models of entities and events presented in a discourse world and related in specific, verifiable ways to each other (Reichman 1985). Despite this similarity, the fundamental concern of the two modes is distinctly different: narrative discourse is concerned with performing reality, non-narrative with verifying reality.

This fundamental referential (or text-external) parameter of the two modes also accounts for the other referential properties of narrative vs. non-narrative i.e., those aspects concerned with discourse's reference to reality. First of all, the object of concern is different in the two modes and so are the truth claims they make. Bruner (1991) aptly suggests that the two modes differ crucially in terms of ordering, norm and particularity (cf. Ricoeur 1981). In particular, narrative encompasses a wide range of popular and artistic genres that are held together by the chronological dimension (Ricoeur 1988), or, in other words, the depiction of a temporal

transition from one state of affairs to another. Narratives may concern past, present, future, hypothetical or habitual events, everyone of which is defined as 'an occurrence in some world which is encoded in a proposition which receives an instantaneous rather than durative interpretation' (Polanyi 1982: 510). In a nutshell, narrative discourse presupposes reference to some temporally instantaneous events.

Recent narratology has emphasized the double temporal logic of narratives. As Chatman (1991: 9) explicates, narrative entails movement through time not only externally (through the presentation of the novel, film, play) but also internally (through the duration of the sequence of events that constitute the plot). The former operates in the dimension of discourse (*suzhet*) and the latter in that of story (*fabula*). Non-narrative text-types do not have an internal time sequence, even though, obviously, they take time to read or hear. Their underlying structures are static or atemporal, synchronic or diachronic.

As numerous scholars have also claimed, narratives do not just recount temporally ordered events; they also convey attitudes, feelings and emotions about them. They crucially filter and shape experiences, i.e., provide them with meaning and structure, construct a plot (cf. Aristotle's *mythos*). In this way, they make a point about 'the world which teller and story recipients share' (Polanyi 1985: 16). Thus, it is no accident that narratives do not normally recount utterly predictable, but noteworthy events, i.e., surprising, disturbing, interesting or tellable events (Labov and Waletzky 1967). In so doing, they can serve to highlight the restoration of a disrupted order (equilibrium) or 'render the exceptional comprehensible' (Bruner 1990: 52).

Whereas narrative discourse focuses on the re-creation of what happened, non-narrative discourse focuses on how things are, either with a view to state what they need to be or should be (e.g., instructional, argumentative, hortatory texts) or not (e.g., iconic and descriptive texts). In contrast to narrative, non-narrative discourse has been primarily related to beliefs, views, attitudes, descriptions or arguments. Its focus is less on experiences and more on generic truths or assessments; less on actions and human agents and more on states, processes, problems or opinions, as well as on internal evaluative or externally validated positions about problems, circumstances, states, actions and processes (Britton and Black 1985). The common view in the literature is that non-narrative discourse is built around some central proposition in the form of a problem to be solved, a claim to be supported or denied, a general topic or subject matter to be developed (e.g., Longacre 1976; Hoey 1983). This proposition or subject matter involves central entities and relations that do not usually have a temporal dimension. Therefore,

the ordering of non-narrative texts does not follow the temporal sequencing of (re-constructed) events but either reflects the structure of the entities and events in question (e.g., the landscape or process described), as in iconic texts, or identifies a basic problem that needs to be addressed (including a question which provokes logical argumentation) (see articles in Rambow 1993).

We can thus argue that the unifying thread among different types of non-narrative discourse is the common concern with establishing (or, reaffirming) a generic truth about a specific discourse entity, through analysis, synthesis or argumentation. This truth is commonly presented as detailed information about an entity's structure or process (e.g., in a travel guide, an information leaflet, a scientific essay or an academic article, a manual). It may also be put forth as a position which needs to be supported or conformed to (e.g., in a political speech, an editorial, a letter of complaints, a TV debate). Finally, the (presented as) generic truth may take the form of a warning (as, for example, in a street sign) or any other speech act (apologies, thanks, advice, etc. in spoken or written interaction). As has been pointed out, in the case of non-narrative texts, we are not concerned with the issue of whether what is presented is factual or fictional, i.e., the relation between represented and real events (Bruner 1991). Of more central importance is the verifiability of events, that is, whether we can validate the generic truth presented. Validation here is an issue of conformity — not to the conventions of a reconstructed world but to 'the way things are' in the world. As in the case of narrative discourse, this does not mean that a description of an entity simply reflects the state of the things in the world. It rather means that the criteria of verification do not belong to a taleworld but are dictated by some other logical necessity.

