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*Narratological Concepts across Languages and Cultures*

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## Foreword

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“Whatever Happened to Narratology?” asks the title of an essay by Christine Brooke-Rose. “*It got swallowed into story* seems the obvious answer: it slid off the slippery methods of a million structures and became the story of its own functioning – like mathematics, which never claimed to speak of anything but itself, or even to speak at all” (1990: 283).

Were Brooke-Rose to pose the same question today, would she answer in the same terms? Clearly not. The lively debates and multifarious developments that have animated narratology over the past quarter-century show that what has happened to narratology is that, far from slipping over the horizon of irrelevancies, it has expanded into areas that could hardly have been imagined a few decades ago. The fifteen contributions to this collection of essays all bear witness to the vitality of ongoing research in the field, but also to the wealth of topics waiting to be explored, examined more deeply or reconsidered, or indeed that are now in the process of being formulated.

“Emerging Vectors of Narratology: Toward Consolidation or Diversification?” Such was the theme of the 3rd conference of the European Narratology Network (ENN), held in Paris on March 29 and 30, 2013, where the contributions to this special issue of the AJCN, now full-length articles, originated. A mere glance at their titles is enough to see to what degree the authors have worked in the spirit of these emerging vectors. The authors’ contributions speak more eloquently for themselves than can be hoped for in the modest comments in these introductory pages. The necessarily incomplete presentations that follow are meant to provide a brief overview of the five areas of inquiry into which the texts have been grouped, but in particular they are intended to encourage readers to explore these contributions for themselves.

### I. Toward a reconfiguration of narrative concepts

Arguing in favor of a narratology based on socio-pragmatic linguistics and cultural semiotics, Beatriz Penas-Ibáñez questions the premises of both natural and unnatural narratology. She appeals to Bakhtin, Lotman and the Prague School semiotics and refers, instead, to the notion of standard and non-standard narratives, more pertinent, in her view, from a cultural-semiotic perspective. Standardization, unlike the natural, follows a process of selection, codification, re-elaboration and implementation which is not culture-specific. In order to illustrate these and other principles, Penas-Ibáñez offers an illuminating portrait of Japanese narrative literature. Here, the standard is not nineteenth-century realism and its violations, but rather a haiku-like compression

of narrative meaning achieved through a syncretic treatment of image-word and poetry-prose, a practice which has its roots in intercultural Sino-Japanese relations. Non-standard by western criteria, Japanese narrative standards have nonetheless penetrated western literature through Ezra Pound's and T.E. Hulme's imagism, a process which is further reflected in the process of hybridization in (post)modern fiction.

Reading works from foreign cultures has always posed a wide array challenges and has produced a multitude of methodologies and critical practices. Bohumil Fořt proposes to approach the issues from the standpoint of possible worlds narrative theory. Here, fictional encyclopedias are understood to diverge from the actual-world encyclopedia, requiring readers to make inferences across world boundaries to capture the implicit meaning. But how might fictional encyclopedias influence the actual-world encyclopedia? This question has never really been addressed. Fořt proposes to study the perspectives opened up by this configuration with a case study of Milan Kundera's novel *The Joke*. Written in 1965 and first published in Czech in 1967, the English translation appeared in 1969, one year after the events of the Prague spring. Interpreted by the English-speaking public as an indictment of post-war Stalinist Czechoslovakia, Kundera retorted that *The Joke* is a love story. Fořt concludes that Kundera's strategy is in fact one of provoking misunderstanding by replacing the real-world encyclopedia with fictional encyclopedias while modeling the latter as reading programs.

In yet another study that explores how concepts intersect and combine, Ludmila Comuzzi reconsiders the standard generic opposition between narrative and non-narrative poetry. Genre is conceived, in line with recent Russian scholarship, in analogy with the gene in biology, so that no matter what transformations and dislocations traditional genres might undergo over time, their structures, like organisms, do not fundamentally change but only mutate. What sets poetry off from prose is that the structures of the former are "noticeably measured and rhythmical." Yet, poetry's "fine-textured counterpoint of verse, syntax and narrative," which takes the form of segmentivity, gapping and measurement/ countermeasurement at various textual levels (McHale), carries over, in Comuzzi's proposal, to prose. Narrative texts, she argues, construct metric patterns and countermeasurements to these patterns through the various planes of point of view inscribed in the supra-phrasal units of narrative composition identified by Boris Uspenskij. Comuzzi completes her contribution to transgeneric narratology with a penetrating analysis of a corpus of lyric poems in which narrative scenarios, however discreet, are indissociable from the counterpoint of meter and rhythm.

The question of space in narrative has persistently been framed in terms of the opposition between description and narration. This association has resulted in impoverished notions of narrative space, going so far in some cases as to sever the

spatial order from the logical/causal and temporal orders. Joshua Parker, drawing on a large and varied body of sources ranging from ancient Greek and modern philosophy to sociology, cognitive science and literary theory, proposes to re-examine narrative space by considering space in fields outside literature, but also in relation to the narrative concepts of setting, background, landscape, schemata, causality, temporality and particularly place. If space is an abstract notion, place is where something occurs, a space that determines its own type of actions: from this standpoint, space pertains to description as much as it does to narration and must be seen as “the container of history and the generator of story” (Parker quoting Friedman). Parker concludes: “In imagining what events ‘mean’, might we not only ask ‘what do they lead to in a causal chain?’ but look more closely at where they happen and what this ‘where’ means to those involved, be they readers, characters or narrators?”

