



Narrative Segments in Fiction_ Scenes, Sequels, and Other Structures (1).pdf
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I am constructing a narrative scene ontology which attempts to break narrative scenes in stories (contiguous narrative segments featuring continuity of time, place, character, theme or action). We've broken these down into six major scene definitions:

- Orientation scenes introduce world, characters, and context and typically start narrative
- Dramatic scenes depict an active goal-driven conflict and its outcome
- Dramatic sequels process the outcome of dramatic scenes and set new goals
- Reorientation scenes transitions between major arcs
- Evaluation scenes distill lessons, values and changes and typically conclude narrative
- Exclusionary scenes break the narrative plane and act as asides from the author

I would like to assess the cognitive science and literary theory of these scene types to identify what cognitive reality of these scenes exist. That is, what scientific evidence exists that there are or are not formal features that reliably distinguish these scenes from each other, either from the perspective of a reader reading the story or an author creating a story?

Thanks for providing such a rich context and document! To tailor the research to your goal, could you please clarify a bit further:

1. Are you seeking cognitive science studies specifically validating distinctions *between* your six scene types (Orientation, Dramatic Scene, Dramatic Sequel, Reorientation, Evaluation, Exclusionary)?
2. Should I also include insights from literary theory beyond cognitive science — such as narratology, structuralism, or writing craft manuals — to see how these scene types are treated or distinguished?
3. Would you like findings focused only on narrative fiction (e.g., novels and short stories), or also consider film and other narrative media if the research helps?

I'll make sure to pull the most relevant scientific and theoretical material depending on your preference!



Thank you. 1) Yes, I want to look for distinctions between scenes (though the studies may not refer to our scene types by name). 2) Focus primarily on cognitive science, but it is okay to include narratology, structuralism, or writing craft manuals. 3) Focus on narrative fiction (novels and short stories)

Excellent, thank you for the clarification. I'll dive into research focused primarily on cognitive science evidence for whether distinctions between different types of narrative scenes (such as orientation, dramatic, sequel, reorientation, evaluation, and exclusionary scenes) have cognitive reality — and supplement with narratology, structuralism, and writing craft insights where relevant. I'll focus specifically on narrative fiction (novels and short stories). I'll let you know when I have a detailed synthesis ready.



Cognitive Science on Distinct Narrative Scene Types

Scenes as Fundamental Units of Narrative

Research in cognitive psychology and discourse processing supports the idea that narratives naturally break into **scenes** – contiguous units of time, place, and action. Readers seem to mentally chunk events into such episodes. Experiments show that when one scene ends and another begins, readers slow down; reading times reliably increase at those boundaries

[file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). This suggests readers detect a shift and take extra processing time to integrate a new “situation model” for the upcoming scene[file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#).

Memory studies likewise indicate that people recall events within the same episode more strongly associated together than events across a break[file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). In other words, the mind **chunks narrative by scenes**, treating a continuous action sequence as a unit, and a change of scene as a signal to reorient. These findings imply that a **scene**, defined formally (same setting, time, characters), has cognitive reality for readers[file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). Readers may not consciously label “Now a new scene starts,” but their slower reading and memory structure show an implicit recognition of scene boundaries[file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#)

[file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). This aligns with theories of event segmentation in comprehension: when key situation aspects (time, place, characters) shift, readers update their mental model, effectively marking a new scene. Such cognitive evidence lends empirical support to the long-held narrative notion of scenes as the building blocks of stories.

“Dramatic” Action Scenes vs. “Sequel” Reaction Scenes

Many fiction writing manuals (e.g. Swain’s *scene–sequel* model) distinguish **action-driven scenes** (often called *Dramatic Scenes*) from **reflective aftermath scenes** (often called *Sequels*). Cognitive research suggests this distinction resonates with readers’ comprehension. In narrative psychology, **story grammar** models from the 1970s–80s identified similar components: an **Initiating Event** provoking a character’s **goal**, followed by attempts and an outcome, and then the character’s **reaction** to that outcome[file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#)[file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). Notably, a full story *episode* in these schema includes both the outcome of action **and** the character’s emotional or evaluative reaction[file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#)[file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). This maps closely onto the scene–sequel pattern: the **action scene** covers goal → conflict → outcome, and the **sequel scene** covers reaction → dilemma → decision (leading to a new goal). Experimental studies have found that stories containing a clear consequence **and** a subsequent reaction are judged more coherent and satisfying than those that omit the reaction

