Of all the various strands of modern literary theoretical approaches, narratology is least controversial among classicists: its technical and descriptive nature is non-threatening to conventional models of interpretation, and scholars have often pointed out that there were ancient forerunners to modern narratological analysis, most importantly the remarks in Plato’s *Republic* about different modes of narration and Aristotle’s *Poetics*. No scholar has done more to promote the use of sophisticated modern methods in the analysis of ancient narrative than Irene de Jong: since her doctoral dissertation on *Narrators and Focalizers* in the Homeric *Iliad* (1987, 2004), supervised by the classicist Jan Bremer and the narratologist Mieke Bal, she has published a steady stream of studies that make excellent use of advanced concepts and methodologies to analyze a variety of (mostly Greek) texts. D. J. is the godmother of narratology in classics, and having an introductory book by her is a very welcome addition to the growing number of publications on this topic. It is a clear and helpful book that will undoubtedly be used in many departments of classics to introduce the concepts and terms of narratology to undergraduates or beginning graduate students.

In her “Preface”, d. J. is quite explicit about what this introductory book aims to be (p. v): “(…) this is what theoretical concepts are for (…). They should sharpen and enrich our interpretation of texts.” Many readers of her book will find this unambiguous focus very welcome: d. J. provides a hands-on approach whose use will be immediately obvious even to unexperienced readers. However, this also means that her account is somewhat one-sided: narratology may be more than understanding individual texts. How is our sense of self conditioned by narrative? Which role does narrative play in the construction of social identity? Are there universal laws of storytelling, or are cultural differences paramount? These are just some questions that different branches of narratology pursue. The book under review offers only a small section of this wide field. There are good reasons for d. J.’s decision to limit the scope of her introduction, yet I think that even users of such an introductory book should have deserved to hear about these limitations and to be given some pointers where to look for alternative approaches.

The book is comprised of two large parts. The first of them provides, after a very brief overview of the development of narratology and its introduction into classical scholarship (3-11, with a very helpful bibliographical list at 11-15), a series of four chapters explaining fundamental concepts of narratological
analysis: “Narrators and Narratees” (17-45), “Focalization” (47-72), “Time” (73-103), and “Space” (105-131). In a didactically efficient manner, d. J. illustrates the most important aspects of these concepts by quoting short passages from narrative texts that display these phenomena and by giving a short analysis. In general, she provides one example from a modern text (most of the time, nineteenth- or early twentieth-century English novels, but occasionally translated French or Italian texts) and one (both in the original and in her own translation) from classical literature. This is helpful because many readers will find the modern passages less unfamiliar and hence easier to analyze than their classical counterparts—even though I fear, from my own experience with undergraduates, that we will soon have reached a point at which Jane Austen or Charles Dickens are as alien as Virgil or Homer. It is obvious that d. J. tries to accommodate a wide variety of classical texts; hence, in addition to the usual suspects such as Homer and Virgil, Apuleius and the Greek novelists, or Thucydides and Livy, we also find authors such as Valerius Flaccus or Josephus. Teachers who use the book in the classroom will occasionally want to replace these examples with different passages, but it is immensely helpful to have these apt illustrations of narratological phenomena. Every chapter is followed by a section “Further Reading”, subdivided into a section on general works on this particular narratological aspect and a section “Narratology and Classics”. Again, this is very useful; however, I believe a paragraph or two of prose explaining the direction and importance of the main contributions would have been welcome for readers who work their way through this book without a competent teacher to guide them (or even for some teachers who venture onto unfamiliar territory).

As the headings of these chapters make clear, d. J. mostly concentrates on concepts that are at the center of narratological methodology as defined by scholars such as G. Genette or M. Bal. Again, there are valid reasons for this choice; nevertheless, I was a bit surprised to see that scholars such as K. Hamburger, E. Lämmert, W.C. Booth, or K. Stanzel (to name but a few) are either not mentioned at all or are given very short shrift. The chapter on space (105-131) is more independent; d. J. is right to emphasize that space is “an aspect that has received far less theoretical attention” (105; M. Bal’s *Narratology* (21997) has a short section “From Place to Space”, 132-142). There is a number of acute and perceptive remarks on the use of space (e.g., on its symbolic or characterizing function), but I also had the impression that this chapter was used as a receptacle for material that would not fit anywhere else (e.g., I was not quite sure what epic ekphrasis has to do with space).

The second part of the book offers “narratological close readings” of three Greek texts, belonging to three different genres: epic (the Homeric Hymn to