

Communication and narrative theories

A comunicação e as teorias narrativas

LARISSA CONCEIÇÃO DOS SANTOS^a

Universidade Federal do Pampa, São Borja - RS, Brazil

ABSTRACT

This is a review of the book *Diccionario de Teorías Narrativas 2: narratología, cine, videojuegos, medios*, edited and organized by Spanish Lorenzo Vilches Manterola, full Professor Emeritus at the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona (UAB), launched in 2021, in a physical and ebook format by the publisher Caligrama in Spanish. The book, organized in the form of a dictionary, has approximately 450 entries that bring to light not only fundamental concepts regarding contemporary Narrative Theories but also applications and methodologies that relate to narratology, the media, and communication.

Keywords: Narrative, communication, dictionary, narratology

RESUMO

Trata-se de uma resenha do livro *Diccionario de Teorías Narrativas 2: narratología, cine, videojuegos, medios*, editado e organizado pelo espanhol Lorenzo Vilches Manterola, Professor Catedrático e Emérito da Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona (UAB), lançado em 2021 em formato impresso e ebook pela editora Caligrama, em língua espanhola. A obra, organizada em forma de dicionário, conta com aproximadamente 450 entradas (verbetes) que trazem à luz não apenas conceitos fundamentais, a respeito das Teorias Narrativas contemporâneas, mas também aplicações e metodologias que colocam em relação a narratologia, a mídia e a Comunicação.

Palavras-chave: Narrativa, comunicação, dicionário, narratologia.

^a Associate Professor at Universidade Federal do Pampa (UNIPAMPA). PhD in Information and Communication Sciences (CELSA, Université Paris-Sorbonne) and PhD in Communication Sciences by Escola de Comunicações e Artes from Universidade de São Paulo (ECA-USP). Researcher linked to the Centro de Estudos de Comunicação Organizacional e Relações Públicas – Cecorp (ECA-USP), the t3xto research group (UNIPAMPA) and the Laboratoire Gripic (CELSA/Paris-Sorbonne). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1834-5547>. Email: larissa.conceicao@gmail.com

Vilches Manterola, Lorenzo. (Ed.) (2021) *Diccionario de Teorías Narrativas 2: Narratología, cine, videojuegos, medios*. Caligrama. 883p.

NARRATIVE HAS ALWAYS been present in society, circulating in the most varied forms and formats, as Roland Barthes noted in his remarkable introduction to a dossier dedicated to narratives published in France in 1966, which later became a landmark for scholars of this subject. From this, one can observe the importance of narratives as a form of human expression and communication (Benjamin, 1994), as a manifestation and understanding of reality and the world surrounding us (Bruner, 1991), as a constituent element of communities and maintenance of memory and culture in a continuous transmission of reports and knowledge between different generations, which led some scholars, such as Walter Fisher (1984), to understand narration as a true paradigm of human communication.

Research in the field of communication in Brazil shows a growing interest in themes related to narratives: studies in which the theoretical matrix is based on narrative or narratological theories, investigations in which narratives are the central object of analysis or even those that mobilize methodologies and techniques of narrative analysis.

In this scenario, Lorenzo Vilches Manterola's recent *Diccionario de Teorías Narrativas 2: narratología, cine, videojuegos, medios* (2nd Dictionary of Narrative Theories: narratology, cinema, video games, media), edited and published in 2021, fulfills a primary role by providing a robust and grounded selection of the main concepts in vogue regarding narratology and, at the same time and in an innovative way, the main methodologies and applications of the concepts presented.

As a continuation of the proposal started in 2017, with the publication of the first dictionary focused on narratives, cinema, and transmedia, *Diccionario 2* contains approximately 450 entries by researchers from different countries, including Brazil. The entries are arranged alphabetically and by thematic index into: Approximations, Cinema, Media, Theories, and Video games, facilitating the search and selection by these key terms.

According to Vilches Manterola, the section "approximations" aims to open up space to diverse strands that enable the articulation of the narratives circulating in society with themes related to gender, women, and the individual taken as narrative subjects. The entries thus include approaches about (post)feminism, dance, women and photography, organizational and sports narratives, among others.

