

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI VERONA
DIPARTIMENTO DI LINGUE E LETTERATURE STRANIERE

ENGLISH LITERATURE &
CULTURE
2018/2019
[TANDEM]

Dr RAFFAELE CUTOLO





MAN IS A STORYTELLING ANIMAL

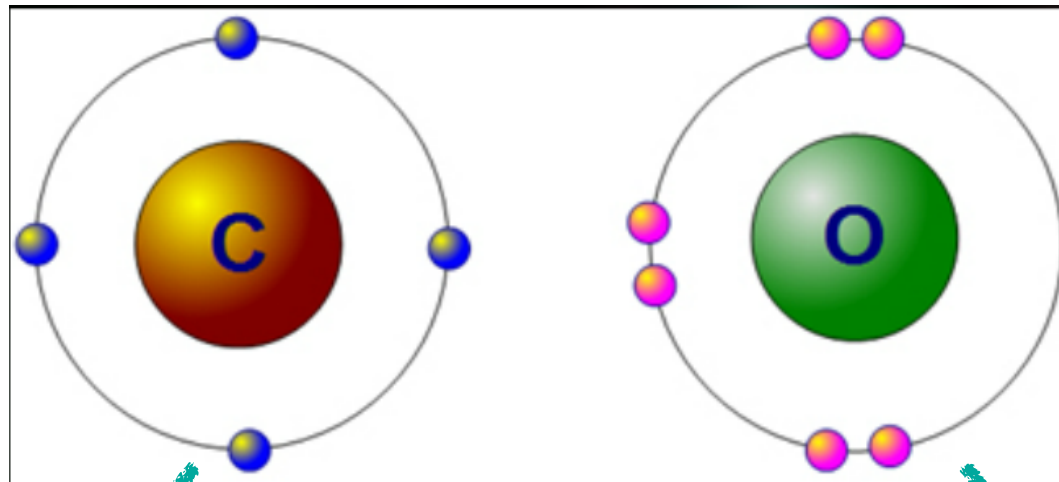
G. Swift, *Waterland*, 1983.

