Emergent Narratological Explanatory Frames: From (non)naturalness to (non)standardness (the case of haiku-like narratives)

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1. Introductory remarks on a relevant terminological discrepancy

In my 2008 contribution to *Theorizing Narrativity*, I discussed the issue of non-standard narrativity, and I exemplified my point by means of an analysis of Vladimir Nabokov's and Ernest Hemingway's highly stylized brands of literary narrativity. I preferred the terms "standard" vs. "non-standard" to Fludernik's 1996 terms "natural" vs. "non-natural" and to Richardson's (cf. Alber et al. 2010) term "unnatural." I explained Nabokov´s narrativity as non-standard due to its marked preference for the horizontal displacement of the core story from the textual center to the margins, while I characterized Hemingway's non-standardness as a marked preference for top-to-bottom "iceberg" narrativity, one which leaves the core story submerged while a more trivial one surfaces in the text. In both cases, the reader must engage the text from an active writerly position and risk the dangers of over-interpretation. I used the expressions "standard narrativity" and "standard narrative" (as opposed to non-standard narrativity/narrative) to characterize a way of emplotment which deviates from the pattern of expectations created by readerly narratives of the well-made, well-told, realist novel[1] type. Narratives articulating characters' and narrators' voices in ways other than realist I would also call non-standard, but at a different narratological level than emplotment.

The aim of this paper is to explore two types of narrative, one standard, the other non-standard, which I propose as the most appropriate distinction for cultural narratological analysis. Now as regards defining narratives as "natural" (or "non-natural") and calling, accordingly, for a natural narratology or an unnatural narratology, I wish to stress the following two points:

1) there is nothing natural about narrative;
2) narrative is perfectly natural.

The term natural is ambiguous, for it means different things in 1) and in 2) and should thus not be used indiscriminately in narratology. By natural in 1) is meant "not constructed," "not symbolic." A narrative text is the product of an elaborate process of patterning and compositional pattern recombination subject to specific

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[1] The adjective 'realist' as used here alludes specifically to nineteenth-century realism.

generic norms, and it is open to particular innovations of design, addressing somebody. From this point of view, narrative cannot be considered natural because there is nothing that is not "constructed" in a narrative. The term natural here has no opposite, but is rather part of a gradient that goes from more to less natural according to other considerations such as quality and degree of literary elaboration or dual foregrounding. On the other hand, there comes a cluster of quasi-synonyms, including "unsophisticated," "everyday life" and "spontaneous,"[1] that reduces the definition to a vague conceptualization of a narrative as more or less natural. (1)

In a concept of natural according to sense (1) that integrates these synonymous meanings, it would make sense, up to a certain point, to say that oral narratives are more casual and less thought-out and thus more natural than written narratives, or that folktales are more natural than the sophisticated narratives of high culture, and so on. In any case, approaching narrative as never being totally natural is compatible both with formalist theories of narrative, which are more attuned to narrative pattern – everyday vs. literary product design – and with sociopragmatic theories of the Bakhtinian kind in which a distinction is drawn between primary and secondary speech genres, as we will see later. Moreover, given that design is bound to human agency and selection within a range of options that are not only individual, but also social- and culture-specific and therefore not universal, the term natural may also apply to other approaches to the study of narrative. For instance, "natural" narrative might appear in the context of cultural narratology for want of specific critical terms. The refunctionalization of such a protean term can only lead to an increase of its already high level of ambiguity. In that context, using the term "standard" would be preferable.

By natural in (2) is meant that the capacity to narrate and produce narratives is wired into the anthroposemiotic hardware of the newborn. The meaning of natural in this second sense is "in-born" or perhaps "innate": narrative is connatural to human communication and, vice versa, human communication is connaturally narrative. Natural in this second primary meaning means "universal," as when we say that the capacity to tell/narrate a story is universal, equally as natural and universal as our

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[1] In fact, 'spontaneous' is one of the senses of natural that Fludernik acknowledges in *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* (1996) on level III in her analytical model. She says: "storytelling is a general and spontaneous human activity observable in all cultures, it provides individuals with culturally discrete patterns of storytelling […] and particularly an ability to distinguish between different *kinds* or *types of stories*" (44).

capacity to use language.[1] The expression "natural narrative" may appear in discussions among cognitivist and evolutionary narratologists, but the meaning will differ from the cultural narratologist's use of the term.

To sum up, the essential difference between the homonymous natural (1) and natural (2) corresponds to "spontaneously occurring activity" and "innate competence," respectively. Natural 1) underlines diversity: narrative storytelling is a discrete activity that, according to context of situation and culture, can occur more or less spontaneously and produce diverse storytelling forms and patterns, from the culturally standard to the non-standard. Natural 2) underlines unicity: narrative storytelling is a universal, general human cognitive-communicative competency. As homonymy is a potential source of misunderstanding and ambiguity and should be avoided in the context of scientific language, my suggestion, at this point, is that for natural 1) the term 'standard' should be adopted together with its variants 'non-standard', 'substandard', 'supra-standard'. Whereas natural and unnatural are related to cognitive criteria, standard and non-standard are semiotic. Since the two approaches – natural, standard – start out with different premises, they, and their terminologies, must not be confused.

Once the distinction between the two usages of natural has been made clear, the radical ambiguity of the term, when used both in its positive and negative variants (natural/unnatural) to refer to narrativity from perspectives 1) and 2), becomes clear. In Fludernik (2012), commenting on Alber et al. (2012), a good example can be found of the problematic consequences that applying ambiguous and equivocal terminology can lead to in narratological discussion. Fludernik's perceptive critique of unnatural narratology insists on the need to agree on the meaning of the metalanguage used by Alber et al. (2010) and herself in earlier work. Had the meta-terms natural (non-natural/unnatural) not been used in all their different double senses by both Fludernik and Alber et al., there would have been no reason for discussion and criticism. In other words, as the example shows, it is the inadequacy of the metalanguage that creates a problem where, normally, there is none.

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[1] It should be noted that in general linguistics the meaning of the term 'natural' in the expression "natural language" contrasts specifically with the meaning of the term 'artificial' in "artificial language." The ongoing discussion on the inadequacy of the term 'natural' for the meaning 'standard' in the expression "natural narrative" does not apply here. For instance, natural language refers to English, French, etc. and artificial language to 1) composite languages made up of several different languages (this could also be "newspeak" in *1984*) or 2) computer languages.

My suggestion is that cultural narratology will benefit from applying the relevant findings of earlier and present-day scholarship and moving on to consider why the terms standard vs. non-standard are preferable to natural and non-natural. Standard vs. non-standard are well-defined concepts within both socio-pragmatic linguistics and cultural semiotics. Standard bears on linguistic and sociosemiotic phenomena in relation to textual meaning and value against a hierarchical diversity of norms that regulate their form and use in the semiosphere (Lotman 1981). This diversity is a basic phenomenon within the semiosphere and results in complex articulation. On the one hand, diversity is articulated polyphonically within texts and contexts – the contexts of culture and situation (cf. Malinowski 1935; Halliday 1978) in which the standards of behavior of the members of a community are defined. On the other hand, diversity is articulated through the forces of heteroglossia within a complex socio-linguistic context in which the standard variety of a language is inscribed as having a specific symbolic value within the surrounding diversity, both intralinguistic and interlinguistic. From my point of view, which is Bakhtinian on this matter, narrative should be viewed under the same theoretical lens of systemic diversity.