We can summarize the basic differences as found in the literature on the referential properties of narrative and non-narrative discourse in Table 1 (cf. Bruner 1991). What is immediately apparent in the treatment of the referential aspects of the two modes in the literature is that their discussion does not take into account the interactions between actual texts that belong in the two modes and thus remains at an abstract or idealized level. This is the case, for instance, with Bruner's approach, which is concerned with the psychological study of how people make sense of their lives. Within this paradigm, narrative has been canonized as the basic mode of human understanding. This reflects the recent disenchantment with the long-standing mistaken emphasis of Western rationality and science on paradigmatic, analytic kinds of thought at the expense of the narrative or common-sense mode of thinking and communicating. The fascination with narrative seems to follow in many respects the

Table 1 *Referential properties of the two modes*

	<i>Narrative discourse</i>	<i>Non-narrative discourse</i>
Relation to reality	performing	verifying
Object of reference	reconstructed events	verifiable propositions
Truth claims	verisimilitude	validation
Ordering	temporal sequencing	multiple ordering (logical, temporal, etc.)
Particularity	particular events	generic truths (structure, process, speech act)
Norm	disruption and re-establishment of equilibrium	stating (arguing, etc.) what the norm is

tradition of literary criticism, which viewed literary narrative as a mode of discourse par excellence, qualitatively different from non-literary types. As a consequence, there has been no systematic exploration of how modes of discourse work in interaction, i.e. as situated activities which make sense for the people who produce and interpret them. Rather than revealing how the distinction between narrative and non-narrative operates in contextualized language use, narrative psychologists have imposed them as theorized, idealized constructs. There has also been little understanding of the interaction between modes. The two kinds of discourse have been proposed as a stark dichotomy and have consequently been typecast as the 'good' (narrative) and the 'bad' (non-narrative).⁴

Textual properties

Whereas the narrative vs. non-narrative distinction is most explicitly expressed in relation to referential properties of texts, methods, analyses and findings pertaining to textual aspects of the two modes have remained largely in isolation of one another. As a result, mode-independent differences have not been acknowledged properly and interpreted accordingly. Another consequence is that different notions tend to be created across modes about the same or similar textual features such as structural patterns, organization, units and functions.

In terms of structural patterns, the main unifying threads emerging from the literature relate to the disruption and re-establishment of equilibrium, in the case of narrative, and the generic truth about a specific discourse entity, in the case of non-narrative mode. Narrative discourse has been prototypically related to a structural pattern involving

the basic parts of orientation, complicating action and resolution (Labov 1972). Similar patterns are found in story-grammar paradigms (e.g., Stein 1982) or van Dijk's superstructural schema (1980), as well as in earlier structuralist attempts such as Propp (1968) and Barthes (1977). By contrast, non-narrative texts, as a rule, have been found to make use of an introduction, a main body and a conclusion or closing. The main body may revolve around a problem (with its related effects and causes), its solution and evaluation (i.e., the assessment of solutions) (Hoey 1983). Alternatively, it may revolve around an argument, which requires explanation, proof, refutation, etc. or a central discourse entity, event or process that is described, analyzed, etc. Numerous variants of these patterns have been pointed out in the literature (e.g., Hatim and Mason 1990).

The above emphasis of the literature on different structural patterns is also reflected in the identification of organization devices or text strategies prototypically associated with each mode. For instance, temporal text strategies have been found to be far more important in narrative than non-narrative discourse. This difference can obviously be related to the definitional characteristics of each mode. The telling of a story with a beginning, middle and end inevitably leads to an emphasis on sequentiality and temporal as well as spatial relations. In addition, the importance of actors (characters) in the storyworld leads to an emphasis on the linguistic devices that follow their lines of activity. As a result, narrative discourse is built on the interaction between participant, time and place chains. These constitute major indicators of both individual units and the overall structure. In non-narrative discourse, the goals of imparting information, developing argumentation or description, etc. rely on the interaction between given and new knowledge. Non-narrative texts are thus mainly developed on the basis of lexical patterning that involves the provision of new lexical information, in conjunction with a repertoire of grammatical items, the multiple lexical relations between adjacent and remote items (e.g., cohesion and anaphoric nouns) and the use of prediction pairs or other dialogic structures (Georgakopoulou and Goutsos 1997a: ch. 4).