MAN IS A STORYTELLING ANIMAL



The concept of valence in
chemistry and grammar

valence in chemistry



has 4
needs 4

has 6
needs 2

valence in grammar

SLEEP

They sleep

VALENCE: 1

EAT

They ate something

VALENCE: 2

MOVE

**They moved my bag
from my seat to that
one**

VALENCE: 4

valence in grammar

TELL

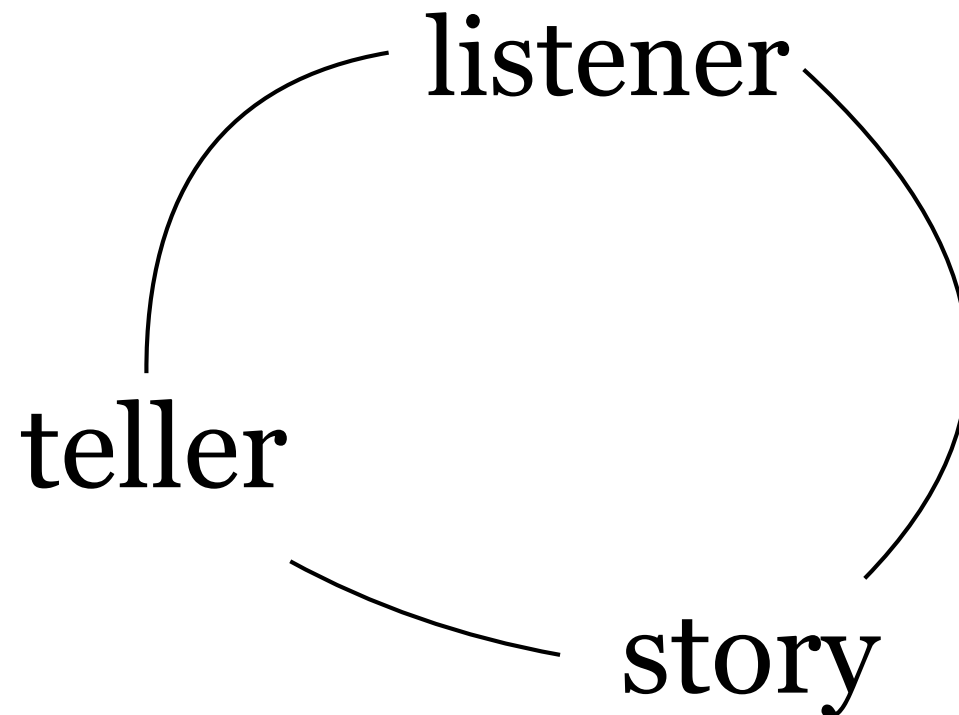
They told **us** a **story**

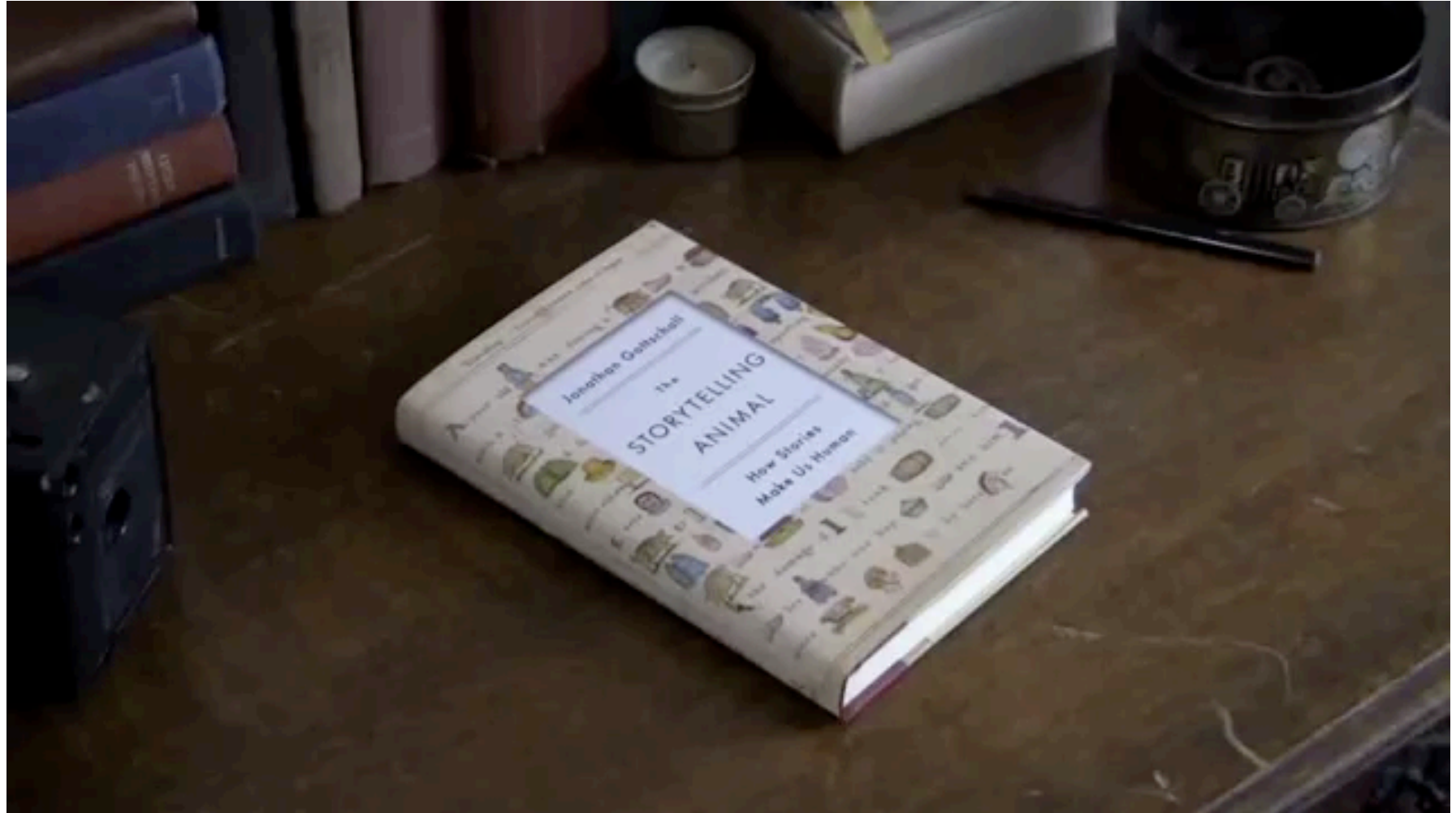
VALENCE: 3

MAN IS A STORYTELLING ANIMAL



tripartite relationship between





MAN IS A STORYTELLING ANIMAL

Stories do not belong to storytellers and story listeners because all stories are “reassemblies of fragments **on loan**” and “depend on shared narrative sources.”

MAN IS A STORYTELLING ANIMAL

Stories not only contribute to the making of our narrative selves but also weave the threads of social relationships and make life social.

MAN IS A STORYTELLING ANIMAL

Stories have certain distinct capacities that enable them to do what they do best and can be understood as narrative types or genres. Though distinct, genres of stories depend on one another, for there is no such thing as a pure genre, and all tale types have a symbiotic relationship to one another.

MAN IS A STORYTELLING ANIMAL

Socio-narratology encourages a dialogic mode of interpretation so that all voices can be heard, and open up a story for various interpretations and possible uses.

MAN IS A STORYTELLING ANIMAL

Socio-narratology, although always relational in recognizing that all parties act, pays most attention to stories acting. It analyzes how stories breathe as they animate, assemble, entertain, and enlighten, and also deceive and divide people.

MAN IS A STORYTELLING ANIMAL

Analysis demands that we learn from storytellers. “The primary lesson from storytellers is that they learn to work with stories that are not *theirs* but *there*, as realities. Master storytellers know that stories breathe.”