2. Intrageneric diversity and standard/non-standard narratives as specific cultural-semiotic categories

Narrative is a form of communicative behavior that takes place in a culturally positioned community. Through the lens of cultural semiotics, we can see that narratives that seem natural are in fact those that fit the norms prevalent within a group in a given space and at a given time. From this perspective, narratives are standard when they are predicated on shared knowledge and expectations. That certain narratives are standard means that they are centrally located within a culture and a genre in which other kinds of narrative may be less central and thus non-standard.[1] For a variety of reasons, such non-standard forms may even be marginal, such as supra-standard or sub-standard narratives whose symbolic value and social relevance cannot be adequately determined with reference to the standard criteria. We will see an example of this from Japanese culture in part 3 of the present contribution. The specifically dual (Sino-Japanese) origin of Japanese culture is replicated in the Japanese narrative standard, the pattern of which differs substantially from western narrative standards, thus calling into question the notion of narrative universality.

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[1] The question remains as to whether some narratives are more standard than others. Prague School semiotics differentiates between two standards – folk tales and high literature – in terms of simple versus double foregrounding or, in Mukařovský's terms, "unstructured vs. structured esthetic" ([1948] 1964: 31). What is interesting for us in this semiotic explanation is the acknowledgment of a *plurality of standards* relative to the existing cultural and literary polyphony. This theoretical position departs from the Saussurean semiological concept and application of one norm as "the" standard.

Cultural-social semiotics considers, firstly, diversity to be a basic within the semiosphere and, secondly, that systemic complexity results from the (inter)textual and (inter)medial integration of this structural diversity. From these premises it can be assumed that, already within a given narratological semiosphere, no matter whether eastern or western, narrative is subject to different parameters of intrageneric diversification: just as language, narratives vary according to place, time, user, genre, medium, social group and culture. As I have argued elsewhere (Penas-Ibáñez 1996), we are indebted to Mikhail Bakhtin ([1937] 1981, 1986) for drawing attention to diversity as a constitutive textual and cultural factor. He changed patterns of thought and research on narrative by introducing the idea that a text is translinguistic, an utterance made up of many utterances, because "actual meaning is understood against the background of other concrete utterances on the same theme, a background made up of contradictory opinions, points of view and value judgements" (Bakhtin [1937] 1981: 281). As Bakhtin puts it: "The word cannot be assigned to a single speaker. The author (speaker) has his own inalienable right to the word, but the listener also has his rights, and those whose voices are heard in the word before the author comes upon it also have their rights (after all there are no words that belong to no one)" (Bakhtin 1986: 121). Indeed, it was Bakhtin who conceived the text as being an intertextual, intersubjective and intercultural utterance, thus placing social diversity at the root of social semiotics. Todorov makes the clarifying remark that (according to Bakhtin) "No utterance is devoid of the intertextual dimension" (Todorov [1981] 1984: 62), even though Bakhtin never used the term intertextuality, Julia Kristeva's 1967 coinage for Bakhtin's concept of dialogism (60). For Yuri Lotman as well, diversity, or organic heterogeneity within the system, is an essential feature of the semiosphere. Lotman's term semiosphere is analogous to Vernadsky's term biosphere so that, according to Lotman ([1981] 2005), just as the biosphere is a space filled with the totality of living organisms, considered an organic unity of living matter, so "The semiotic universe may be regarded as the totality of individual texts and isolated languages as they relate to each other" (Lotman [1984] 2005: 208). In his later work Lotman (1990) reiterated that heterogeneity is one among other fundamental organizing principles of the semiosphere, but his last work (1992) focused essentially on heterogeneity: "The relationship between multiplicity and unity is a fundamental characteristic of culture" (Lotman [1992] 2009: 3).

Despite these major breakthroughs, there remains much to be done in the study of narrative as a semiosphere, i.e. a system of subsystems of signification, a system of sign-paths that can be trodden top-to-bottom (from the context of culture to contextualized narrative utterances) or bottom-up (from token utterances to culture). Here Lotman's groundbreaking theorization of culture as the realm of semiosis can

be compared to Bakhtin's theorization of the social utterance and the novel. Culture, for Lotman, is always to be understood as intercultural (through his concept of hybridity) just as, for Bakhtin, the text is always intertextual (through his concept of heteroglossia); moreover, in modern philosophical and philological hermeneutics, subjectivity is always intersubjective (Merleau-Ponty 1945; Ricœur 1975). Only along these lines can communities and their members communicate among themselves and with others in ever-changing ways that affect intercultural and intracultural transfer. One of the salient effects of this transfer is the hybridization of narrative forms. As I have recently proposed, Lotman's concept of hybridity is better understood in association with Garvin's concept of standardness whereby hybridization results from processes of cultural contact that can only occur against the backdrop of an existing diversity within which the standard forms serve as the cultural norm and referential locus of difference (cf. Penas-Ibáñez 2013).

Narratology has developed from its classical formulations. It can even be said that classical narratology has been supplanted by quite a few "narratologies," among them the above-mentioned natural and unnatural narratologies, feminist narratology, evolutionary narratology, etc. Although socioculturally aware, most of these narratologies do not account for the differences and similarities between diverse narrative standards and their variations across time, space and cultures – variations that are in no way attributable to a lack of naturalness. For instance, Fludernik's model aims to "supply key conceptualizations for the study of all types of narrative" (Fludernik [1996] 2001: 15), but it focuses only on western forms of storytelling, mainly English, but also German and Spanish. Philology has explained the genesis of narrative in the west as developing from the epic genre and historiography. These sources have left an indelible mark on the classical narratological analysis of what a "normal" form of narrative is and how essential a specific kind of action, plot and (character's vs. narrator's) voice are for that form to be called narrative of the standard kind. Narratological inquiry based on the premise of either the "naturalness" or "unnaturalness" of a particular narrative format becomes blind to its own ethnocentric bias by disregarding the implications of cultural diversity in the constitution of narrative. The essentialism of such a line of inquiry puts it at the disadvantage of having to explain the paradox of, on the one hand, postulating as natural a *langue*-like abstract narrative structure – be it (spontaneous) oral or (literary) written – while on the other hand having to postulate as respectively non-natural or unnatural the diverse phenomenal forms of narrative structures that do not comply with the abstract model.

2.1. A cultural-semiotic approach to the dynamics of standardization.
    Peirce – Bakhtin – Garvin – Lotman

The awkwardness of such explanations can be obviated by acknowledging the socio-cultural and temporal relativity of a narrative form's standardness. Allowing for narrative to meet a diversity of standards with regard to time, place and culture thus rules out lines of inquiry predicated on a universal narrative form that would make some literary narratives natural/non-natural (Fludernik) and others anti-mimetic/unnatural (Richardson's group). According to Fludernik, "Fictional experiments that manifestly exceed the boundaries of naturally occurring story(telling) situations are, instead, said to employ *non-natural* schemata" (12, original emphasis). The fictional experiments she speaks about must be in a textual form if they are to be accessed via cognitive schemata, whether these fictions are natural or non-natural. Thus in the end, the statement that, in her model, "The term '*natural*' is not applied to texts or textual techniques but exclusively to the cognitive frames by means of which texts are interpreted" (12, original emphasis) renders the model hermeneutically descriptive while narratologically emptied of its analytical force. On the other hand, unnatural narratology concerns itself with literary narrative forms that deviate from mimetic realist narrative, thus elevating mimetic realist narrative to the counterpoint position of natural abstract negative model. I am aware that this is Richardson's own understanding of unnatural while others, particularly his fellow unnatural narratologists, may understand the term differently. Richardson acknowledges the key issue that "each of us [unnatural narratologists] has a slightly different conception of the unnatural" (Richardson 2013: 101), without really considering this a problem.

