

Core Concepts and Basic Theories of Narrative: A Conversation with Gerald Prince

Shang Biwu & Gerald Prince

Abstract: Gerald Prince is Professor of Romance Languages at the University of Pennsylvania. The author of *A Grammar of Stories* (1973), *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative* (1982), *A Dictionary of Narratology* (1987), *Narrative as Theme: Studies in French Fiction* (1992), Prince is a leading scholar of narrative poetics. Developing such key concepts as *narratee*, *narrativity*, *disnarrated*, and *narrative grammar*, Prince has helped to shape the discipline of narratology. In 2013, Prince received the Wayne C. Booth Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Society for the Study of Narrative, an organization that he presided in 2007. During Prince's visit to SJTU for the Summer Seminar on Narratology, Professor Shang Biwu interviewed him on a wide range of issues concerning narrativity, the definition of narrative and of a minimal story, the distinction between narrative and non-narrative, the correlation between classical narratology and post-classical narratology, and postcolonial narratology.

Key words: definition of narrative; narrativity; minimal story; postcolonial narratology

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标题: 叙事的核心概念及其基本理论: 杰拉德·普林斯对话录

内容摘要: 杰拉德·普林斯是宾夕法尼亚大学罗曼语系教授, 国际叙事学研究协会前主席, 国际叙事学研究协会终生成就奖获得者。作为当今世界最杰出的叙事学家之一, 普林斯在其学术生涯中开创性地提出了受述者、叙事性、叙事语法、未发生叙述等概念, 出版《故事语法》(1973)、《叙事学: 叙事的形式与功能》(1982)、《叙事学词典》(1987)、《作为主题的叙事: 法国小说研究》(1992) 等系列权威论著, 有力地促进了叙事学的发展。2017年夏, 普林斯教授应邀在上海交通大学暑期叙事学讲习班授课。期间, 尚必武教授就叙事性、叙事的定义、最小故事、叙事与非叙事之分、经典叙事学与后经典叙事学之间的关系, 以及后殖民叙事学等相关话题同普林斯展开对话。现

就对话内容整理刊出，以求教于读者。

关键词：叙事的定义；叙事性；最小故事；后殖民叙事学

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Shang Biwu (Shang for short hereafter): Dear Professor Prince, thank you for lecturing in SJTU Summer Seminar on Narratology and for taking part in this conversation about narrative studies. I am very pleased to say that some of your works — including *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative* and *A Dictionary of Narratology* — were translated into Chinese,¹ and that both are well received by their Chinese readers. As an admirer of your work, I have also translated your article “Classical and/or Postclassical Narratology” (2008).² When presenting to you the Wayne C. Booth Lifetime Achievement Award bestowed by the International Society for the Study of Narrative, Hilary Dannenberg said that “In terms of ideas, Gerald Prince’s rigorous theorizing of narrative in its many aspects has informed, inspired and encouraged many other scholars of narrative. The following key areas and concepts were invented or developed in his work: the narratee; the disnarrated; narrativity; narrative grammar; scholarship of the French novel; the art of studying narrative through minimal narratives; postcolonial narrative; narrative and gender.”³ I agree with every word said by Dannenberg. Undoubtedly, you’ve made tremendous contributions to narratology as an enterprise and discipline. So, our conversation will begin with an issue we are very curious about. How did you start your career as a narratologist?

Gerald Prince (Prince for short hereafter): That’s an interesting question. I was interested in a French writer, a very famous one, Jean-Paul Sartre, the famous existentialist and existentialist-Marxist philosopher. I was interested in his philosophy but I “mastered” his philosophy. And I was interested in his theater, but I also “mastered” his theater. What was left was his novels and short stories. I decided

1 See 杰拉德·普林斯：《叙事学：叙事的形式与功能》，徐强译。北京：中国人民大学出版社，2013年。杰拉德·普林斯：《叙述学词典》，乔国强、李孝弟译，上海：上海译文出版社，2011年。

2 See 杰拉德·普林斯：《经典/后经典叙事学》，尚必武译，载《叙事》（中国版）第五辑，唐伟胜主编，广州：暨南大学出版社，2013年，第147-154页。

3 Hilary Dannenberg, “2013—Gerald Prince.” <<http://narrative.georgetown.edu/awards/Boothprince.php>>

to do a thesis on the relationship between his view of the world and the narrative techniques that he used. And when I started my thesis, it was at the same time as the French founders of narratology were beginning to publish their work. So, as a student, I read their work and my first book was on Sartre's metaphysics and narrative techniques. And I used many of the narratological concepts that were being developed. That's how I became a narratologist.