MAN IS A STORYTELLING ANIMAL

neural coupling

A story activates parts in the brain that allow listeners to turn the story into their own ideas and experiences thanks to a process called neural coupling.

mirroring

Listeners will not only experience a similar brain activity to one another, but also similar to the speaker.



dopamine

The brain releases dopamine into the system when it experiences an emotionally charged event, making it easier to remember and with greater accuracy.

cortex activity

When processing facts, two areas of the brain are activated (Broca's and Wernicke's area). A well told story can engage many different areas, including the motor cortex, sensory cortex, and frontal cortex.

FAIRY TALES STICK

Jack Zipes - memetics and fairy tales

capability of the fairy tale to adapt itself to several cultural changes.

relevance

relevance

All tales want to be relevant, in the same way that we seek to make ourselves relevant through storytelling. Tales do not have agency. They are not alive, but they breathe



ORAL TRADITION

the folktale

from folktales to fairy tales

the “classic” fairy tale is a *literary* appropriation of the older folk tale, an appropriation which nevertheless continues to exhibit and reproduce some *folkloric* creatures. As a “borderline” or transitional genre, it bears the traces of **orality**, folkloric **tradition**, and socio-cultural **performance** [...] And conversely, even when it claims to be folklore, the fairy tale is shaped by literary traditions with different social uses and users.

C. Bacchilega, *Postmodern Fairy Tales: Gender and Narrative Strategies*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 3.

from folktales to fairy tales

Francesco Straparola's collection titled
Le piacevoli notti (1553)

Giambattista Basile's
Lo cunto de li cunti (1634-1636).

from folktales to fairy tales

French authors of the late 1600s,

Charles Perrault

Catherine Bernard

Henriette Julie de Murat

conte de fée

from folktales to fairy tales

French authors of the late 1600s,

Charles Perrault

Catherine Bernard

Henriette Julie de Murat



from folktales to fairy tales

Germany 1800s

The Grimm Brothers

from folktales to fairy tales

England 1700s

James Ridley's *Tales of the Genii* (1764)

Horace Walpole's *Hieroglyphic Tales* (1766-1772)

William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786).

from folktales to fairy tales

The **Victorian** Fairy Tale, England 1800s

literary products that carried an important didactic value, which aimed at highlighting the importance of the child's operative role in society

from folktales to fairy tales

The **Victorian** Fairy Tale, England 1800s

Colin Manlove describes the nineteenth century as the **Renaissance** of English **fantasy**, a genre that had been neglected for over a century

from folktales to fairy tales

The **Victorian** Fairy Tale, England 1800s

multifaceted set of narratives in which social stability, social order, and the set of Englishness-dictated behavioural norms could be questioned, challenged, subverted, and also re-established.

from folktales to fairy tales

The **Victorian** Fairy Tale, England 1800s

Francis Edward Paget, Catherine Sinclair, Mark Lemon

used the didactic fairy tale to overtly foster a moral teaching for the future adults of Victorian society

from folktales to fairy tales

The **Victorian** Fairy Tale, England 1800s

**Lewis Carroll, George MacDonald, Oscar Wilde,
and Edith Nesbit**

instilled a utopian spirit into the fairy-tale discourse that endowed the genre with a vigorous and unique quality of social criticism.

from folktales to fairy tales

The **Victorian** Fairy Tale, England 1800s

Margaret Gatty, Mary Louise Molesworth, and Lucy Clifford

moved along both of these paths producing works that “contain buried subtexts which modify, contradict, and sometimes unravel the threads of moral tapestry”³ in a narrative that creates a clash between the liberating imaginative content, and the formal structure of the morality tale.

from folktales to fairy tales

The features of fairy tales

Vladimir Propp

> functions of the Russian tales
(structuralist perspective)

Once Upon a Time

All in the golden afternoon
Full leisurely we glide;
For both our oars, with little skill,
By little arms are plied,
While little hands make vain pretense
Our wanderings to guide.

Ah, cruel Three! In such an hour,
Beneath such dreamy weather,
To beg a tale of breath too weak
To stir the tiniest feather!
Yet what can one poor voice avail
Against three tongues together?

Imperious Prima flashes forth
Her edict to "begin it"--
In gentler tones Secunda hopes
"There will be nonsense in it"--
While Tertia interrupts the tale
Not more than once a minute.

Anon, to sudden silence won,
In fancy they pursue
The dream-child moving through a land
Of wonders wild and new,
In friendly chat with bird or beast--
And half believe it true.

And ever, as the story drained
The wells of fancy dry,
And faintly strove that weary one
To put the subject by,
"The rest next time"--"It is next time!"
The happy voices cry.

Thus grew the tale of Wonderland:
Thus slowly, one by one,
Its quaint events were hammered out--
And now the tale is done,
And home we steer, a merry crew,
Beneath the setting sun.

Alice! a childish story take,
And with a gentle hand
Lay it where Childhood's dreams are twined
In Memory's mystic band,
Like pilgrim's withered wreath of flowers
Plucked in a far-off land.



Choose a fairy tale and
identify five of its
memes