In place of these paradigms, we might adopt Paul Garvin's (1979, 1981) notions of sign system, structure, esthetic function, standardness and high versus folk culture. These criteria help to throw light on a cultural-semiotic dynamics in which the center of the semiosphere is the locus of standard (dominant) signifying practices while other kinds of signifying practices are pushed to marginal positions that may, in lay parlance, pass for unnatural but that, technically speaking, are non-standard, perhaps also including substandard and possibly superstandard techniques.

It is not surprising, then, that with respect to different literary and other artistic genres and traditions, western classical narratology is biased by its own specialization in the observation and analysis of narrative works belonging mainly to the western literary canon. Forms of narrating that have become standard in the west have given birth to their own intertextual progeny by diverse types of imitation (formal or thematic), hybridization, or by deviation (formal or thematic). Brian McHale denounces for us the consequences of this bias. In a recent article, McHale reflects critically on the problems posited by his own 1980s universalist account of postmodern narrative: "Western theorists, including me, constructed theories of

postmodernism using exclusively Western models, ignoring so-called 'Third World' cultures generally and Asian cultures in particular" (McHale 2013: 359).

McHale's acknowledgment of western-centrism as a bias in classical narratology underscores the need for revising central theoretical and critical tenets, especially the tendency to adopt a type of narrative – the well-made nineteenth-century novel of western realism – as a universal model of naturalness from which other forms of narrative deviate as unnatural. This biased attention to western realist narrative models can be accounted for in terms of a broader bias: the linguistic "turn" taken by the humanities in the second half of the last century and, more specifically, by a narratology derived from Saussurean semiology and its Barthesian poststructural developments.

As is well-known, for semiologists in this tradition, *la langue* (versus *la parole*) is an abstract theoretical principle. Moreover, it becomes practically conflated with the educated linguistic norm in a community, one which has been standardized on the basis of its written form and whose normalization contributes to its naturalization. Saussure is aware of the paradox, for he observes:

Everywhere we are confronted with a dilemma: if we fix our attention on only one side of each problem, we run the risk of failing to perceive the dualities pointed out above; on the other hand, if we study speech from several viewpoints simultaneously, the object of linguistics appears to us as a confused mass of heterogeneous and unrelated things […] As I see it there is only one solution to all the foregoing difficulties: *from the very outset we must put both feet on the ground of language and use language as the norm of all other manifestations of speech*. […] speech is many-sided and heterogeneous […] we cannot put it into any category of human facts, for we cannot discover its unity.

Language, on the contrary, is a self-contained whole and a principle of classification. (Saussure in Taylor 1986: 142, original emphasis).

Langue, the norm, is supposedly shared as the native speaker's natural means of communication within and across national borders. But this quite paradoxical understanding of *la langue* overlooks the pragmatic issues associated with performance.[1] What I have in mind in particular are issues of power and national identity, a blind spot of post-Saussurean developments that has been addressed by sociopragmatics and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Garvin (1964), Fishman (1968), Halliday (1978), van Dijk (1977), Mey (1979) and Fairclough (1992), among others, question the adequacy of the Saussurean linguistic model on account both of

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[1] Noam Chomsky's 1957 *Syntactic Structures* opened linguistics up to a proto-cognitive theory of language in which there is 1) an underlying grammar universally shared by humans, 2) a competence in a particular language which is made up of a few general grammar rules shared by all the members of a community and 3) a set of transformation rules that explain the diversity of social performance. Later, cognitivism departs from Chomsky's model but does not challenge its claim to universalism.

its theory of the sign as bipartite (signifier and signified are not connected through an interpretant – the Peircean third) and of its definition of *la langue* as opposed to *la parole*. This opposition burdens the theory of *parole* by the tendency to connect the particular system – a specific *langue* of a language – to the *parole* of that language via the standard educated variety as if shared naturally by all the members of a speech community. It is clear that the standard is just another variety among varieties of a language, not the language as such. The standard variety is also the language of power, and it is always easier for the sons and daughters of the educated classes to learn than for lower segments of society. CDA had a precedent in Bernstein's (1964) sociolinguistic research on "elaborated" versus "restricted" codes and school performance examined the problem, in a way, by defining the standard as an elaborated code, one which felt natural only to those who were born into it. For those born into an uneducated milieu, the restricted code was the natural one, so that they needed to learn the elaborated code of their own language nearly as they would a second language, overcoming a similar degree of strangeness and difficulty. So for Bernstein there were different norms for differently educated classes who regarded different varieties of language as natural.

The conflation of the concepts of *la langue* (often translated into English as "language" or as "standard English," "standard French," etc.) has caused a certain amount of confusion in linguistic research, leading sociolinguists to abandon the term "language" due to its lack of precision. However, the term "dialect" has both a general and a strict sense. In its general sense, dialect is used to mean "any" sociolectal variety of a language that can be defined on the basis of stable classificatory characteristics of the language user, while in its strict sense it means just "any geographical variety of a language." One grammatical effect of the vagueness of "language" is that it can be used periphrastically both in collocations such as "national language" or "natural language" in which language refers to an object of linguistic study and, metaphorically, in expressions like "the language of flowers" or "film language."

This consideration of the potentially blinding effects of biased linguistic categories can open the narratologist's eyes to one basically undesirable effect of extending linguistic theory focused on the study of *langue* to the study of narrative. Considering one type of narrative (whether oral or literary) and its narrativity as the natural norm is an extrapolation in terms of *la langue* that leads to focus on the language of narrative rather than on its textuality (intertexts and context included), and to maintain concepts of "narrative" and "narrativity" that are context-blind and universalizing. This critique has been increasingly recognized over the past fifteen years. For instance, Nünning (2003) establishes the difference between classical and post-classical narratology along similar lines by saying that classical narratology is

"text-centered" (*langue*) and postclassical narratology "context-oriented" (*parole*). I agree with what Nünning intended to say but not with a terminology that places the text on a level with *langue*. In a post-Bakhtinian, postclassical frame, the text is an utterance that cannot be reduced to *la langue* and, as *parole*, is anchored in its context. In Nünning's article, text is meant to refer specifically to linguistic texture without its contextual intertextual dimension. My rewording would be that classical narratology is semiologically centered and the product of the last century's "linguistic turn" while post-classical narratology is socio-semiotically oriented and the product of a relatively recent "cultural turn" in the humanities.

A narratology grounded in cultural semiotics, rather than in Saussurean semiology, considers that narrative norms or standards are culture-bound. Within any one culture, different kinds of narratives are produced according to a diversity of contexts of situation (Malinowsky 1935; Halliday 1978): according to mode (written, spoken, multimedia narratives), tenor (degree of formality of the narrative) and field (a specific kind of genre differentiation according to subject matter: travel narratives, war narratives, westerns, etc.), but also according to diverse subcultural contexts whose textual articulation incorporates the following cultural differences:

1) socio-symbolically motivated cultural differentiation, of the type high vs. low/folk;
2) temporally motivated cultural differentiation, of the type old vs. new, (pre)modern vs. (post)modern;
3) geographically motivated cultural differentiation, of the type western vs. eastern, northern vs. southern;
4) esthetically motivated cultural differentiation, of the type experimentalist vs. conventional.