In narratives, as mentioned, temporal adverbials, and participant and tense shifts are particularly important signals. This has significant implications for text segmentation: narrative units are mainly identified by time, place and character markers (Georgakopoulou 1997). By contrast, the identification of non-narrative units relies on more explicit conventional devices such as paragraphing, meta-linguistic expressions and encapsulating cohesion (Goutsos 1997). In addition, although the employment of discourse markers to indicate discourse structure has

been found to be a common device shared by both modes, meta-linguistic expressions are favored by non-narrative discourse, and, in particular, written non-narrative texts.

Units which are defined by formal linguistic (syntactic, intonational, typographic, etc.) criteria such as idea unit, stanza and paragraph have been identified in both modes (Chafe 1994). However, oral narrative discourse has been shown to make use of rhythmic units such as verse or stanza (Gee 1990; Hymes 1977, 1981), whereas non-narrative discourse mainly develops around the paragraph, defined as an orthographic, intonational, sequential and/or thematic unit. This must relate to the centrality of entities and events as part of a central subject-matter in the latter as opposed to the concatenation of events in the former.

The area of overall discourse structure seems to be a locus of divergence for the two modes, since different generic patterns have been emphasized in each mode. The concerns of plot predominate in narrative discourse, in opposition to non-narrative discourse, which exhibits, according to the literature, different patterns (iconic, transactional, problem-solution, claim-denial, etc.) (Georgakopoulou and Goutsos 1997a: 153ff.). Another point of divergence between the two modes arises in the specific area of interpersonal relations and the related expressive devices. Stories are regarded as discursively constructing and evaluating experience: they encode the storytellers' selection and interpretation of what happened, their subjective views and attitudes towards what is narrated. Subjectivity, however, seems to be less pervasive in non-narratives. These are, instead, characterized by specific details of categorization regarding the way different parts of the world (entities or categories) are perceived. Thus, the two modes are prototypically associated with subjectivity or affectivity and information-giving or analyzing, respectively. Narrative is said to touch upon our deep, imaginative processes, while non-narrative to rely on rationalization (Witten 1993). As happens with other textual mechanisms, the main devices by which evaluation is realized are, as a rule, different in the two modes. In narratives, it is mainly encoded by repetition patterns, tense shifts, speech presentation and (other) dramatization devices, whereas in non-narrative texts it relies heavily on explicit or implicit lexical signaling. Furthermore, non-narrative texts are more likely to activate detachment strategies, while narrative texts opt for a specific set of devices (such as speech presentation, expressive sounds, etc.), which achieve involvement through dramatization (Tannen 1989).

The main differences of the two modes concerning their textual properties as found in the literature are summarized in Table 2. The study of the literature indicates that concepts which deal with the textual properties of narrative and non-narrative discourse have been

Table 2. *Textual properties of the two modes*

	<i>Narrative discourse</i>	<i>Non-narrative discourse</i>
Structural patterns	orientation-climax-resolution	generic structure (e.g., iconic, argumentational, etc.)
Organization devices	temporal adverbs, cohesive chains (person and time shifts)	meta-linguistic expressions, prediction acts
Units	rhythmic (verse, stanza, episode)	types of paragraph
Macro-structures	narrative schemas	generic schemas
Discourse functions	plot trajectory	iconic, problem-solution, claim-denial, etc.
Evaluation	related to tale-telling	related to object of reference

developed apart from one another. This has resulted in our not being able to see the larger picture of discourse and thus point out whether some analytic notion (e.g., evaluation) refers to the same or a different aspect of text in the two modes. Furthermore, the text-internal specification of the two modes has mainly involved establishing constellations of prototypical features. However, whereas the findings of narrative analysis as discussed above refer to some prototypical narratives (mainly oral stories), the non-narrative mode appears to be fragmentary, precisely because no prototypical texts have been identified. Mappings of prototypical features for each mode are needed. We also have to account for the possibility that narrative and non-narrative discourse may be recursively subsumed under one another or, generally, be at the service of one another. The sequential management of such interactions in discourse and the ways in which discourse participants themselves choose to shift between modes and complement the one with the other are, with a few notable exceptions (Antaki 1994), far from explored.