[file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). Our narrative cognition seems to **expect both the action and the follow-through**[file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). In other words, readers intuitively register when the story is in “action mode” versus “reflection mode” even if they don’t use those terms

[file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). The action segments create suspense and drive the plot, while the reaction segments provide emotional processing and context for what just happened

[file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). This dichotomy is not just a writers’ convention; it appears to have

psychological reality. Readers shift their mode of understanding: during an action scene, attention is on events and external conflict, whereas during a sequel scene, readers shift to a more introspective processing, focusing on character feelings, implications, or plans. Thus, formal features often differ: **Action scenes** tend to have immediate, event-focused narration (rich in verbs of action, external description, dialogue, and time moving forward in moment-to-moment fashion), whereas **reaction scenes** may slow the pace and turn inward (more description of internal states, emotions, evaluations, often summarizing time or jumping to reflective narration). Indeed, one study in educational psychology noted that readers (including children) find a story more complete when the character's emotional reaction is included after a high-stakes event [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). This implies that even if readers don't explicitly say "this is a sequel scene," they process it differently – as a necessary wrap-up to the frenzy of action. In sum, the **action-reaction sequence** appears to be a natural narrative cycle that readers cognitively recognize: the dramatic scene delivers problems and questions, the sequel scene delivers answers or at least emotional resolution [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#).

Orientation Scenes (Introductions and Exposition)

Most narratives have some form of **orientation** or exposition at the beginning – introducing characters, setting, or context before major events. Cognitive and psycholinguistic research suggests that such **framing scenes** serve an important function in comprehension. When readers begin a story, they are forming an initial mental model of the narrative world. An orientation scene (often the opening passages or chapter) helps "**build the initial mental model**" by providing a stable groundwork of who, where, and when. Humans seem to expect a "**beginning**" that **introduces context**; this is seen across cultures (e.g. the classic "Once upon a time..." setup) and is supported by cognitive schema theory [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). If a story were to plunge into chaotic action with no orientation, readers would likely experience confusion or have to pause to infer basic facts – evidence that we rely on an orientation phase to set up expectations. In Labov's analysis of oral narrative, this corresponds to the **Orientation** section that identifies time, place, and characters before the complicating action. In narratological terms, it's equivalent to **Freytag's Exposition** or a *setup scene*. Formal features of orientation scenes often include a more descriptive or informative tone: authors might use omniscient narration, broad time frames (e.g. historical background), and a lack of immediate goal conflict. Empirically, readers use this section to **establish schemas** about the story's setting and characters. Once the orientation is laid out, readers have a framework into which subsequent events can be integrated. Cognitive research on scene segmentation also finds that the very **first scene** of a narrative is typically recognized as doing different work than later scenes – it has to introduce rather than continue a thread. For example, one might measure different reading behavior at the start of a narrative: readers allocate effort to encoding context (names, world rules, tone) which later need not be re-encoded in the same way. While experimental studies specifically on "exposition vs main action" are scarce, it's generally accepted that **providing an introduction improves comprehension** and recall (a principle used in educational texts and story comprehension alike). Thus, an orientation scene is *functionally distinct*, and its formal cues (e.g. lots of scene-setting description, absence of high tension conflict, use of past perfect or summary to recount backstory) reliably signal to the reader that "this is setup." Readers in turn adjust by absorbing details rather than expecting plot advancement. This distinction is so natural that "**introduction-body-conclusion**" feels intuitive to readers

[file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#), indicating a cognitive predisposition to segment narratives in this way.