Within the context of this paper, one of the most relevant effects of complex subcultural differentiation along the esthetic parameter 4) is the difference between artistic (literary) and non-artistic (non-literary) texts.

Regarding the latter kind of texts, we must look back again to Garvin (1981) who applies Jan Mukařovský's ([1932] 1964) definition of double foregrounding in literature to all the arts, adding that expectancies are not identical for all members even of a given cultural community, much less universally valid. While Mukařovský differentiates between everyday expectancies and a given esthetic canon in order to explain dual foregrounding in the high arts, Garvin points out that both everyday expectancies and the esthetic canon are culturally defined in an anthropological sense. In other words, there is nothing universal about expectancies. Even the so-called universal values of the high arts are universal only to the extent that they have been "universalized" or spread to a broader cultural setting, for instance from

western to eastern culture or vice versa, as we shall see in part 3 of the present work. Standardization and globalization are interrelated semiotic processes whose dynamics depends on the existence of intracultural and intercultural diversity and contact. Literary renewal (aesthetic creativity) relies not only on individual agency and the existence of dual foregrounding within a given literary tradition, but also on free intercultural borrowing and transfer which makes it possible for double foregrounding to operate across different literary traditions and enables cultural hybridization. Hybridization, as we have stressed before, can take place only on the basis of an existing contrast between diverse different standards (Penas-Ibáñez 2013).

With these considerations in mind, what now is meant by "standard narrative"? It can be defined as the contextualized form/meaning template that seems to be normal (in the sense of "the most widely expected") for a particular set of communicative functions and for a particular community. It is normal not because it is natural but because it is so expectable that it "feels natural." Or to put it another way: it is a pattern of meaning standardly addressed to listeners/readers that is readily recognizable as a narrative and widely circulated within a given community for a particular purpose. In other words, a standard narrative is a variety of narrative that has become the standard through a process of standardization, a process that has been well studied in Prague School semiotics and its aftermath. According to Garvin, several conditions must be met in order for a variety of a language to "become" standard. In my analysis, these same conditions of standardization also pertain to the textual generic variety called narrative.

1) A variety must have been *selected* from a preexistent diversity before it becomes the norm. In this particular case, the discourse patterns of the western nineteenth-century realist novel have become standard and, as such, have been singled out as the object of much western classical narratological study. The considerable amount of research devoted to modernist and (late-) post-modernist narrative is witness to the similarities and differences between them and the earlier realist model.

2) The selected variety must be *codified*. In the case of the well-made narrative, codification has taken place through formal analysis and isolation of the composition rules and structural components of the well-made realist narrative. Classical narratology has been instrumental in codifying the standard written narrative. But there are also other codifying agencies: linguistics has contributed especially to the codification of standard oral narrative, and much popular literature is written following recipes provided by publishing houses inspired by market surveys and using their own best-selling standard formulas.

3) That variety must undergo *re-elaboration*. The western nineteenth-century realist narrative model resurfaces in a plurality of texts, not only in later realist fiction but also in the non-fictional narratives of journalism and historiography that conform to the realist style. In addition, we find a richly elaborated modernist, postmodernist and late cosmodernist (D'haen 2013) proliferation of narratives whose relation to nineteenth-century realism has been amply discussed in terms of deviational intertextual filiation. Postmodern narratives can be called "unnatural" by Richardson (instead of non-standard) only by postulating a deviational relation with supposedly antecedent "natural" models.

4) That variety must be implemented. *Implementation* takes place through institutional agencies that favor this very same process by focusing on the standard variety of narrative which ends up being perceived as the prestigious "norm" and the canonical one. Here we can mention the long-standing tradition of academic and critical focus on standard narrativity and the literary canon as well as editorial and publishing policies, the very selective practice of "fluent" translation of non-western narrative (cf. Venuti 1995), the national and international literary award system, the monitoring role of reviewers, literary circles and cliques, among the most important implementing agencies.

The process of standardization affects both the production and the reception of narrative. If there are differences regarding the way in which the process takes place in eastern and western cultures, as we posit in the following sections, then this will be noticeable in the differential form shown by the narrative standard products resulting from them. The individual producer operates at level 3), the level of (re)elaboration in the overall process of standardization. Here, the creative writer's task usually involves inventing personal forms of telling (writing) stories that may be unexpectedly new, that is, non-standard to begin with, just as a matter of authorial choice and style. Nonetheless, these idiosyncratic narratives are part of the same dynamics of literary standardization that will normalize or naturalize them over time and make them canonical in some cases. This exemplifies why the standardization process is historical and dialectical. From the vantage point of individual writer/reader (or teller/listener) expectations, the introduction of novel narrative features is a technical resource that introduces a measure of unexpectedness. The unexpected can perhaps be attributed to narrative sophistication, defamiliarization or a strangeness of design relative to the established norm within a specific textual tradition and a particular sociocultural milieu. But it should not be called either unnatural or non-natural. In Japanese literature, this particular aspect of the process differs from that in the west. The elusive role of individual creativity in the standardization process is highly characteristic of Sino-Japanese aesthetics and

culture whose relation of continuity with tradition – dual Sino-Japanese anchorage – provides stability to the literary system while promoting a highly hybrid/syncretic narrative standard that is distinctly Japanese.

When narratological enquiry gains awareness of the sociocultural semiotic standardization process in its entirety, then the normal standard narrative within a community, a culture-bound semiotic construct, will not easily be misconstrued in terms of the natural narrative.

2.2. Standardization in the west: the role of individual creativity

For Garvin (1981), who follows Havránek (1932) and Mukařovský ([1932] 1964) on these matters, literary narratives are esthetic objects whose esthetic nature is manifested through dual foregrounding, as opposed to automatization. By 'foregrounding' is meant *unexpectedness*, that is, 'esthetic' equals 'the unexpected' that calls attention to itself by existing against a background of expectancies embodied in the standard object. As Garvin puts it: "*Automatization* refers to the stimulus normally expected in a social situation; *foregrounding* – in Czech *aktualisace* – on the other hand, refers to a stimulus not culturally expected in a social situation and hence capable of provoking special attention." (Garvin 1964: viii, original emphasis). The immediate effect of foregrounding is to draw attention to the unexpected in the text, therefore to the individual text itself and to the individual text producer. But this effect ultimately results in "some further effect upon the cultural community which responds to it" (Garvin 1981: 103), thus opening the text up to its cultural context. In Lotmanian (1981, [1984] 2005) terms, the overarching sphere in which an esthetic or literary narrative can be understood as such and acquire meaningfulness is culture or the semiosphere, which requires culture-bound specification for any narrative standard: sign relations and their interpretation are dependent on a particular tradition and culture so that interpreted meaning/form – and this includes narrative meaning/form – is neither strictly textual nor strictly personal or subjective because narrative does not exist only at level 3) of the historical dynamics of standardization necessary within a culturally diverse context.