Contextual properties: The presentation of the self

The identification of the prototypical contextual parameters of the two modes, the ways in which they shape and are invoked by their immediate and wider contexts of occurrence has mainly focused on the differences between them. The dimension of the contextual properties that has been extensively studied refers to the ways in which speakers and writers manage themselves and their relationships with others, i.e., the stance they take with regard to one another and to what is being said. These processes of self-presentation form an integral part of how discourse displays and constitutes its context (Ochs 1992).

It is widely held that narrative is the prime discourse mode for self-presentation (Schiffrin 1996), mainly on the basis that it allows for identity constructions that are shielded from testing, justification, debate and proof (Witten 1993). As a result, identities acted out through narrative are very effective in recruiting audience alliances. The audience, rather than being in a position to solicit proof for what is narrated, are invited to join in the subjective, imaginative and affectionate processes of narrative construction.

As mentioned above, the basic function of the narrative mode refers to the construction of a reported reality (taleworld), which is deictically (i.e., spatio-temporally and in terms of participants) distinct from the moment of the narrative's telling. The interaction between these two worlds holds the key to the narrative modes of self-presentation. More specifically, it allows the tellers to 'lamine' aspects of their self, as Goffman (1981) calls it, by appearing both as narrators and characters in the taleworld. The prime site for this self-lamination is the realm of reported speech, which is at a more embedded level of narration than that of narrative action. Goffman's notion of footing is crucial in understanding this process. As Schiffrin (1990) has explicated it with reference to spoken texts, storytellers can present themselves in the capacity of

- a) *animator* (the person who produces talk),
- b) the main character in the story or *figure*, someone who belongs to the world that is spoken about and not the world in which the speaking occurs,
- c) *author*, the aspect of self responsible for the content of talk (i.e., when quoting their prior words), and, finally,
- d) *principal*, the aspect established by what is said, committed to what is said.

Alternatively, they can delegate any of the aspects of author, principal and or figure to other characters in the taleworld. Through such manipulations, storytellers can diffuse their agency or responsibility in the social field, create a widened base of support for their views and beliefs, or, generally, cast positive light on them.

Bamberg (1997) proposes a more explicit scheme for looking into a storyteller's construction of identities through narrative. Building on Davies and Harré (1990), he locates a teller's positioning at three levels

- Level 1* positioning of the characters vis-à-vis one another in the taleworld (e.g., as protagonists or antagonists).

- Level 2:* positioning of oneself as the speaker with regard to an audience in the act of narrating, involving claims with regard to the teller's identity, which are locally and situationally achieved.
- Level 3:* positioning of tellers vis-à-vis themselves; the storytellers at this level make claims that they hold to be true and relevant above and beyond the local conversational situation.

The interaction of the three levels of positioning indicate that self-presentation in narrative fully exploits subjective, deeply imaginative and affective processes to create sympathetic alliances with the audience. The interaction of figure, author and principal as parts of the story-telling self helps transform the person who listens to the story into an audience that vicariously participates in the narrator's experience. This process is strongly constrained by the sentiments that the speaker holds toward the experience. Through the above self-presentation features, narratives are capable of compelling belief in various views with minimal risk of argumentative challenges and truth claims based on testing and debate.

In contrast, positioning in non-narrative discourse is lacking in Level 1 in Bamberg's scheme and, subsequently, in its interactions with Levels 2 and 3. In other words, non-narrative self-presentation misses out on the deictic shifts of the story-world but can be presented as more objective, tested or universal, holding for all situations and states of affairs, yielding to analysis and argumentation. When individuals make statements about an external world, they are usually seen as displaying a principal. They can manipulate their aspects of self and modify commitment to what is said. Consequently, in non-narrative discourse speakers/writers modify the display of principal and author: for example, decrease commitment in opinion-expressing ('that's my opinion') or increase commitment ('everybody thinks so').⁵ The role of impersonal, 'objective' evidence is much more important in this mode.

From a different perspective, it can be argued that the aspects of self-presentation in the two modes link to different processes of subjectification, in Foucault's (1977) terms, i.e., the ways in which we become tied to specific identities by drawing upon particular discursive constructions. A further aspect of these differences in the presentation of the self relates to the process of legitimization. In rhetorical terms (Aristotle 1991), narrative and non-narrative differ in all four types of proof, that is, the ways in which they construct the tellers' *ethos* (character, persona), *pathos* (emotional involvement in discourse and participants), *logos* (evidence, presentation of thesis and support with reasoning) and *kairos* (propriety, contextualization of discourse).

