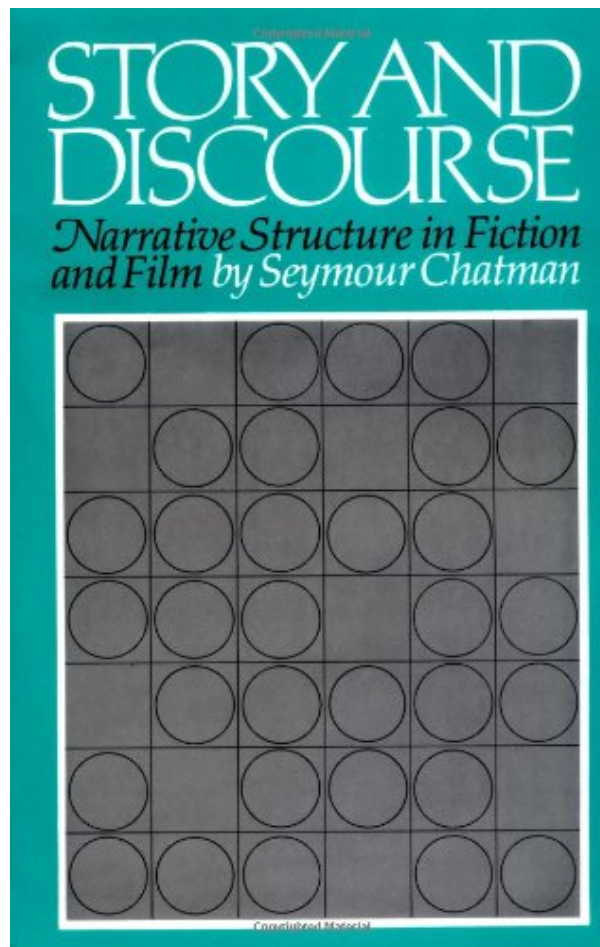


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STRUCTURE IN FICTION AND FILM BY
SEYMOUR CHATMAN**



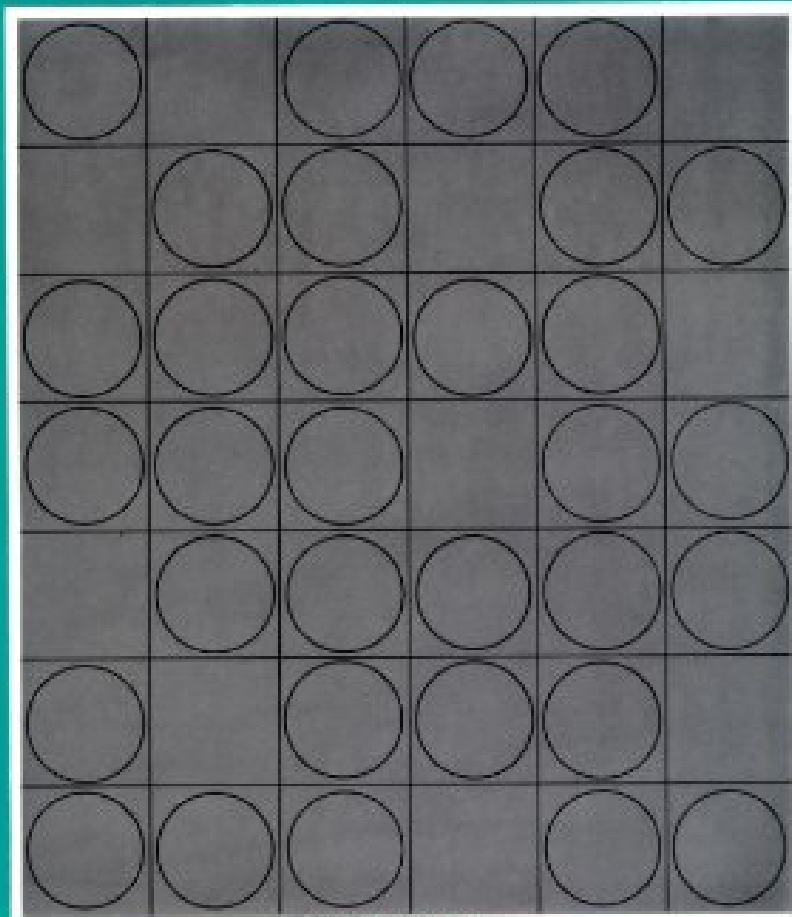
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Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film. 'For the specialist in the study of narrative structure, this is a solid and very perceptive exploration of the issues salient to the telling of a story-whatever the medium. Chatman, whose approach here is at once dualist and structuralist, divides his subject into the 'what' of the narrative (Story) and the 'way'(Discourse)... Chatman's command of his material is impressive.'

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"An important American contribution to the study of narrative theory."?Choice

"What I appreciate most in Chatman's study are the problem-solving activities and ambitions: again and again, he proves capable of defining areas to investigate (the borders between narrative and other temporal genres, for example, the typography of plots, the distinctive features of foregrounding and backgrounding) and of discussing narrative in terms of problems and solutions. When I opened the Chatman volume, I read the blurb first: 'A judicious and well-informed book, Story and Discourse should become the standard guide to narrative and to modern thinking about narrative.' The blurb is right."?Gerald Prince, MLN

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35 of 35 people found the following review helpful.

Rhetoric and Narrative

By Adirondack Views

Chatman's book has been around for a while, but it is still probably the best summary of structuralist

narrative theory out there. Chatman makes the very important connection between narrative theory and its rhetorical effects on audience. His treatment of the construction of time in narrative summarizes several other prominent narrative theorists, but his terminology is perhaps the most useful. His clear presentation of the distinction between "story" and "discourse" (often called "l'histoire" and "recit" after Genette) and the linking of discourse to rhetorical theory is perhaps the book's most useful feature. Chatman, whose early works included a treatise on poetic meter, is known primarily as a film theorist, but his work analyzes narrative in many media and in many forms. I have used this book as an introduction to narrative theory in my classes.

16 of 17 people found the following review helpful.

very useful

By Picky Consumer

This is a terrifically useful book and is quite well known in graduate student circles. I came across it randomly at a bookstore when I was searching for a good introduction to literary theory and basic concepts. This book was clear and insightful and Chatman's presentation has since become the anchor around which I was able to read and digest all the other books that came after it. If you're looking for a 'way into' literary theory concepts, this one will be very helpful.

The title, story and discourse - refers to the basic distinction literary theorists make between a story (chronological set of events) and its narration (chronology can be manipulated to produce various rhetorical effects such as suspense, etc).

48 of 48 people found the following review helpful.

Useful for analyzing written and film narratives

By Gideon Haberkorn

This book offers, for me, the most understandable model of a narrative I've read so far. Chatman offers helpful concepts for analyzing both written and film narratives. He tries to create a synthesis of all narrative theory before his book, and he does a very good job. Instead of getting lost in a collection of different approaches, you actually find yourself connecting them all, seeing where they fit together.

Among all the books on narratology and narrative analysis I've read, this is the one most helpful not only for analyzing film narratives but also written narratives (although I would always recommend you also read "Narratology: An Introduction", "Narrative Fiction" and perhaps Bordwell and Thompson's "Film Art : An Introduction", if you want to focus especially on films).

This book and the way Chatman dissects the narrative are also interesting for people more interested in writing than in analysis: I believe the parts Chatman splits the narrative into resemble very closely those writers use in putting one together. So this book may actually help writers gain new insights into what they are doing instinctively.

First and foremost, however, it is a very useful book for the student and scholar of literature.

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