This theoretical vantage point on narrative and the literary semiosphere provides awareness of cultural diversity and of the role played by standardization in dynamizing intracultural literary relations as well as intercultural literary transfer and hybridization (Penas-Ibáñez 2013). It also provides a well-balanced basis on which to analyze and explain narrative textual phenomena within a theoretical and metatheoretical framework well suited to the task. The cognitive-linguistic notion of 'naturalness' is specific to its own field and, when extended to the field of

narratology, it should be reformulated in terms of the well-tested socio-semiotic concepts of standardness and non-standardness. Working within this framework, it is also possible to examine the history of western literary culture and see it developing from folk to urban and from low to high culture. Popular language and literature in the western semiosphere developed among the less cultivated and privileged social groups, largely ignored by the elite classes. It is at the beginning of early modernity, with the rise of standard languages and high art and literature, that European national communities gained a sense of differential identity that affirmed itself on the basis of the pride and prestige symbolically embodied by these high culture phenomena. Western modernization involves a process of development from low to high, from country to town, from monarchy to democracy, from local to global, from non-standard to standardizing national formations. This directional process has generally been regarded as progressive and modernizing. The role of revolutions and enlightened ideology in the modernization of the west has affected our perception of the past. The enlightenment, with its critique of obscurantism, brought about the French revolution and an intellectual atmosphere contrary to old regime values for their lack of egalitarianism, liberty and fraternity. The age of reason inaugurated a phase in European modernity that lasted a century at the end of which reason was questioned in a critique that subverted and deconstructed reason. We are heirs to an ideological frame of mind that praises novelty for novelty's sake, change for the sake of change, as if all things past need to be associated with backwardness and conservatism, those two great cultural fears of the western mind.

As a corollary, we find that western narratives of nationhood and modernity are narratives of progress. Our narratives of narrative are also narratives of progress – progress from oral to written, from modernity to post-modernity. It thus seems necessary to look at the narratives of nation and of narrative born in other cultures in order to see whether or not the narratologist can generalize by concluding 1) that there is one kind of narrative deserving the name of 'universally standard' and 2) that an analogous process of standardization of narrative takes place in different literary semiospheres.

3. Differential eastern (Japanese)/western narrative standards and standardization processes: *The Tale of Genji*

The history of Japanese society and culture is quite different from that of the west. In Japan the formation of a narrative standard followed a process characterized by its idiosyncratic integration of duality along the four steps of the standardization process: selection, codification, elaboration and implementation. The selection and codification of a narrative variety that eventually became standard was made from

two sources that were integrated within the narrative text by way of juxtaposition rather than replacement (Chinese/High literary narratives and autochthonous/Low Japanese popular narratives). Codification was dual, for Japanese narrative juxtaposed image and word, showing and telling, prose and poetry, subjective and objective points of view, fiction and fact, thus erasing the liminal borders of western narratological categories used in the classification of realisms. Sylvie Patron (in the present volume) has underlined the lack of perfect fit between Japanese and western narratological concepts on a translational basis. Iwamatsu Masahiro (also in the present volume) confirms the point both on a translational and cultural basis by taking into account the culturally diglossic distribution of Chinese and Japanese in Japan. Historically, Chinese was the language used for theory in Japan, and thus Japanese narratology is doubly dependent on translation. A concept taken from a western language is understood through a Chinese term before it can become a Japanese term. The translated Japanese term and text can scarcely be expected to be equivalent to the original narratological concept. From the point of view of the present research, the lack of fit between Japanese and western narratological concepts also needs to be explained on the basis of the existence of a Japanese-specific standardization process based on the synchretization of dual polarities in the Japanese narrative standard. In other words, it is the western conceptualization of subjective/objective, natural/cultural, poetry/narrative, fact/fiction as polarities that makes the standard Japanese narrative seem non-standard to western eyes and the Japanese translation of western narratological terms fuzzy to the Japanese.

Besides selection and codification, elaboration of the Japanese standard has also been dual in that the same "*haikai* imagination" and esthetic (Shirane 1998) imbued two different genres: *haibun* (prose) narrative and *waka, renga* and *haiku* (poetry) writing. Implementation has been dual as well, from without and from within: in addition to the expected implementation agencies, we find that the standard intensely intertextual quotational quality of Japanese narratives is highly self-implementational as well as self-referential. The process is integrational, both in its entirety and in its parts, and the standard narrative produced throughout is characterized by its syncretic integration of elements that western standards tend to use in complementary distribution. It is the complex integrational quality of process and product that lends cultural idiosyncrasy as well as stability to the Japanese semiosphere.

Thomas Rimer (1995), Jennifer Railey (1997) and Haruo Shirane (1998) all stress the continuity of a dual esthetic intrinsic to Japanese culture that sets it apart from the western tradition. The oldest dual esthetic and cultural values have been internalized by the master Japanese writers and integrated over the centuries into a tightly knit

literary tradition and a holistic culture in which literary revolutions in the western sense have never occurred. The distinctiveness of Japanese culture relies on the peculiarity of its early historical national formation which took place through a dual recurrent pendular process that alternated between phases of open cultural contact with foreign powers and ensuing phases of political and cultural isolation and restricted exchange. A later section will specify how this pendular movement has taken place more than once and played an essential role in Japanese history and culture. It has also shaped Japanese literary taste and standards in idiosyncratic ways that reverse the western idea of literary progress and change. The narrative patterns of Japanese medieval narrative run counter to the western narratological expectancy that the older forms of a pattern are less complex and sophisticated than their later developments and that literary narrative grows from folk into high and from oral to written. Regarding influence (between both individuals and cultures), the expectancy of an anxiety of influence, as posited by Bloom (1973) in reference to leading western writers, cannot be applied to the great Japanese authors. Some of the historical reasons explaining these differences are given in the following section.

3.1. Historical sources of differential standardness in Japanese narrative

In Old Japan, high culture was associated from very early with foreign Chinese classical culture. China's influence came in a first wave of cultural transfer that took place between the fourth and the ninth centuries, when Japan borrowed immensely from China: Chinese erudition, Chinese ideogrammatic writing, Chinese high art and literature, a new religion (Buddhism), an efficient centralized administration, a centralized political system led by an emperor. Paradoxically, these borrowings took cultural hold not during the phase of exposure to intercultural contact but during the four hundred years that followed, between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, when commercial and political relations with China were forbidden. This period of withdrawal became a golden age that saw the construction of the Japanese nation and national culture, including a national literature, in terms of Sino-Japanese hybrids. The high Chinese literary forms were juxtaposed with the Japanese folk vernacular and adjusted to the Japanese narrative standard, which is dual by definition (both high and low, sophisticated and bare, complex and simple). Japanese literature was written not ideogrammatically but using syllabic characters, called *hiragana*, which facilitated reading and writing by substituting a set of simpler characters for the difficult Chinese system of ideograms. *Hiragana* transcribed the sounds of oral Japanese into signs of writing, and this gave impetus to a body of literature written in Japanese *hiragana* characters that could be produced and read by the merchant groups and samurai families that had no access to Chinese high culture. In the Heian (794–1185 A.D.) and Kamakura (1185–1333 A.D.) periods, Japanese Classical literature came into being, centuries before a similar phenomenon took place in the west with the rise of the European national literatures.

One particular aspect of this dual standardization process seems to be of special relevance to the present argument: the traditional vernacular forms of Japanese low culture (popular *haikai* poetry and the old folk tales of oral transmission) were re-functionalized as a result of being practiced and appreciated at the Imperial Court by cultivated courtiers among whom women of the court played an essential role (Keene 1971). The great classical narratives in Japanese originated in this period and were written by court ladies, women from the low aristocracy who were the daughters and granddaughters of high-brow male scholars, men who wrote their works in Chinese. These highly literate women were ladies in waiting of the empresses and wrote their Japanese prose in a special private code, *omna moji*, or women's writing.