Shang: In order to set up a kind of companion to the address by Hilary Dannenberg, I'd like to mention her article "Gerald Prince and the Fascination of What Doesn't Happen" (2014). In this article, Dannenberg claims that "The focus on the concept of *narrativity* in Gerald Prince's work demonstrates a keen interest in uncovering the ways by which a narrative can interest or fascinate the reader. Studying narrativity involves the investigation of the relative effectiveness or tellability of particular narratives, or what Prince has also called 'narratability'" (Dannenberg 304). Narrativity is a very essential notion in the arena of narrative inquiries. Without narrativity, we would hardly have the genre "narrative." On the one hand, narrativity is a kind of property or feature, which could be fruitfully used to draw a distinction between narrative and non-narrative. On the other hand, narrativity denotes a kind of degree, which makes some narratives look more narrative-like than other narratives. Could you say something more about the concept "narrativity"?

Prince: I think you said two things that are important. On the one hand, all narratives have narrativity, but on the other hand, some of them have a lot of it and some of them have so little of it that you don't even notice that they are narratives. So, the question is: what are the features that make you see more or less quickly that this is a narrative, this is a good story, this is a narrative that's very narrative. Among these features, there is the fact, for instance, that the events are represented as definite, as certain, rather than as possible or probable. No good story can hesitate for too long a time. It is fine to say "Well, I am not sure whether she did this or that, and I am not sure whether she was happy or not." But it's not fine to go on saying that you don't know what you're talking about, because narrative has to be positive. You can raise questions about some events. But the events have to be positive. They have to be discrete. They have to be bounded. They have to involve some conflicts, whether these conflicts are internal or external. They have to involve human or human-like experiences. For instance, weather reports are narratives: "Tomorrow it will rain and then it will snow" is a little narrative. But it's a lousy story. Why? Because there is no human experience that is talked about, because there is no conflict that is talked about, because it is just a relating of events.

Given that it's a weather report, we are not quite sure that the events will happen. Very often, it says it won't rain, and it rains. And I'm without an umbrella! That's really annoying.

Shang: I think each one of us is trying to be as good a narratologist as you are, but we encounter some obstacles. For example, most of the time, though we do have some good arguments and we also have the narratological framework or the narratological toolkit ready to realize them, we still don't know how to articulate them with much clarity. When talking about your narratological scholarship, Thomas G. Pavel says, "One of the most striking features of Gerald Prince's work is its unswerving commitment to conceptual and stylistic clarity" (Pavel 298). Clarity is the keyword in Pavel's compliment. Do you have any secrets for writing narratological works with so much clarity?

Prince: I'll tell you something. If I don't understand myself, it's no good, but if I understand myself, then it's clear, because I am not that smart. So, if I understand what I've written, it means that it's clear. It's very important to understand what you're saying, to understand what you've written, to master what it is that you are saying, and not to try and hide your ignorance with a lot of words. Really, if you can understand what you're saying, it's good. If you don't understand what you're saying, it may be good in certain contexts, but not in narratology.

Shang: At least, we know what we're talking about now. I also agree with Pavel, who argues that "A rigorous but open-minded thinker, a genuine innovator, and a wise adviser, Prince is an inspiring example of creative scholarship in narrative studies" (Pavel 303). I can't agree with him more. You started your career as a classical narratologist and you published *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative* and *A Dictionary of Narratology*, but you are open-minded in that your ideas go with the climatic change of narratology. For example, in the 1980s, when Susan Lanser proposed a feminist narratology, she argued and fought fiercely with Nilli Diengott. You showed your support for Lanser, which she was very much grateful for, and she mentioned it in her own article "A Prince for All Seasons, With Notes Toward the Delineation of a *New Yorker* Narratee," when she paid tribute to your scholarly achievements. The other thing is that you have a wonderful way of working for the discipline of narratology by raising inspiring questions. For all these years, I've been working hard to answer the questions you list in "Forty-One Questions on the Nature of Narrative" (2000). You begin with "What is the difference, if any, between narrative, nonnarrative, and antinarrative" and you end with

“What are the necessary and sufficient conditions for something to be (a) narrative?” I think even today these questions are very much worth our efforts to answer them. Since you are here with us today, I will use this rare opportunity to invite you to answer some of the questions you raised a decade ago. As we know, human beings are storytelling animals. We enjoy stories, we try to be persons with stories, and we try to tell our stories very well. It is no exaggeration to say that story and storytelling constitute the way of our life. I will single out some questions you mention about stories. For example, question twenty-nine: “Are all narratives stories?” And question thirty-four: “What is a minimal story?”

