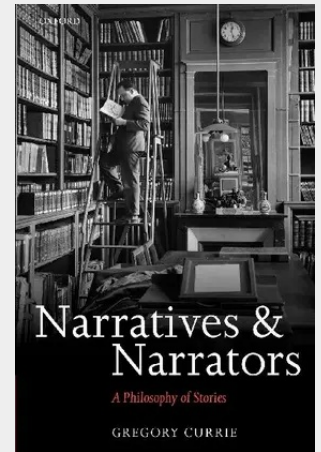


Narratives and Narrators

A Philosophy of Stories

Narratives are artefacts of a special kind: they are intentionally crafted devices which fulfil their story-telling function by manifesting the intentions of their makers. But narrative itself is too inclusive a category for much more to be said about it than this; we should focus attention instead on the vaguely defined but interesting category of things rich in narrative structure. Such devices offer significant possibilities, not merely for the representation of stories, but for the expression of point of view; they have also played an important role in the evolution of reliable communication. Narratives and narrators argues that much of the pleasure of narrative communication depends on deep-seated and early developing tendencies in human beings to imitation and to joint attention, and imitation turns out to be the key to understanding such important literary techniques as free indirect discourse and character-focused narration. The book also examines irony in narrative, with an emphasis on the idea of the expression of ironic points of view. It looks closely at the idea of character, or robust, situation-independent ways of acting and thinking, as it is represented in narrative. It asks whether scepticism about the notion of character should have us reassess the dramatic and literary tradition which places such emphasis on character.

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