The lady Murasaki Shikibu wrote the *Tale of Genji* (*Genji Monogatari*) during the eleventh century. This tale, or *monogatari*, was a hybrid of first-person diary and third-person omniscient narration, of history and fiction, poetry and prose, literary criticism and literature. It could hardly be described as a standard narrative from the western point of view. Nevertheless, these women writers of the eleventh century selected a low-culture product, the oral tale, and superimposed it onto the written *hiragana* characters that elevated it from the low into the highest mode of written narrative. This ultra-hybrid narrative form provided later Japanese writers with a standard for writing narratives that became canonical within Japanese culture, one that is intertextually alluded to in the more popular narratives of the Tokugawa period and also in recent narrative. Through repeated intertextual quotation, the Japanese tradition of narrative writing erased the boundary between high and low that western literature so clearly draws. This highly allusive quality of Japanese literature creates cohesion within the semiosphere, as the act of creative renewal passes through the act of remembrance of an old model: intertextual difference passes through sameness and brings change through continuity instead of revolution or an anxiety of influence.

For instance, the aristocratic values of *The Tale of Genji* are replicated in the Tokugawa period by Basho's popular narratives in the early seventeenth century. Here, the aristocratic values from Court and city were brought to town and commoner so that through intertextual reappropriation they became culturally shared rather than questioned values. This is a movement from high-low to low-high, resulting in ideological and aesthetic continuity within change in Japanese literary standards. Early on in Japanese history, the development of a holistic ideology, a stable esthetics (de Bary 1975, 1958) and a persistently self-quotational literary standard made the Japanese literary semiosphere differ from the traditional western divide between high (standard) and popular (folk, substandard) culture that remained prevalent up until the time of western postmodernity.

According to Shirane (1998), *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji Monogatari*) has become truly canonical because it is a fountainhead for the seasonal poetic topoi that have formed the heart of all subsequent Japanese literature. Not only highbrow prose and poetry, but also the popular products of *haikai* imagination from which seventeenth-century Edo Japanese *haikai* poetry and *haibun* prose spring have explored the associative meanings derived from the parallel relation drawn between the four seasons (Higginson 2008) and the human experience of the passage of time. Early on, *The Tale of Genji* provided the horizon of meaning and the standard form for it which the other significant writers in Japan have appropriated and integrated into their own

work so that what feels like standard storytelling to Japanese readers of narrative and non-standard to western readers is one and the same monogatari form.

Japanese culture started as early as the ninth century to develop narrative forms that move inwards to stress the interior, psychological and spiritual world of the characters portrayed. These Heian medieval novels employ techniques for direct and indirect forms of speech and thought representation that in the west characteristically started with Samuel Richardson and Jane Austen, culminating in the modernist stream-of-consciousness technique. The use of these techniques by early Japanese writers would make their works familiar to modern western readers and completely unfamiliar to western readers from the eleventh century. This historical inversion of the interior/exterior polarity in narrative creates diachronic cross-cultural strangeness: when the nineteenth-century Japanese writers of the Meiji era looked to the western realist standard with a mind to modernization, they found that what was a novelty to western realists – the rendering of characters' subjective inner states – was already part and parcel of the oldest classical Japanese literary narrative standard. Inversely, modern Japanese fiction writers innovated by moving in the opposite direction, focusing on the chronicle of the individual's external action they found typical of standard western realism. As said before, standards are formed through a specified process and are subject to change. They are socially and culturally bound, but they are also bound to time and place – chronotropes in Bakhtin's ([1937] 1981) sense of the term – and therefore bound to change differently in different contexts.

The Japanese narrative standard has developed differently from western standards also due to the sustained reciprocal influence of lyrical poetry and prose that can be seen already in *The Tale of Genji*. Over the centuries, that tendency created a distinctly Japanese literary semiosphere in which the generic division between prose and lyrical poetry, traditional in western literature and criticism, is effaced. While Japanese lyrical poetry adopted narrative functions, Japanese narrative prose developed a persistent strain of lyricism that is still part of Japanese modernity. Heian medieval narratives like *The Tale of Genji*, as well as modern Japanese stories, formally mix modes by juxtaposing represented oral and written discourse and by placing descriptive and narrative prose alongside poems that advance the narrative.

Here is an example taken from *The Tale of Genji*. At the outset of the story, Genji is a child, not yet in his seventh year, who goes into mourning for his mother, the Japanese emperor's beautiful concubine. The emperor is inconsolable and eventually sends a trusted gentlewoman, Myobu, to the house of his deceased love to inquire about his son, little Genji, and to let the boy's widow grandmother know that he

cares about them. Myobu is respectfully welcomed by the old woman, who sheds tears at the sight of the Emperor's envoy and waits for her to deliver a message. The message comes to her encoded in three successive modes: 1) oral mode (the part of the message that has been received aurally by Myobu and memorized by her so as to be able to transmit it orally and unchanged – in free direct style – to the old lady); 2) epistolary written mode (Myobu brings a letter from the Emperor for the old lady to read); 3) the letter transmits its message in elegant prose until it shifts to a short *tanka* poem that moves the old lady profoundly and elicits her sincere answer, articulated in response to a poem's verbal-visual image and its associations.

This is the full passage:

[Myobu] delivered His Majesty's message.
"'For a time I was sure that I must be dreaming, but now that the turmoil in my mind has subsided, what I still find acutely painful is to have no one with whom to talk over what needs to be done. Would you be kind enough to visit me privately? I am anxious about my son and disturbed that he should be surrounded everyday by such grieving. Please come soon.'
"He kept breaking into tears and never really managed to finish, but he knew all too well, as I could see, that to another he might not be looking very brave, and I felt so much for him that I hurried off to you before I had actually heard all he had to say."
Then Myobu gave her His Majesty's letter.
"Though tears darken my eyes," the lady said, "by the light of his most wise and gracious words…" And she began to read.
"I had thought that time might bring consolations to begin lightening my sorrow, but as the passing days and months continue to disappoint me, I hardly know how to bear my grief. Again and again my thoughts go to the little boy, and it troubles me greatly that I cannot look after him with you. Do come and see me in memory of days now gone…" He had written with deep feeling and had added the poem:

"Hearing the wind sigh, burdening with drops of dew all Miyagi Moor,
my heart helplessly goes out to the little hagi *frond."*

But she could not read it to the end.
"Now that I know how painful it is to live long." She said, "I am ashamed to imagine what the pine must think of me, and for that reason especially I would not dare to frequent His Majesty's Seat. It is very good of him to favour me with these repeated invitations, but I am afraid that I could not possibly bring myself to go. His son, on the other hand, seems eager to do so, although I am not sure just how much he understands, and while it saddens me that he should feel that way, I cannot blame

him. Please let His Majesty know these, my inmost thoughts […]" (Murasaki Shikibu [b. 978?] 2001: 8)