Reorientation Scenes (Transitions and Updates)

Not all scene breaks are about starting a new major episode; some scenes function primarily as **transitions** or reorientations. A **reorientation scene** is a segment that helps the reader adjust after a shift – for example, after a time leap, a location change, or a major plot twist, the narrative might pause to realign the audience with the new status quo. From a cognitive standpoint, this is related to the process of **updating the situation model**. If the story suddenly jumps forward 5 years or the protagonist moves to a new city, the reader's mental model must be updated with new temporal or spatial context. Reorientation scenes often carry formal markers of these changes: they might explicitly mention the time jump ("Three years later,..."), describe the new setting or circumstances, or shift the narrative tone to reflect a lull or aftermath (e.g. a **bridge scene** after a high climax). Psycholinguistic research on event boundaries shows that when any of the key narrative dimensions (time, space, characters, goals) undergo a discontinuity, readers register a boundary and may devote extra processing to re-establish coherence. A reorientation scene leverages that by *acknowledging the shift* and helping the reader "catch up". For instance, after a chaotic battle, a short scene might show the heroes traveling to a new location, with calmer narrative summarizing recent changes – effectively signaling "we're in a new phase now." Formally, such scenes might use **transitional language** (connectives like "Afterwards...", "Meanwhile..."), a change in pacing (often slower, reflective after fast action, or briefly fast-forwarding over unimportant time), and sometimes a change in point-of-view or narrative voice if the story's perspective moves elsewhere. Cognitive science doesn't name "reorientation scenes" per se, but the phenomena of **event boundary processing** and **situation model updating** are well documented. Readers have been found to pause longer and show decreased memory overlap at points where a narrative makes a significant shift, indicating they segregate what came before from what comes after. In essence, a reorientation scene is a **mini-orientation in the middle of a story** – it re-establishes the who/when/where after a disruption. Empirically, this contributes to coherence: without these subtle scenes, readers might feel lost or perceive a jump as jarring. From an author's perspective, such segments often have low conflict and serve to **bridge narrative arcs**. For example, after a big revelation, a reorientation might involve a quiet scene of a character traveling to a new place, giving both character and reader a moment to regroup and understand the new context (new goals, new stakes). These scenes are distinguished more by **function and context** than by a unique linguistic signature, but common patterns include a neutral or reflective tone and explicit markers of change (time skips, location names, reintroducing characters in a new situation). Readers may not always notice "ah, a transition scene," but they benefit from the clarifying information. Cognitive insight from schema theory suggests that after a surprise or disorienting event, *schema revision* is needed – reorientation passages facilitate that process, reinforcing the story's coherence after a shift.

Evaluation Scenes (Conclusions and Morals)

Many narratives include moments where the narrator or characters step back to **evaluate** what has happened – to draw conclusions, state a moral, or articulate the thematic significance. In Labov's classical framework for personal narratives, an **Evaluation** is the component that conveys why the story is tellable or meaningful, often through commentary or a result that highlights a lesson. In

fiction, we see analogous **evaluation scenes** typically toward the end (e.g. an epilogue or final chapter that reflects on events) or occasionally at key turning points to spell out a lesson. Do readers recognize these segments? Cognitive science suggests that readers are indeed sensitive to shifts from *story action* to *story meaning*. Such scenes often feature a change in discourse mode: from showing events to telling the significance. **Formal cues** might include a switch to a more abstract or general tone, use of evaluative language (adjectives that carry value judgments, statements of moral like “He realized the importance of family at last”), or a narrator’s commentary voice taking prominence. Psychologically, readers can distinguish this mode because it requires a different kind of processing – more akin to understanding an explanation or moral lesson than following along in the action. If the narrative suddenly presents a **coda** (to use Labov’s term) that wraps up the story, readers often slow down to integrate the thematic conclusions (much as we slow at scene boundaries). One reason is that **evaluation segments often contain abstract reasoning** or summative statements that invite reflection. Neurocognitive research even hints that processing explicit commentary or moral lessons in a story might engage brain networks for abstract thought or autobiographical reflection, as opposed to the vivid sensorimotor immersion during action scenes [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). In effect, when a story “tells you what it all meant,” you momentarily step out of the timeline of events and into a reflective stance. Empirical support for this comes from narrative comprehension studies showing that readers remember thematic statements or morals as separate from the event sequence (often recalling them as high-level takeaways). Also, when an ending explicitly **resolves the narrative’s themes**, readers report greater sense of closure and satisfaction – indicating they notice when a concluding/evaluative wrap-up is present. From an author’s perspective, an evaluation scene is often marked by **authorial voice** or a **narrative summary style** rather than in-world action. For example, a final chapter might describe how characters changed over the years and what the story was “really about.” Such passages have a different rhythm – more narration, less dialog; more conclusions drawn, fewer new events. Because these differences are noticeable, readers can usually tell that the story’s action has given way to commentary or conclusion. This is why classic fables end with an explicit moral: it’s a distinct narrative move to shift into evaluation mode. In modern fiction, the cues may be subtler, but readers still pick up on the change in tone and purpose. In sum, **evaluation scenes** (whether a standalone epilogue or embedded commentary on events) are distinguishable by formal features like summary statements and moral language, and they fulfill a cognitive role of **distilling meaning** from the narrative.