The entries in the “cinema” section deal with its theoretical analysis of film characters, semiotic narrative analysis of cinema, cinema and cognitive theory, typology of the film genre, etc. – but also historical aspects –, Westerns, ethnographic cinema in Latin America, *fotonovela*, the “new Japanese wave,” etc. – as well as critical reflections on the studies of neurofilmology and spectator categories.

The thematic index “media” concentrates entries that relate narrative to the most diverse media and, above all, televisual concepts, elements, and objects. Including entries such as “users of narrative media” – aficionados, amateurs, audiences, cinephiles, fans, geeks, etc. –, the evolution of audiovisual narrative media, immersive journalism and transmidiality, television and the temporality of digital media, in addition to television series as objects of narrative analysis.

The largest number of entries is concentrated in the “theories” section, which contains fundamental concepts on the study of narratives – events, happenings, quinary schemes, enchainment, achronic structures, story arcs, plot construction, narrative definitions, model reader, narrative rhetoric, intrigue, narrative sequence, etc. – and transdisciplinary approaches that help the understanding of the mobilized terms, theories, and examples – biofiction, cyberpunk, transmedia culture, folktales and magical tales, folklore, history, literature, urban legends, transfictionality, etc.

One of the novelties of *Diccionario 2* was the inclusion of themes related to video games in entries that explore this universe and the particularities of plots, storylines, and narrative temporality from different game examples and genres – Arcade, ARG, RPG, etc. –, character analysis, the characteristic typologies of games to model players, and video game narration.

In Lorenzo Vilches Manterola’s words, the publication of the second dictionary has become fundamental to cover and complement the currently developed narrative approaches. Some contributions derived from the narrative theories in the book can be mentioned, such as anthologies, narrative structures and configurations, the explanation of models and paradigms, audiovisual media, the art of fiction and its digital evolution, skills and knowledge, critical narrative culture and its ideological representation, and innovation and communication.

Thus, the book fulfills a role greater than that of a mere dictionary in the strict sense of the term. The dense 883-page publication offers readers theories, concepts, methodologies, applied examples, and further references to the themes listed at the end of each entry.

Some particularly unique and current entries deserve to be highlighted, such as those related to narratives and games, which address everything from the analysis of the characters and the history and narrative format in such games

to the narrative approach of the new wave of Japanese documentary cinema or even to narrative productions (notably audiovisual ones) with a focus on feminism and post-feminism.

Such perspectives, theories, and applications in the dictionary constitute a reliable and up-to-date source for communication researchers – whether beginners or those already initiated in narrative studies –, who can, by consulting its entries, immerse themselves in the vast field of classical and post-classical narratology (Herman, 1997; Prince, 2008), getting to know and recognizing the studies and scholars who have dedicated themselves to such themes.

Considering the dissemination of this theme between the different areas of Communication – as can be observed by the publications of Santos and D’Almeida (2012), Cogo (2012), Nassar (2016), and Andreoni and Scroferneker (2019), which analyze narratives from the perspective of Public Relations and Organizational Communication; Zozzoli (2012), Brandão (2016), Covaleski (2012), and Carrascoza (2014) in their investigations on the relationship between narratives, brands, and consumption under the scope of Advertising; and the various studies developed by researchers in journalism, as per the survey conducted by Martinez and Iuama (2016), within the scope of the Brazilian Society of Researchers in Journalism – as shown by the expressive publications of the Research Network of Contemporary Media Narratives (RENAMI) (Maia & Martinez, 2018; Maia & Passos, 2020; Soster & Piccinin, 2017; Soster & Piccinin, 2019). The importance of a work that presents theoretical subsidies and narrative perspectives that dialogue with communicational studies is thus remarkable.

Considering such diversity, it should be noted that, although the proposal to summarize narrative theories in dictionaries has already been developed by other authors – such as the seminal work by Gerald Prince (1987) –, such adopt the mere definition of concepts or terms in a strict way, not intending to develop a broad foundation about them. Moreover, such dictionaries (Calatrava, 2004; Herman, Jahn & Ryan, 2005; Prince, 1987; Reis, 2018; Reis & Lopes, 2000) are conceived within the scope of Language and Literature, thus focusing on linguistic and literary studies, from which narratology originated.