According to Tyler's footnotes to his translation (2001: 8), the Emperor's poem means, indirectly: "As the sad winds of change sweep through the palace, they bring tears to my eyes, and my heart goes out to my little boy." The boy, Genji, is poetically referred to by means of an allusion to a plant, *Hagi*, an autumn flowering plant whose long graceful fronds can be easily tossed and tangled by the wind. Miyagino, east of present Sendau, is often associated with *hagi* in poetry, and here the *miya* of Miyagino also suggests the palace (*miya*). Thus the Emperor's poem refers, in the fiction, through intertextual allusion, to earlier allusions made in the old Japanese book of poetry, *Kokinshu*.[1] The old lady's answer in the fiction also alludes to *Kokin Rokujo*, a historically dated poem in which the poet laments feeling even older than the pine of Tasakago, a common poetic exemplar of longevity, and thus she indirectly conveys her meaning: she does not want others to know that she lives on after her daughter's death. She is ashamed to imagine what the pine (indirect reference to the emperor) must think of her, an old useless woman who should have died instead of her young daughter, the emperor's lover and Genji's mother. Here the literal allusion to the pine has a factual referent (the old standing Tasakago pine tree literarily famous for its longevity), which becomes an intertextual referent (the Tasakago pine tree as a *topos* for longevity in Japanese literature) and a symbolic referent (the pine image indirectly represents the Emperor).

The analysis of this passage aims to demonstrate, through an example, the haiku-like compressed way in which narrative meaning is conveyed in *The Tale of Genji*. Images replace the literalness of the telling in the narrative and increase its poeticity by showing that the emperor father is the pine under whose shadow the graceful hagi plant (the child Genji) should grow up. This textual preference for the highly indirect presentation of meaning is non-standard in western narrative but dominant and perfectly normal (in the sense of 'expected') in Japanese literature. On the other hand, this passage from *The Tale of Genji* exemplifies the way in which the novel formally juxtaposes descriptive prose, narrative prose and lyrical poetry within one text. Brief *tanka* poems recurrently occupy the place of direct speech in a novel that is a perfectly dual composite of prose and poetry, radically violating western expectations for an eleventh-century narrative. The differential standards of Japanese

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[1] *Kokinshu* means, in Japanese: "Collection from Ancient and Modern Times." It is the first anthology of Japanese poetry compiled upon Imperial order, by several poets, in 905, a few decades before *The Tale of Genji* was written. The collection comprises 1111 poems, many of them anonymous, divided into twenty books arranged by topic. The most memorable among them are flawlessly turned miniature seasonal poems, love poems, travel poems and mourning poems that form, since then, a literary repertoire shared by the cultivated Japanese.

narrative are exogenous to the western semiosphere, and the contrast may serve narratology to revise and explain its conceptualization of what may be simple or complex, old or modern, normal or not in a narrative and do it from a non-biased, explicitly situated vantage point of analysis.

The same haiku-like compression of meaning derived from a non-standard treatment of narrative meaning, by its presentation through a syncretic (image-word) (poetry-prose) narrative text, can be found when comparing the narratives of Japanese Heian Court classics from the tenth century, for instance, *The Tale of Genji* and the *haibun* travel narratives developed by Basho in the late seventeenth century. Basho's *haibun* travel diaries modulates meaning through passages in prose and Haiku poems that advance/describe the action in parallel. Here the prose explains the poem, and the poem supports the prose. The Heian standard reverberates in Basho and also in twentieth-century westernized novelists like Kawabata who keep the traditional Japanese model within their highly poetic all-prose narratives by having an image precipitate an action or by introducing into the plot extended moments of introspection that make these narratives seem non-standard to the conventional western reader for the essentially poetic revelatory power of their imagistic prose.

3.2. A diachronic approach to intercultural hybridization: Standards in contact

Consistently mixed-register narrativity has been standard in Japanese literature throughout its history. In the west, similarly hybrid forms of narrative have not been theorized as common till recently, but they are now associated with non-standard high modernist narrative writing, especially in late modernism. For this reason, they have received critical attention. McHale (2009), among others, has studied the rise of narrative forms in postmodern poetry. Peter Hühn and Jens Kiefer (2005), among others, have studied the narrative elements of lyric poetry. What remains to be fully acknowledged is the direct influence of Japanese literary standards on the rise of western imagism and, indirectly through the latter (cf. Pound 1913; T. E. Hulme 1924), on modernist literary narrative. In that case, the rise of more complex, hybrid, non-standard forms of narrativity in western modernity would be explainable in terms of intercultural contact (Arrowsmith 2011) rather than as inner progress from simple to complex. In terms of literary standardness, the western "realist" narrative standard prevalent in the second half of the twentieth century was replaced by an avant-garde textuality which, in time, would become the modernist standard, a textuality very much aware of past western narrative conventions on account, partly, of a new familiarity with non-western, Chinese and Japanese literary and cultural conventions gained through access to eastern texts in translation (cf. Pound 1928). It cannot be a coincidence that, following post-Meiji intercultural contacts between east

and west, a second phase of modernization of western literary narrative standards has taken place through modernist and late modernist experimentation with previously non-standard forms of narrative management of fact and fiction. Starting with the "New Writing" in the 1930s and since, we have seen genres such as the non-fiction novel, faction, low-fantasy fiction and many genres problematizing the real as well as the pre-modern western assumption that there is a clear-cut boundary between the fictional and the factual (non-fiction). It cannot be forgotten that these new western genres – now quickly becoming part of the postmodern standard – question the traditional western polarity (fiction vs. non-fiction) much like the Japanese literary narratives have questioned it since the time of the Heian classics.

An additional source of differential standardness in Japanese narratives is their traditional conflation of fact and fiction. Stemming from a traditionally held Japanese belief in the superior truth value of facts over the figments of imagination, Japanese fiction writers have, from their Heian beginnings (cf. Struve 2010), sought validation for their work by grounding fiction in actual fact: for instance, by using actual contemporary incidents and local news as their source of plot and character, by close observation of daily life, by using historical characters in imaginary situations, and, more subtly, by the intertextual use of old literary matter whose factual existence in literary history becomes a warrant of validity (Oura 2010). This is what the western historical novel, starting with Scott, has done more recently. Ian Watt's (1957) *Rise of the Novel* attributes the origins of the English novel precisely to this kind of approach to narrative that the Japanese have practiced from the ninth century onwards. It would be interesting to consider the possibility that sea-travelling and cultural contact with the east and Japan had an impact on the first modernization phase of western narrative standards resulting in the rise of the early modern European novel. This hypotesis will be developed further in the last section as part of the conclusions because it seems more than feasible, especially when contemplated in the light of an analogous second standardization process taking place later in history: the western recodification process opening up into (post)modernism that was started by the imagists' theoretical rethinking of Chinese and Japanese *haiku* aesthetics. The impact of Pound's and Hulme's imagistic reconceptualization of the relation between image and word, within both poetry and narrative, derived from their knowledge of the east and their masterly understanding of *haiku*-like writing and its revolutionary management of the relation between language meaning and literary representation (Penas-Ibáñez 2006). If, before modernism, western thought and criticism assumed the existence of a clear-cut interpretative boundary between literal and figurative, image and word, prose and poetry, or between fiction and fact (non-fiction), more recent criticism and narrative study has had to acknowledge and explain the hybridizing change in narrative standards brought by the cosmopolitan modernists

in the western literary semiosphere. Paul Ricœur wrote his three-volume *Temps et récit* (1983–1985) to acknowledge this (post)modernist situation, studying both historiography and fiction within a new formulation of hermeneutics. Ricœur argues for an interpretative style attentive at once to categorization (fact-fiction), but also to preservation of "the dynamism of meaning" through the use and experience of metaphor. Metaphor vivifies, brings to life the meanings fixed in dead linguistic formulae. The experience of metaphor causes "a 'thinking more' at the conceptual level. This struggle to 'think more', guided by the 'vivifying principle', is the soul of interpretation" (Ricœur [1975] 1977: 303). Ricœur brings to the theory of linguistic interpretation the same metaphor-based/image-based approach that, sixty years before, Pound and Hulme applied to the theory of linguistic-literary representation – an approach rooted in their awareness of alternative standards in the east.