Prince: Yes. First, let me point out that these are questions, which means I don’t necessarily have the answers. And even, originally, I wanted my title to be followed by a question mark: “Forty-One Questions on the Nature of Narrative” and a question mark. Because many of the questions involve more than one question. It’s more than forty-one questions. And I even wanted to put a question mark after my name, because who exactly is Gerry Prince? Gerry Prince, in some sense, is all the people who have worked on narrative. But Brian Richardson told me: “You cannot put a question mark after the title and especially after your name.” So I didn’t. I go back to your questions. One question is “Are all narratives stories?” I think my answer would be no. Stories are particular forms of narratives. Stories are narratives where the beginning and the end of the narrative are transformationally related. So, a story could be something like “She was rich, she played poker, she lost her money, and she became poor.” There is a transformational relation between the beginning and the end, “she was rich” and “she was poor.” Whereas many narratives do not necessarily have this structure. Earlier, I gave an example. “Tomorrow it will rain and then it will snow.” Well, there is no necessary link between rain and snow. It can rain and it can snow and then it can become sunny and then we can go out and then we can have dinner and so on. There is no transformational relation between the beginning and the end. So, my answer to the question “Are all narratives stories?” would be no. There are narratives that are not stories and they usually are not particularly interesting as narratives. They can be informative but are not necessarily interesting. But you also have narratives that are stories, where the beginning and the end (the beginning, the middle, and the end) cohere together, are related transformationally to each other. That would be my answer to the first question. “What is a minimal story?” I think the question is not that difficult. A minimal story is not any kind of minimal narrative. A minimal story is a story presenting a single event, one that does not presuppose and that does not imply the beginning or the end. For instance, “She was rich, she played poker, and she became poor.” That’s

a minimal story. There is only one event: “she played poker.” But this one event does not presuppose the fact that she was rich. She could be poor and play poker. And this one event does not imply the fact that she became poor, because she could play poker and win money. So, the one event does not presuppose the beginning and does not imply the end. That’s enough for a minimal story. Slowly, you can expand it, and I think I spoke about it a little bit today. You can expand a minimal story. You can add any number of events: “She played poker and she wasn’t very lucky and she continued to play and her luck didn’t change and she became poor.” I already expanded it a little bit. Or I can expand it further and say: “and then she played more poker and then she became rich.” Given a minimal story, I can expand it indefinitely. But a minimal story represents a single event, one that does not presuppose the beginning or imply the end. That’s what a minimal story is.

Shang: Ok, thanks for telling us a wonderful story about playing poker and then losing all the money and then winning all the money to become worthy again. A wonderful story. Let’s go from issues like story and minimal story and narrative to the very definition of narrative. As we know, generally it is agreed that, given that narratology is a theory of narrative, a fundamental concern, a primary concern, will be the definition of narrative. Without narrative, how are we going to do narratology? Basically, we have two types of definitions of narrative: in a narrow sense, narrative is mostly related to fiction, while in a broad sense, anything can be narrative. Let us go back to the last two questions on the list. “What are the advantages and disadvantages of a restrictive or an expansive definition of narrative(s) and narrativity?” and “What are the necessary and sufficient conditions for something to be (a) narrative?” First, could you comment on the two competing attitudes about the definition of narrative?

Prince: Yes. I like a narrow definition more than a broad one, because with a narrow one, even though it is narrow and may miss some narratives, at least you know what you’re talking about, whereas with a broad one, if everything is narrative, then it’s not very interesting to talk about. If someone tells me “This bottle is narrative,” I say “OK, fine,” you know. But it’s not that fine. So, I prefer a restrictive definition.

Shang: Regarding the distinction between narrative and nonnarrative, what are the necessary and sufficient conditions for something to be a narrative?