Exclusionary Scenes (Authorial Asides and Commentary)

“Exclusionary” scenes refer to moments when the narrative breaks its own fourth wall or flow – e.g. the narrator or author steps in with an aside, commentary, or meta-narrative intrusion that is **outside the progression of the story events**. These can range from a narrator directly addressing the reader (“*Dear reader, you may wonder...*”) to an essayistic aside where the author reflects on a theme. Cognitive science finds that readers do recognize these intrusions and process them differently than ordinary story text. Essentially, the reader switches from *immersed mode* to a more *analytical or observer mode* when an authorial aside occurs [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#) [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). Formal markers are usually overt: a shift to first-person commentary or a telltale change in style (often more abstract or explanatory, sometimes even a different font or set-off formatting in modern books). When such a shift happens, **readers slow down** to interpret the commentary [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#) – similar to evaluation scenes, but

here the content explicitly “talks about the story” rather than moving it forward. Cognitive research on **narrative transportation** (immersion) shows that extra-diegetic asides can pull readers out of the story world momentarily [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). A consistent narrative viewpoint with minimal asides tends to increase immersion, whereas intrusive commentary can reduce the *suspension of disbelief* [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). However, this is not purely negative: while an aside might lower emotional immersion temporarily, it can **increase reflective thought**, engaging parts of the brain associated with critical reasoning or autobiographical memory as the reader steps back to consider the story’s meaning or the narrator’s opinion [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#) [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). For example, in a Victorian novel where the narrator suddenly preaches to the reader about morality, readers indeed *notice* – they might even mentally identify that “the author is speaking directly now.” Empirically, readers are fully capable of distinguishing the narrative levels. As one study noted, readers can tell when a passage functions as the author or narrator “talking about the story” versus the story itself, and they adjust their understanding accordingly [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#) [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). Brain imaging research has hinted at distinct activation patterns when reading narrative commentary vs. narrative event descriptions [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#), supporting the idea that these asides are processed differently at a neural level. From a formal features standpoint, **authorial asides** often use a generalized or philosophizing tone, sometimes a shift to present tense or generic statements (as opposed to past-tense specific events), and may use inclusive pronouns or direct address (“we,” “you”) [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). These features reliably signal that the text is now commentary. Readers tend to pause and take note, as the aside usually serves to **emphasize a theme or convey the narrator’s stance** explicitly [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#) [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). In cognitive terms, this creates a *metacognitive moment*: the reader is reminded that there is a storyteller guiding the narrative [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). While frequent intrusions can fragment the reading experience, occasional commentary can enhance appreciation by making the story’s significance clearer. In sum, authorial commentary segments are **distinct in form and effect** – they are indeed “real” to readers’ minds, as shown by how readers slow down and often recall these parts separately from the plot. They act as a higher-level discourse that the mind tags differently (e.g. “this is the narrator’s voice now”) [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#), which is evidence that we cognitively separate them from the ongoing events.

Can Formal Features Reliably Signal These Scene Types?

