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## Fictional Contamination or What Literary and Conversational Narratives Share

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Storytellers in conversational contexts often render original speech situations seemingly verbatim (Tannen 2007); they include other people as ‘characters’ in their narratives and assign thoughts and emotions to them; they may even tell another person’s story altogether (Norrick 2013), regardless of whether they were first-hand witnesses to that person’s experiences or not. Furthermore, conversational stories are often embellished and dramatized by means of perspectival shifts (Graumann & Kallmeyer), by creative language use involving figurative speech and playfulness (Carter 2004) or by taking recourse to existing cultural story templates. Although these linguistic and narrative-structural features should raise questions concerning the epistemic status of what is told (Filutowska 2022, Norrick 2020), narratives using them are usually accepted by listeners because their reference to the real world is taken for granted. This is also why such narratives are completely overlooked in fictionality studies.

I argue (Mildorf 2023) that it is precisely such features in conversational stories which, if they were used more extensively, would make these stories come close to generic fiction. Being based on the same storytelling parameters including worldmaking, storyworld disruption, experientiality and situatedness (Herman 2009), literary and conversational narratives share a potential for fictionalization or what I call *fictional contamination*. It is mostly culturally determined pragmatic constraints and generic expectations that prevent conversational stories from becoming more fully fictionalized. In analysing examples from oral history interviews, I demonstrate how seemingly simple anecdotes and stories may come to resemble fictional narratives. The main motivation for storytellers for using stories’ fictionalizing potential is their aim to involve listeners and to tell an interesting story.

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