Prince: You do have to have the representation of at least one event. That is absolutely necessary. If you don’t have the representation of an event, of something that

happens, you don't have narrative. So, something like "My name is Gerry Prince" is not a narrative. It's a statement. It's a piece of information. Something like "How are you?" is not a narrative. It can be answered by a narrative: "Sometimes I get tired, I am not doing well because I got sick, etc. etc." But "How are you?" is not a narrative. Or take this little poem in English: "Roses are red, Violets are blue, Sugar is sweet, and so are you." It's not a narrative. It's a poem of affection and love. It does not involve any event. So, the necessary condition is that a narrative has at least one event. With sufficient conditions, you do have people who argue differently. Some people say that there has to be a human agent or a human patient. There has to be something related to human experience. For them, to say something like "It rained and then it snowed" is not enough to make a narrative. You have to have something like "It rained and I got wet and then it snowed and I got a cold and I became sick." That's a narrative. Because you have human experiences. Other people say that a single event is not enough: the representation of a single event is merely an event description. You need more: two events or even three events. Or you need the form I call a story, with beginning, middle and end. The point is that sufficient conditions sometimes vary with the theorist. But the necessary condition is: you have to have events. You have to have a change that is presented, that is mentioned, that is talked about. You have to have that change. When I was a kid — the following is for people who have a very broad definition of narrative — when I was a kid, I knew a good joke. A good joke for a kid. I was three or perhaps two. You have a painting. It's white. And you ask "What is it about?" Somebody tells you: "It's a story." "What's the story?" "Well, it's about a meadow, a cow in a meadow, and it ate all the grass and it left." Is the white painting a narrative? I don't think so. A narrative has to represent events. It has to mention a cow eating all the grass. It cannot leave everything to your imagination. So, the necessary condition is: it has to be the representation of at least one event. Maybe it should be two or three. That is arguable. But there has to be at least one.

Shang: When we talk about narrativity, narrative, and stories in terms of narratology today, I think that a very frequently talked about topic is the distinction between classical narratology and postclassical narratology. Since the time when David Herman initiated this distinction in his article "Scripts, Sequences, and Stories: Elements of a Postclassical Narratology" (1997) and the consequential collection *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis* (1999), since then, we have all these discussions about postclassical narratology and classical narratology. Some scholars do not really agree with Herman about the distinction between the two.

Meir Sternberg is a typical example.¹

Prince: Yeah.

Shang: I was very pleased to read your article “Classical and/or Postclassical Narratology” (2008). In the title of this article, you used “and/or”. Are there any reasons for doing so?

Prince: Yes. The reason why I said “and/or” is to show that there is a hesitation in the very definitions of classical and postclassical. If I say “classical and postclassical narratology,” I put together two things; I do not necessarily oppose them. I do not necessarily say it’s either one or the other. No. I say “classical and postclassical.” They are together somehow. If I say “classical or postclassical,” there’s possibly a choice to make. You may have to choose between one and the other. There is a stronger opposition between them. I wanted to show in the title that classical and postclassical narratology are not necessarily opposed. They can even be considered as going together (“and”) rather than being in conflict (“or”). That’s why I used both.

Shang: So, this way, we shall know why you have written all your articles on the one hand with much clarity, while on the other hand with much ambiguity.

Prince: Yeah. Because in the article, on the one hand, I say that — and I said it today, earlier — I say that postclassical narratology is really a prolongation, an expansion of classical narratology. It asks the same questions and also other questions. But I also say in the article that, on the other hand, there are differences between the two and we cannot ignore them or hide them under the rug. Classical narratology is much narrower and perhaps, in a sense, because it’s narrow, more rigorous. You know, because it’s more constrained. Postclassical narratology is perhaps less rigorous but it is richer because it asks many more questions. And I think that what happened in the field of narratology is that people, after a while, got bored with the narrowness, with classical narratology, and said “the hell with rigor! We want to ask certain other kinds of questions.” There was a session that was supposed to take place at the last narrative conference. It was supposed to be a session where there would be three participants: myself, Thomas Pavel, and Roy Sommer, who is a postcolonial narratologist and a postclassical one but with strong classical ideals. And the session was going to be called: “Narratology: Happiness, or Rigor.” It didn’t quite take place. Why? I wrote to Roy Sommer. I said: “When are we going

¹ Meir Sternberg, “Reconceptualizing narratology: Arguments for a Functionalist and Constructivist Approach to Narrative.” *Enthymema* 4 (2011): 35-37.

to propose the session?” and I didn’t get any answer. So, I thought: “ok! maybe he was drunk when he said ‘this is what we’re going to do next year.’” I didn’t get any answer, so I joined another session. But then Roy wrote to me saying: “So, when are we going to work on the session?” I said: “I wrote to you three months ago!” He said: “I never got your email!” And, indeed, I had sent it to the wrong address. So, it didn’t quite happen. But I like the notion of happiness or rigor. I was going to represent rigor, I think, and Thomas Pavel was going to represent happiness, and Roy Sommer was going to try and show how you can be happy and rigorous at the same time. But can you? I really think that the story of postclassical narratology is that people were rigorous but they weren’t happy, so they decided to be happy and forget about rigor. That’s how I tend to view the field.