The discussion of contextual features of the two modes in the literature has been latent rather than explicit: studies tend to put forth narrative as the mode par excellence for the construction of the self. This view is increasingly explored within discourse-oriented studies of the active role of narratives in constructing identity that depart from the majority of psychological research on self and identity working with an idealized notion of texts. By contrast, non-narrative has not been discussed in these terms, although there has been some exploration of issues of authorial stance and responsibility.

Following the narrative vs. non-narrative distinction

Our critical discussion of the literature has indicated that the narrative vs. non-narrative distinction may be used to refer to a socially asymmetrical relation in the ways of relating to and interacting with the world. The difference in the rhetorical mode or stance reflects a differential in the means of making claims about knowledge and constructing theories about the world, ourselves and others. In our view, the narrative mode has been shown to be concerned with (re)constituting and thus interpreting the world through the construction of a taleworld. This is a dynamic concern, focusing on what happened. On the other hand, the non-narrative mode would seem to encompass concerns of description, argumentation and exposition, which are not to be thought of as separate modes of discourse but as interrelated facets of modeling the world-discourse relation. Iconic, descriptive and procedural texts model world entities and their attributes, whereas argumentative, hortatory and persuasive texts model premises and their conclusion. These concerns are interdependent: parts of every syllogism are descriptive, and each attribution to an entity has an argumentative purport (cf. Chatman 1991). There, thus, seems to be a common static concern with modeling how things are (or become or should be/ought to be).

In view of the above, the essential characteristics of narrative and non-narrative are mainly to be found in their role as categories that describe the interface between socio-cultural worlds and textual functions. We can thus understand the two modes as drawing on different resources for the symbolic representation of the world, which is always a re-creation of the world through discourse. The two modes are the primary means of creating our reality and making sense of our world. Our full participation in social and political life is impossible without an awareness of the main narrative and non-narrative concerns. As a result the further exploration of the distinction is bound to have

significant implications both for our view of discourse and our view of the world.

Revisiting discourse boundaries

In the first section, we argued that a new approach to genre is imperative in order to deal with the various problems that have accumulated around the notion. As suggested at the beginning, descriptive frameworks that reflect the multiple minute differentiations of text according to text-external or contextual features end up with a long list of indeterminate categories. This does not mean that notions like genre are not useful at describing the contextual fit of texts, as Swales (1990) suggests. It means, instead, that they lack taxonomic power and may obscure the actual relations between different texts. Classifications that are based on purely textual criteria or a combination of parameters may also obscure the functional import of each text; for instance, Biber (1988) points out the validity of the narrative vs. non-narrative distinction but underplays its significance in favor of a multi-feature analysis. Finally, traditional classificatory frameworks seem to be based on a symmetrical relation between modes, whereas a notion of dominance is necessary to account for their differential role (cf. Virtanen 1992). Furthermore, these frameworks narrowly define 'text-types' either as idealized, abstract categories or as text-parts embedded in text-externally defined genres (e.g., Werlich 1976; Virtanen 1992; following Enkvist 1987).

By giving overdue emphasis to either text-internal or text-external features, existing frameworks of classification downplay the most important insight of concepts like genre, that is, the interaction between referential, textual and contextual properties. As seen above, taxonomy can be misleading in implying a symmetrical relation between different kinds of discourse. For this reason, the most profitable way to revisit the question of discourse boundaries is, in our view, the detailed study of the dimension of rhetorical mode or stance, through the narrative vs. non-narrative distinction. The dichotomy of modes suggests an effective redrawing of discourse boundaries by proposing that the distinctive characteristic of texts lies in their orientation towards two distinct relations with the world, implying a different interaction with reality, namely its re-construction or its modeling. This is a dynamic, explanatory approach to discourse boundaries, by contrast to static, descriptive notions such as genre or text type. It also allows us to understand how both the narrative and the non-narrative modes play host to numerous genres or text types, notions which describe discourse boundaries on a fundamentally

different level. Rather than following the lead of abstract or conventional configurations with more or less prototypical enactments, it would be preferable to focus on the functional modes of pairing world and discourse with different locutionary (or textual) properties, illocutionary force (to display/reconstruct vs. to report/model) and perlocutionary effects (to move vs. to inform, to produce affective involvement vs. belief).

