

Nünning, Ansgar; Sommer, Roy. 2011. "The Performative Power of Narrative in Drama: On the Forms and Functions of Dramatic Storytelling in Shakespeare's Plays". In: Olsen, Greta (ed.). *Current Trends in Narratology*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

## **Abstract**

The essay explores the role of narratives and storytelling in drama, pursuing two main goals: On the one hand, an attempt is made to systematize the manifold forms and complex functions of dramatic storytelling by drawing on a narratological framework and analytical toolkit. On the other hand, the essay attempts to outline some of the characteristic features and functions of Shakespeare's dramatic and theatrical uses of narrative and narration, highlighting what Barbara Hardy has felicitously called "the theatrical power of narrative, its capacity to change events". In addition, the article provides short overviews of recent discussions surrounding the question of whether drama should be regarded as a narrative genre as well as of previous research on the narrator's functions in drama. The concluding section suggests that much more work needs to be done if we wish to come to terms with the theatrical power and performative force of narrative; it outlines areas of research that could open up productive new horizons and that arguably deserve to be given more scholarly attention than they have hitherto received.