Shang: Ok, but anyway we shall be very tolerant.

Prince: Yes.

Shang: We shall be happy and let other people be happy.

Prince: Yes, yes.

Shang: And then, in the article, you observed and you argued that postclassical narratology actually is not anti-formalist. Instead, you believe that “it is very much interested in form, its definitional powers, its systematic investigation” (Prince 117), and so on and so forth. And then, very interestingly, you conclude the article by saying: “Whether narratologists adopt classical or postclassical positions, whether they focus on specifying the nature of narrative grids or on exploring the ways various factors can inflect these grids, whether they give all or only some of their attention to form, the elaboration of such models is crucial to the coherence of the discipline and to the systematic study of its object. In other words, and at least in this sense, whatever direction it follows, narratology should continue to be formalist” (Prince 122).

Prince: Yes.

Shang: So, the question is, basically: if we believe that, in a way, all narratologists are working like formalists, it can be confusing to our followers, and in particular our students, or even the participants of the seminar on narratology; because, apparently, there is a kind of “contextualist turn,” and we really need to take all sorts of contextual elements into consideration. So, the problem is: what are we going to do with the formalist baby and the contextualist bathwater? Could you possibly

elaborate on this issue?

Prince: Well, that's a good point, Shang, I think. Because what I meant by "whatever positions you adopt, you have to be formalist," what I meant by that is that you should never forget form. Sometimes, you get so interested in context that you forget text and form. Sometimes, you ask so many different questions that you forget questions that are much more pertinent to narrativity, to plot, to point of view, to fundamental narratological categories. So, what's important, really, is to always remember form, is not to forget form by asking too many different questions. For that, I think one has to exercise tact and tell oneself — even as one is exploring context, even as one is asking questions that do not seem to be classical questions — one has to remind oneself, from time to time, that, "well, now, enough, I have to go back to form." That's what I meant. And one learns how to do it or one can decide not to do it. You know, after all, you are free not to do it, but for narratology it is important to remember that certain questions are fundamental and have to be asked again and again, regardless of how much you want to talk about context or you want to talk about things that are not particularly narrative. I'll give the following as an example: suppose you read a funny story, a story that makes you laugh. Well, comedy is not necessarily narrative. You can have comedy in non-narrative forms. So that if you read the comic story and you talk only about the comedy and not about the story, to my mind, you are not really doing narratology. You have to be able to combine the two, to combine your reflection on comedy with a reflection on the particular narrative techniques that foreground the comedy, that increase the comedy, that make it more interesting, or even more funny; you always should remember the narrative aspects of it. That's what I meant.

Shang: Thank you. Let's go back to the very issues of formalist pursuits and also contextual elements. Because I realize that, when commenting on classical and/or postclassical narratology, somehow, as I mentioned, you are very much open-minded and willing to explore some aspects of narrative in relation to ideology, and even history, and still other notions. In particular, you try to open and expand narratological inquiries into some neighboring fields. So, I was very happy to see you try to bring a happy marriage between postcolonial theory and narrative studies in your excellent and ground-breaking article "On a Postcolonial Narratology" (2005). On the one hand, I was very much pleased to see that you were going to go in this direction; on the other hand, to my regret, you stopped your exploring in this direction. To my knowledge, possibly, this is the only article you have written on the issue of postcolonial narratology. If we are going to pursue the line on postcolo-

nial narratology that you have outlined in that article, could you possibly elaborate some future directions or potential aspects? What are your suggestions about this fertile field?