Given the above, an important question is whether **formal textual features** can reliably distinguish these different scene types. To some extent, yes – each type of scene tends to have characteristic patterns (as described: e.g. orientation scenes use exposition and stable settings, dramatic scenes use active conflict language, sequels use introspective tone, transitions use temporal markers, evaluations use abstract summaries, asides use direct address). Cognitive narratology observes that even without being told, readers *pick up on these cues* and adjust their comprehension mode accordingly [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). The fact that similar scene categories appear in both prescriptive writing theory and empirical cognitive studies is telling: it indicates these distinctions are not arbitrary labels but arise from how people naturally experience stories [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). That said, **real narratives often blend scene types**, and the cues can be subtle. For example, an action scene might include a brief reflective sentence (a minor evaluation embedded in the action), or a transition might be so brief that it’s just a single line between high-action scenes. Not every segment will cleanly announce itself. This makes it

challenging to identify scene types by formal features with perfect reliability. Recent AI research illustrates this point: **automatic classification of narrative segments** is difficult. One study had annotators label scene boundaries in fiction, finding decent agreement among humans (they agreed on scene breaks about 70% of the time) [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). But when computational models were trained to detect those boundaries using textual cues, performance was low (F1 around 0.24). In other words, **algorithms struggle to reliably detect scenes or scene types from surface features**, because authors do not always use consistent, overt markers. Scene breaks aren't usually flagged by explicit labels in text (unlike, say, section headings), so a model must infer them from implicit signals like a shift in tense, a change of setting or characters, or a change in tone. These signals can certainly hint at a scene type – e.g. a sudden abundance of emotion words might suggest a sequel/reflection segment, or an opener paragraph describing landscape likely serves an orientation function. Indeed, computational narrative researchers (such as Zehe et al. 2021) define scenes in terms very similar to our discussion (continuous time/place/characters) and attempt to detect them by looking for **changes in time, place, characters in the text** [file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). Some success has been found in special cases (for instance, detecting chapters or major breaks when obvious cues like line breaks or chapter titles are present). But in general, reliably distinguishing all these fine-grained scene types by formal features alone remains an open challenge. Still, the **convergence of evidence** is encouraging: cognitive psychology, narratology, and even NLP all acknowledge these categories as meaningful. Readers demonstrably sense differences (as shown in processing and recall), and authors often intentionally modulate style when moving from one type of scene to another (e.g. slowing narrative pace for a sequel, using omniscient tone for an intro, or italicizing an aside). Therefore, while no single linguistic feature can 100% identify a scene type, a **constellation of features** tends to accompany each type. When multiple features coincide – say, a passage has no dialogue, summarizing past events, and contains moral language – one can confidently classify it as an evaluation or epilogue scene. In cognitive terms, those features cue the reader to shift their frame of interpretation.

Conclusion

Empirical support from cognitive science indicates that the classic scene distinctions proposed in narrative theory and writing practice do correspond to real differences in how readers process stories. Orientation scenes, dramatic action scenes, sequels of reaction, transitional reorientations, evaluative conclusions, and authorial asides each play distinct roles in narrative comprehension. Readers intuitively distinguish *what* a given segment of text is doing – setting up, enacting events, reflecting on events, bridging gaps, drawing lessons, or directly commenting – and this is reflected in measurable behavior (reading time changes, memory structuring, immersion shifts). Formal textual features (like changes in tense, shifts in perspective, presence of certain content like goals vs. thoughts, or style of narration) often align with these scene types, providing cues that readers (and analysts) can use to tell them apart. However, these signals are not as clear-cut as, say, a section heading; authors have creative freedom, and many scenes blend elements. Thus, while **scene types can be differentiated by formal features**, it is “reliably” only in a broad, **probabilistic sense** – consistent enough to guide readers and show up in cognitive measures, but not so rigid that a computer can always spot them without error. In summary, cognitive psychology and psycholinguistics back up the notion that narrative fiction has discernible structural scene types, and that readers and writers (consciously or not) treat them differently

[file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#)[file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#). These scene categories (orientation, action, sequel, transition, evaluation, aside) are psychologically real: they shape how stories are understood and remembered, even if the boundaries are sometimes fluid. The ongoing convergence of cognitive research, narrative theory, and even computational modeling continues to shed light on how formal features of text map to the mental experience of story, affirming that the way we segment and label parts of a narrative does meaningfully reflect the underlying workings of comprehension[file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#)[file-gwk76tnxjbahmkpnxq7sug](#).

Sources




Another constellation of concepts are "beats" as opposed to "scenes". These terms are used in a variety of ways in novel writing, screenwriting, and film. Please describe the different ways that narrative disciplines define beats as opposed to scenes and analyze how these terms are in harmony with or are in conflict with each other.