4. Conclusion

Summing up, cultural modernization has been taking place in both the east and the west over centuries. This process has entailed changes in narrative standards that are perceived to be necessary for the continuity of a given culture. Such changes occur through processes of standardization that package cultural products in newly structured formats according to selection and codification, elaboration and implementation of the most adequate structures within a given communication system. These cultural changes can be perceived in different ways. A cultural past and its standard products, the standard forms in which the community customarily communicates, may seem beautiful, indicative of a shared identity and deserving cultural extension to new members. But the past may also seem passé and useless to them. Each perception causes its own kind of anxiety: by and large, the former attitude characterizes Japanese culture while the latter one is characteristic of western (post)modernity.

The anxieties over cultural modernization in Japan have arisen out of circumstances which are quite different from those in the west. In Japan, modernization has taken place along with waves of foreign influence. Modernization has been accompanied by the fear of losing touch with a cherished core of Japanese identity, which is dual. The response to this fear has been the preservation of old and new in a highly syncretic (hybrid) standard form of narrative. If, as Rimer says "in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D., for example, Japan might have been defined in our contemporary parlance as a 'third world country'" (Rimer 1995: 6), this would be so in relation to Rimer's perception or extrapolation of a situation in the past when the Japanese were an illiterate people over which China began to exert a political and cultural influence that would be felt for centuries. This first phase of openness to

Chinese High culture lasted from the fourth to the eleventh century, but already by the seventh and eighth centuries the Japanese courtiers could use the two languages, Chinese and Japanese, in a diglossic distribution of functions productive of two different potential standards. Japanese was the language of orality, affect and private matters while Chinese became the high language for the expression of abstract ideas in writing.

This cultural dualism was confirmed during the period of cultural isolation extending from the ninth to the thirteenth century, when Japan broke off relations with China and secluded itself, thus giving way to a dynamics that is well known in studies of intercultural exchange: the seclusion phase became a culturally productive period, a golden age, when the borrowings from Chinese culture were properly assimilated and nationally appropriated, selected, recodified, elaborated and institutionally implemented. *The Tale of Genji* and the other Heian classics are intercultural Sino-Japanese hybrids that have become a source of traditional Japanese identitarian values, a canonical standard within the Japanese literary semiosphere that remains the reference point for Japanese narrative writing. But also a source of influences for western modern writing through intercultural contact and borrowing.

Cultural borrowing has recurred twice again in Japanese history, this time with an impact on the west. From the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, Japan opened up again to contact with foreign powers, with China as before and, at the end of the period, with the early modern western maritime empires. The Europeans (mainly Spanish/Dutch at the beginning) were named *namban*, barbarians from the South, although they brought European technology to Japan as well as a new religion that dynamized the lower classes. The fear of being invaded and subjected to forms of colonization of the type dominant in the South-American continent provoked a Japanese reaction. A second era of 250 years of cultural seclusion started in 1653 that was used by the Japanese to digest foreign influence and renovate the old traditional arts in a second golden age, the age of Basho and *haikai* literature (*haibun* prose and *renga* poetry), of *Nôh* theatre, of *ukiyo* and the secularization of culture. Socially, the appearance of a four-class system (nobility, samurai, villagers and urban dwellers, the latter consisting of merchants and artisans) resulted in a power shift that relegated the Emperor to a formal role and placed a shogun at the head of a Japan-specific kind of feudal republic. This period in Japanese history is evolutionary rather than revolutionary, entailing succession at a par with explosion, to use Lotman's ([1992] 2009) terms. In the middle of it, Basho refashions the Japanese cultural past into modernizing cultural forms that remap the national past, as represented by works such as *The Tale of Genji,* by means of allusion, parody, quotation or plain emulation. At the same time, during the seventeenth century, we see the rise of the

novel in Spain, the western colonial empire that had stronger links with Japan at the time (through the Jesuits and Seville's trade) in a case of mutual influence. A century later the rise of the English novel would take place along the same lines, perhaps for analogous reasons. The Spanish picaresque novel, just as *Tom Jones* and *Tom Sawyer* later, are the perfect western embodiment of *haibun*, a *haiku*-like narrative – highly ironic, mixed-register narrative prose, full of cultural references and of a highly intertextual quality that is well exemplified by Basho's *haiku* writing and travel narratives. In view of these developments, it does not seem too far-fetched to say that Japanese literature underwent a standardization process resulting in an early literary modernism before its time in the west, while western culture started its own literary modernizing process at that moment of intercultural contact by producing early modern realist narratives whose standard form was to reach a climax in the realist novel during the second half of the nineteenth century, just at the time the Meiji era was opening up the path to a renewed intercultural flow that brought with it both the western modernist revision of the first early modern western standard and the Japanese revision of its own traditional syncretic standard.

In other words, the last phase of cultural contact between Japan and the west, starting in the Meiji era, has dynamized the overall semiosphere with new standard forms of narrative being produced both in Japan and in the west which are unmistakably intercultural, (post)modernist and hybrid in nature. These new standards have been developing in recent decades both in the east and the west as forms of global (post)modernism. We can agree, at least partly, with McHale's most recent nuanced position on Postmodernism that he defines as "less like the recognition of a shared, universal literary-historical situation and more like the appropriation of 'Third World' esthetic practices by 'First World' cultural authorities" (McHale 2013: 361). He uses the example of magical realism and the Boom in Latin American literature as evidence for the existence of a third-world postmodernism before western first-world postmodernism. I find in the Japanese case evidence in support of a definition of postmodernism more reliant on the condition of intercultural contact than on a specifically colonial or postcolonial relation. I would say, expanding McHale's definition, that postmodernism is not a Boom but a boomerang. It entails not just a simple hybridization moment, "the appropriation of 'Third World' esthetic practices by 'First World' cultural authorities"; it also triggers the more complex moment of hybridizing appropriation of 'First World' esthetic standard practices by 'Other Worlds' cultural authorities who are aware of the modernizing force of this boomerang-like dual standardizing dynamics.

It is only against the backdrop of esthetic conventions prevalent in a specifically defined sociocultural milieu that the standardness of a narrative form may be borrowed, appropriated and transformed into another culture so that there may be innovation and mutual rapport. Western narratives like *Ulysses*, *In Our Time*, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *The Garden of Eden*, *Speak Memory* or *Molloy*, or Japanese narratives like Soseki's *I am a Cat*, Kawabata's *Snow Country*, Enchi's *Masks*, Oe's *The Changeling*, Murakami's *Norwegian Wood*, Yoshimoto's *The Lake* – like old *haibun* narrative prose and *haiku* poetry – exemplify textual-generic and cultural hybridity to perfection. They would be the best examples of the new haiku-like ultra-hybrid (post)modernist standard.

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