This view, furthermore, suggests that narrative belongs to a level before or above genre. (In this sense, narrative and non-narrative constitute primary rather than secondary genres, in Bakhtin's 1986 terms). More specifically, it is our contention that the narrative vs. non-narrative distinction is situated above and beyond the two layers of text and context, i.e., in systemic terms, above the context of situational variables and above language metafunctions (e.g., ideational, interpersonal, textual). The distinction, thus, between the two modes serves both as a text- and as a context-organizing tool. Narrative and non-narrative must be seen as the two fundamental resources of discourse, which are drawn to different extent in the on-line, negotiable process of discourse activity. As argued, the distinction finds sufficient grounding in terms of socio-cultural practices of discourse and can be operationalized in terms of clusters of referential, textual and contextual features, which are prototypically rather than absolutely associated with each of the two modes. As a consequence, it is flexible enough to allow us an insight into particularistic, contextualized studies of discourse, without losing a sense of the overall design of discourse activity. In this way, it offers a principled level of abstraction for studies which seek to explore similarities and differences between discourses or texts.

It is evident that further research is needed to clarify the relations between mode, genre and text-type. This is not so much an issue of relating abstract concepts as finding out the conventional associations between them in particular linguistic and cultural contexts. How many different types and what kinds of texts can serve the narrative or non-narrative demands seems to be a historically and culturally defined issue. It is equally clear that research into discourse boundaries cannot avoid bringing up the question of the interaction between narrative and non-narrative discourse. It is expected that this issue would again be related to broader contextual parameters of use.

The interdisciplinary perspective

Drawing attention to viewing the world of discourse as following narrative or non-narrative demands is a step towards integration and

synthesis. Specifically, it enables us to review the concepts, methods and procedures that have been independently developed with respect to narrative and non-narrative texts and to explore their relations. Furthermore, the distinction allows us to shed new light on the relationships between structures and functions, as well as between text and context, by focusing on narrative and non-narrative as their loci of interaction. It also urges us to seek out similarities which are obscured by the differences in meta-language and make the links between different kinds of texts explicit. In addition, the distinction encourages the integration of domains of the study of discourse which have remained rather disparate and isolated (e.g., stylistics, rhetorics, argumentation studies, etc.). Advances in these domains with regard to the mode of discourse have not been adequately felt and explored within discourse studies of genres, as van Dijk (1990) has noticed.

As suggested, the distinction of narrative vs. non-narrative captures an archetypal categorization of discourse which exists in all communities and is independent of the medium in which discourse is produced. However, different contexts and cultures can be assumed to capitalize on the two modes in different ways and present different preferences. In this way, we can talk about narratively-oriented and non-narratively oriented cultures, or cultures with a narrative and a non-narrative bias. For instance, Maranhão's study (1993) of the community of Icarai (north-east Brazil) offers important insights into this cultural variability. According to it, the community members encode their claims about knowledge and their views about and explanations of the world almost exclusively in the narrative mode. Stories occur after questions in the place of expected, by western standards, short speech acts (turns in conversation, reactions, corrections, etc.). As Maranhão describes: 'the fishermen who told me long fishing stories were demonstrating their knowledge to an ethnographer whose 'scientific' curiosity was interpreted as scepticism' (1993: 265). He goes on to suggest that for him (as an ethnographer) knowledge was defined in terms of explanatory (in our terms, non-narrative) eloquence, while for other communities knowledge partakes in different, narrative spheres of discourse. It can be concluded that narrative and non-narrative can be seen as 'culturally given ways of organizing and presenting discourse' (Hodge and Kress 1988). It is clear that further research is needed on the semiotic role of each mode, as well as for establishing universal and culture-specific patterns and their social implications.

With regard to this latter point, de Beaugrande (1993: 18) has noted the 'insider' and 'outsider' function of register in use. We would expect this to be especially true of the distinction between the two modes. Our research (Georgakopoulou and Goutsos 1997b) indicates, for example,

the validity of studying mediated discourse in Greek in the light of the narrative vs. non-narrative distinction, as well as the narrative bias of the Greek society (Georgakopoulou 1997). It could further be suggested that this bias correlates with the interdependence or ingroup relations, which have been identified as prevalent in the culture (e.g., Triandis et al. 1988) and as intimately linked with such uses of linguistic strategies as positive politeness (Sifianou 1992). Mappings between the two modes and dimensions of cultural variability should be made. This research should draw on and benefit from studies which have attested to the cultural variability of certain styles of argumentation (e.g., Hatim and Mason 1990) and narration (e.g., Gee 1990).