Vilches Manterola’s publication thus distinguishes itself by the originality of its narratological approach, in interface with communication studies, as well as by the content and depth with which the concepts are presented but, above all, by its – almost encyclopedic – ambition that enables us to glimpse a panorama of the state of the art of classical narrative theories and of many other contemporary emerging perspectives. ■

REFERENCES

- Andreoni, R., & Scroferneker, C. M. A. (2019). Comunicação e memória organizacional: para além da produção de narrativas representacionais. *Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias de la Comunicación*, 18(32), 166-176.
- Barthes, R. (1966). Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits, *Communication*, 8, 7-33.
- Benjamin, W. (1994). *Obras escolhidas: v. 1. Magia e técnica, arte e política: ensaios sobre literatura e história da cultura*. Brasiliense.
- Brandão, V. C. (2016). *Quando o livro se torna publicidade: a narrativa na mediação entre poética e retórica do consumo* [Apresentação de trabalho]. Congresso Internacional de Comunicação e Consumo, São Paulo, São Paulo, Brasil.
- Bruner, J. (1991). The narrative construction of reality. *Critical inquiry*, 18(1), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1086/448619>
- Calatrava, J. R. V. (2004). *Diccionario de teoría de la narrativa*. Alhulia.
- Carrascoza, J. A. (2014). *Estratégias criativas da publicidade: consumo e narrativa publicitária*. Estação das Letras e Cores.
- Covaleski, R. L. (2012). O processo de hibridização da narrativa publicitária. *Revista Comunicación*, 1, 52-62.
- Fisher, W. R. (1984). Narration as a human communication paradigm: The case of public moral argument. *Communications Monographs*, 51(1), 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637758409390180>
- Herman, D. (1997). Scripts, Sequences, and Stories: Elements of a Postclassical Narratology. *PMLA*, 112(5), 1046-59. <https://doi.org/10.2307/463482>
- Herman, D., Jahn, M., & Ryan, M-L. (Eds.). (2005). *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. Routledge.
- Nassar, P. (2016). Novas Narrativas e memória: olhares epistemológicos. In M. M. K. Kunsch (Org.), *Comunicação Organizacional Estratégica: aportes conceituais e aplicados* (pp.77-100). Summus.
- Maia, M., & Martinez, M. (2018). *Narrativas midiáticas contemporâneas: perspectivas metodológicas*. Catarse.
- Maia, M., & Passos, M. Y (2020). *Narrativas midiáticas contemporâneas: epistemologias dissidentes*. Catarse.
- Martinez, M., & Iuama, T. R. (2016). *Primeiras reflexões sobre a pesquisa em narrativas midiáticas no Brasil* [Apresentação de trabalho]. 14º Encontro Nacional de Pesquisadores em Jornalismo, Palhoça, SC.
- Prince, G. (1987). *A dictionary of narratology*. University of Nebraska Press.
- Prince, G. (2008). Classical and/or Postclassical Narratology. *L'Esprit Créateur*, 48(2), 115-123. <https://doi.org/10.1353/esp.0.0005>

- Reis, C. (2018). *Dicionário de estudos narrativos*. Almedina.
- Reis, C., & Lopes, A. C. M. (2000). *Dicionário de narratologia*. Almedina.
- Santos, L. C. & D'Almeida, N. (2012). *A abordagem narrativa nos estudos de comunicação organizacional* [Apresentação de trabalho]. Latin American Conference – UC/ICA, Santiago, Chile.
- Soster, D. A., & Piccinin, F. (2017). *Narrativas midiáticas contemporâneas: Perspectivas epistemológicas*. Catarse.
- Soster, D. A., & Piccinin, F. (2019). *Narrativas midiáticas contemporâneas: Sujeitos, corpos e lugares*. Catarse.
- Zozzoli, J-C. J. (2012). *De contar histórias em campanhas publicitárias ao storytelling aplicado à marca no quadro da comunicação complexa* [Apresentação de trabalho]. 35º Congresso Brasileiro de Ciências da Comunicação, Fortaleza, Ceará, Brasil.

Article received on February 16 and approved on July 28, 2022.