



# Unnatural Narrative: Impossible Worlds in Fiction and Drama (Frontiers of Narrative)

*Jan Alber*

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A talking body part, a character that is simultaneously alive and dead, a shape-changing setting, or time travel: although impossible in the real world, such narrative elements do appear in the storyworlds of novels, short stories, and plays. Impossibilities of narrator, character, time, and space are not only common in today's world of postmodernist literature but can also be found throughout the history of literature. Examples include the beast fable, the heroic epic, the romance, the eighteenth-century circulation novel, the Gothic novel, the ghost play, the fantasy narrative, and the science-fiction novel, among others.

*Unnatural Narrative* looks at the startling and persistent presence of the impossible or “the unnatural” throughout British and American literary history. Layering the lenses of cognitive narratology, frame theory, and possible-worlds theory, *Unnatural Narrative* offers a rigorous and engaging new characterization of the unnatural and what it yields for individual readers as well as literary culture. Jan Alber demonstrates compelling interpretations of the unnatural in literature and shows the ways in which such unnatural phenomena become conventional in readers' minds, altogether expanding our sense of the imaginable and informing new structures and genres of narrative engagement.

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