On the basis of the modes' prototypical referential, textual and contextual features, as outlined here, it is to be expected that cultures with a narrative bias will value different kinds and sources of knowledge and evidence than those of non-narrative: e.g., experiential, anecdotal evidence vs. factual evidence based on proof. This is clearly reflected in the different kinds of knowledge appealed to by scholars belonging to successive generations. For instance, the development of scientific research seems to be based on diverse stances towards the two modes, as Atkinson (1993), among others, has suggested. Further research is needed in this area of the historical development of the dichotomy in a wide variety of genres.

It can further be suggested that the narrative vs. non-narrative distinction can provide us with the means of re-interpreting traditional linguistic distinctions like Chafe's (1982) continua of involvement-detachment and integration-fragmentation, as well as sociolinguistic notions like Bernstein's (1971) restricted vs. elaborated code. These dimensions of language use could be fully understood as aspects of the basic symbolic activities of the narrative and non-narrative modes. Grabe and Kaplan (1996: 139) point out the enormous pedagogical and educational implications of such a view.

Studies of media discourse have already attested to a prototypical association between the use of narrative discourse and lay participants: stories and accounts are the principal discursive forms through which lay participants express and validate their individual experiences. This comes in contrast to opinion-expressing (i.e., non-narrative) discourse, which characterizes the contributions of expert participants. The proliferation and popularity of audience participation programs has had significant consequences for models of the public sphere as the site for rational exchange of opinions (Habermas 1984), by marking a shift in the balance of the types of voices that are given access to this public sphere. Lay experience and its narrativization have thus been legitimized

to an unprecedented extent (Scannell 1991; Livingstone and Lunt 1994). Diverse experiences and accounts of reality are constructed through the interplay of the two modes in the proliferating field of electronic media, involving fictional explorations of experience, docu-dramas or documentary coverage of events, 'expert' descriptions of 'lay' experiences, etc. (Georgakopoulou and Goutsos 1997b).⁶

The issue of legitimization and construction of authority in different discourses is a central concern in broader studies of postmodern culture and theory. Narratives increasingly emerge as ways of challenging the status of knowledge and the epistemological principles of other discourses. As such, they provide a vehicle for the voices of disenfranchised groups with restricted access to dominant discourses. For instance, feminist and critical discourse theorists advocate the introduction of personal storytelling into non-narrative domains, by claiming that the use of stories, for example, by victimized women in cases of rape, helps to illuminate issues that would otherwise be obscured in a narrow legal context (Mumby 1993). In the realm of literature, novelists as diverse as Julian Barnes, Michael Ondaatje, Salman Rushdie and Milorad Pavic share a common post-structuralist concern with a dynamic interplay between different aspects of the narrative vs. non-narrative distinction as an answer to the demands of a post-colonial era. More generally, the work of prominent figures like Lyotard (1984) and White (1978) points out that issues of narrativity and its opposite are central to our conception of history and social reality. It seems, therefore, that the implications of the narrative vs. non-narrative distinction are far-reaching. A systematic analysis of their properties is thus expected to provide us with a solid ground for describing the interface between discourse and culture.

Brown argues that the most important contribution of the notion of postmodernism has been in the growing awareness that 'norms are not viewed merely as objective products, but also as symbolic processes that are inherently persuasive' (1994: 25). In his view, the rhetorical analysis of texts has a 'positive, constructive task', which begins with 'the human authorship of human worlds: it requires us to imagine more adequate narratives for our political community, and to show how academic writing can help create these narratives' (1994: 25). We would like to argue that the precise linguistic characterization of the two modes is indispensable for a rigorous description of postmodernism in this process. By considering the different tasks of symbolic processes through notions such as truth claims, discourse functions, macro-structures and levels of self-presentation, we can provide concrete help in disentangling the problems of current theories. In effect, the study of the dynamic interplay

between the means of reconstructing and modeling social reality through narrative and non-narrative can be used as a means of redrawing both discourse and culture boundaries.

Notes

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- 2 In the continental literature, 'text-type' and 'discourse type' have also been used in a more restricted sense, namely as part of a two level typology referring to strategic and realization levels (e.g., Virtanen 1992).
- 3 For instance, Mishler (1995) attests to the importance of the tripartite distinction as a typological principle of narrative analysis.
- 4 For a critique see Edwards (1997: 269ff).
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- 6 It would seem again that the narrative vs. non-narrative distinction recaptures in a most successful way that between 'oral' and 'literate' modes used by Fiske and Hartley (1978) to describe media discourse.

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