Great question. The distinction between **beats** and **scenes** varies significantly across narrative disciplines (novel writing, screenwriting, and film), though each term tends to organize narrative time and action at a different level of granularity. Here's a comparative synthesis:

1. Novel Writing


- **Scene:**
 - A **scene** in fiction usually denotes a coherent, temporally and spatially unified block of narrative.
 - It includes a setting, characters, a goal or conflict, and some form of outcome or change.
 - Scenes are often where narrative time "slows down" for dramatization.
- **Beat:**
 - In fiction writing, particularly craft-oriented guides (e.g., Dwight Swain, Jack Bickham), a **beat** is a unit of **emotional or action-based exchange** between characters.
 - **Example:** Dialogue and its accompanying reaction: "I don't love you," she said. (beat) He looked away, silent.
 - Beats occur within scenes and help **control pacing and rhythm**.

 **Harmony/Conflict:** Beats are **subcomponents** of scenes. No contradiction — just a **hierarchical structure**: scenes contain beats.

2. Screenwriting (Hollywood Model)


- **Scene:**

- A screenplay scene is a block of action occurring in one location at one time.
- It's demarcated by a **scene heading** and typically lasts 1-3 minutes of screen time.
- Scenes reflect major **steps** in the plot.
- **Beat:**
 - In screenwriting, a **beat** can mean:
 - (a) a **pause or moment of change** within dialogue/action (microbeat).
 - (b) a **major plot unit** in beat sheets (macrobeat), used in outlining.
 - **Blake Snyder's "Save the Cat" beat sheet** lists 15 such beats (e.g., Catalyst, Debate, Break into Two).

 **Harmony/Conflict:** Here, the term "beat" spans both micro and macro levels. This **blurs boundaries**, sometimes creating **confusion** with "scene" as both macro (sequence) and micro (dramatic pause) unit.

3. Film Analysis / Directing

- **Scene:**
 - A segment of narrative visually and temporally continuous. It often maps directly to one or more pages of a screenplay.
 - Defined by camera work, lighting, editing, and mise-en-scène in addition to script.
- **Beat:**
 - A **directing beat** is a change in the character's tactic, emotion, or intention — a **psychological unit**.
 - Directors and actors break scenes into **beats** to understand emotional shifts and staging.

 **Harmony/Conflict:** Scenes are the visual containers; beats are **internal character shifts**. These do not conflict but operate in **different dimensions** (external shot structure vs. internal intention).

Cognitive and Literary Theory Insights

From structuralist and narratological perspectives:

- **Scenes** generally align with **syuzhet segments** (the narrated discourse) that align with **fabula units** (story events).
- **Beats**, in contrast, are more akin to **micro-units of intention, attention, or focalization** — aligning with **Proppian functions** or **Greimasian actant shifts** in miniature.
- In cognitive narratology, scholars such as David Herman and Marie-Laure Ryan note that **readers naturally segment text** into cognitively meaningful units (Zwaan et al., 1995), and **beat-like units** (emotion/action shifts) likely correspond to **local situation model updates**.

Summary Table

Term	Level	Definition	Typical Use	Harmony with Other Term
Scene	Macro	Continuous unit of time/place/action	All domains	Contains beats
Beat	Micro/Macro	Action or emotion shift; sometimes major plot point (screenwriting)	All domains	Subcomponent or sequence of scenes, depending on context
Beat Sheet	Macro	High-level plot structure guide	Screenwriting	Abstracts multiple scenes
Directing Beat	Micro	Character's emotional/intention change	Film/Directing	Breaks down a scene

In Your Ontology Context

Your **narrative scene ontology** deals with scenes at the **structural level** (orientation, dramatic, sequel, etc.). Beats, in most systems, operate **within** those scenes:

- An **orientation scene** might include beats introducing setting, character, and goal.
- A **dramatic scene** will feature beats of conflict escalation.
- A **dramatic sequel** will have reflection and decision beats.

So: your ontology is largely **scene-level**. Beats can **enrich the modeling of internal structure** but do not contradict your categories — they **refine** them.

Would you like an illustrated diagram showing how beats and scenes nest within each other across these frameworks?