Prince: You know, that piece, first of all, the origin of that piece is silly in a way. I am friends with Gayatri Spivak, who is a well-known postcolonial theorist. And we were talking about a postcolonial conference. She said: “You have to come.” And I said: “I would love to come.” But it was a conference by invitation and she wasn’t organizing it. She was being invited. Again, she said: “You should come.” I said: “But nobody is going to invite me to the conference.” Because I am not a postcolonial theorist. Then I said: “Wait a minute! I will write a piece on postcolonial narratology and I will be invited.” So I did. But I was not invited. But that’s just a “funny” story. In reality, what I do in the piece is explore various narratological features like point of view, like speed, like voice. But I examine them by wearing postcolonial glasses, the same way as Susan Lanser. When she does feminist narratology, she asks the question: what difference does it make if I read a text with feminist glasses or with masculine glasses? In the same way, I asked the question: what consequences are there if I read with various categories associated with the postcolonial in mind, the category hybridity, say, or the category of code switching (because language is very important in many postcolonial contexts, since you have to deal with the colonizer’s language and your own language if you are colonized)? What difference does it make? This is what one can begin to explore. I think there’s a lot to explore in what is said about the languages characters use and the hierarchy established between languages. There is a lot to be said about point of view, about the hierarchy of points of view and the accuracy of points of view. There is a lot to be said about the narrator’s voice: is it a divided voice or is it a unique and unified voice? These are things one can explore in either novels that are called postcolonial or in any narrative, even if it is not necessarily classified as postcolonial. One can raise these questions and ask “is the narrator in the text a unified voice or is it a divided voice?”, “is the divided voice a hybrid voice or semi-hybrid voice?”, and so on and so forth. That’s what I think people can study. Every category of narratology can be reconsidered with postcolonial glasses in the same way as every category of narratology can be reconsidered with feminist glasses or queer glasses or whatever kind of glasses you can think of.

Shang: Okay. Thanks. Let me ask a broader question. As you can see, most participants are young and willing to learn, but somehow when you are young and filled with energy, you don’t know where you are going to invest your energy, you are

ambitious but somehow aimless. So, this “evening with Gerald Prince” will definitely be inspiring. The question is: in an “imaginary storyworld,” if you were one of the participants in the seminar, and you just started here with your career of being a narratologist, what would you do next? What are the projects that you would carry on?

Prince: That is a very important and interesting question. I think I would, of course, read a lot of narratological texts and ask myself what aspects of narrative, even if not neglected, have not really drawn too much attention, and I think I would find a couple of them. I think emotions and affects have not been studied very much, and space has not been studied enough. For twenty years’ space was sometimes referred to in narratology, but people said that narrative is really a temporal form, it describes change, it tells us about time, and you can have narrative with no mention of space. It doesn’t mean that there’s no space, but there’s no mention of it. For a long time, space was not that important to narratology, and if you read Gérard Genette’s famous *Narrative Discourse*, he doesn’t mention space, he hardly mentions description. Then people began to be interested in things like description, things like the space of the story. But what people did not spend that much time on, and I think I mentioned it in passing today, people did not and still do not explore certain other spaces, not the space of the events but the space of the narrator, the space of the narratee, the space of the narration, and the relations between them. People do not do it but — I think I can mention it — for your journal *Frontiers of Narrative Studies*, there is going to be a special issue on geographical narratology. I think most of the papers will be concerned with the space of the narrated rather than with other spaces, but who knows! This is an area where there’s a lot of work to be done. So, for me, affective narratology is an area where there’s a lot of work to be done — emotions and how they structure narrative — and space and the relations between different kinds of spaces. To give a simple example, is the space of the narrator far or near from the space of the events narrated? Is the space of the narrator the same as the space of the narratee or a different space? Because we can be in the same space, like here, and I can tell you a story, or you can be in Europe and I in China and again I can tell you a story. All these relations should be studied systematically and they haven’t been. These are some fields to explore. Also productive is wearing different kinds of glasses, like postcolonial glasses and so on.

Shang: Thank you, Professor Prince, very much for taking time to be with us. Since, at the beginning, I quoted from Hilary Dannenberg, I’d better end up this conversation with quoting her again. She says that as a scholar and narratologist,

Prince's "own academic work attains a marvelous combination of rigorous academic focus, argumentation, analytical precision and expressive power coupled with his spirit of lightness, humor and wit which often shines through from underneath the academic precision...As a person he is kind, generous, and witty; he has a delightfully warm and gracious spirit; it is always a pleasure to engage in discussion with him on the subject of narrative and on many other subjects."¹ In particular, I quite agree with Dannenberg when she observes that Prince "has such incisive wit and observational skills, an admirable calmness, dignity, and gentle authority in his communicational style that conversation with him is both relaxing and stimulating. He is himself an ideal companion to Narrative."² With that, we shall end our conversation this evening, but we shall give warm applause to Gerald Prince for being with us.

Prince: Thank you. I want to add that I appreciate you as questioner and interviewer. I am very appreciative not only for the questions you asked but also for your attentiveness. Thank you very much.

Works Cited

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1 Hilary Dannenberg, "2013—Gerald Prince." <<http://narrative.georgetown.edu/awards/Booth-prince.php>>.

2 Hilary Dannenberg, "2013—Gerald Prince." <<http://narrative.georgetown.edu/awards/Booth-prince.php>>.