## II Paratext, metalepsis, caesura

The problem of paratext in narratives that employ various visual and graphic devices, on the one hand, and the resources of the new media technologies, on the other, is taken up by Virginia Pignagnoli. Discussing Jennifer Egan’s *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010) as a paradigmatic twenty-first century example, Pignagnoli proposes to expand Genette’s model of paratext so as to include issues of media affordances and digital support. She thus introduces what she calls “paratext 2.0” which consists of “material peritexts” (visual, iconic, material elements included in texts) as opposed to “digital epitexts” (authors’ websites, blogs, videos, social networks, etc.). Such a framework, she argues, goes beyond an analytic typology of paratext and at the same time allows for a medium-specific analysis of works employing both printed and digital media.

Metalepsis, now seen as a more widespread and multifarious phenomenon than was thought only a few years ago, has spawned a variety of partially overlapping theories and models. According to Saartje Goby, most typologies are ultimately predicated on the story/discourse dichotomy, a distinction she herself subscribes to. Noting that narratologists largely associate metalepsis with either the narrator or authorial voice, she proposes to enter into the equation the question of the agent of metalepsis: narrator, character, narratee. Also taken up are the structural paradox produced by metalepsis and the disputed issue of so-called horizontal metalepsis, rejected by some theorists in favor of “transfictionality.” Her own proposal is to distinguish between diegetic and extradiegetic metalepses: those that mark a purely text-internal transition, on the one hand, and those, on the other hand, that affect the entire text, bringing in the author and the extratextual reality of the reader.

Michał Mrugalski discusses an overlooked historical source of modern narratology that dates back to early nineteenth-century German drama theory: caesura. Developed in particular by Hölderlin, caesura, a counter-rhythmical principle of metrics which

also played a role in the formulation of the Russian formalists' principle of "laying bare of the device," and which at the same time contrasts with narratology's reductionist emphasis on endings (stable vs. unstable), forms the basis of an interruptive theory of narrative: a breaking up of the whole. Interruption, in Hölderlin's eyes, is not only a principal of ancient Greek tragedy but also a condition of narrative representation. Commenting on a famous essay by Šklovskij, Mrugalski contends that a novel such as *Tristram Shandy* comes down to the plotting of a series of interruptions. He also enquires into the relations between caesura and its sister devices, metalepsis and *mise-en-abyme*.

### III. Narrative and film

It is well-known that the montage technique in modernist fiction was made possible by the cinema, resulting, for example, in the rise of the so-called cinematic novel. Inna Drach proposes to dismantle this "hybrid" notion by demonstrating, with reference to the writings of Sergej Ėjzenštejn and other Russian theoreticians, that while montage in the cinema is a means of connecting fragments, montage in literature serves to dissociate fragments, rendering their relations illogical. Interestingly, Ėjzenštejn found it difficult to reproduce Dos Passos' novelistic use of montage on the screen, reminding us that the transfer of techniques from one medium to another is not accompanied by the same effects.

James V. Catano explores another aspect of cinema in a study devoted to the convergence of voice and image in a particular cinematic subset of the documentary film which combines nonfiction prose and film: the film essay. Drawing on a corpus of ten film extracts, Catano demonstrates how essay (in the Montaignean tradition), film and narration combine in the film essay in ways that complexify the documentary as mimetic representation and at the same time introduce, through voiced narration, a new range of cinematic and narrative possibilities.

### IV. Narrative perspectives on music

Music presents a particular challenge for narratological analysis. Program music, of course, has long been a favored object of study, but more recent research has focused on various dimensions of the narrative-music relationship other than story content. One such connection, based on the music-friendly narratological concept of experientiality, is explored by Christian Hauer. The narratological status of the musical narrator or performer, how the listener actualizes music and the interconnected roles of persona and emotion in musical perception are studied, backed up with a wealth of the relevant recent research in the cognitive sciences.

In a case study of Alban Berg's string quartet *Lyric Suite*, Karl Katschthaler, arguing that musical compositions should be regarded as cultural texts, adopts an intertextual

and intermedial perspective in order to study the autobiographical elements in this work as forces of meaning. Berg's quartet does not narrate a story, but it does convey a sense of the well-documented Baudelairean "spleen" of Berg's aesthetics and the ambivalence in his music between the ascetic modernism of Schönberg's twelve-tone system and the feminization of writing during the first half of the twentieth century. In music, instances of the narratological distinction between the narrated and the narrating are hard to come by. According to Knut Holtsträter, the temporality of music is one of presentness, a temporality akin to the here-and-now, the "showing" of theatrical representations. Extending the field of narratological-musicological investigation beyond the sonata form and program music to cover atonal music, Holtsträter discusses how, in this music, it is not atonality that forces the listener to situate sounds in relation to one another, but rather the lack of a clear rhythmic structure. This underscores the fact that temporality forms the nexus of music, binding it to narrative conceived as a temporal structure representing changes of state.

## V. Translating narrative theory

One of the distinctive marks of narratology is that from its beginnings it has frequently drawn on concepts and methodologies adopted from different national traditions. Indeed, it has often been the case that translations of theoretical works have given an impulse to narratological research. One prominent example, of course, is Tzvetan Todorov's *Théorie de la littérature* (1965), a collection of essays by the leading Russian formalists whose impact on early French narratology is indisputable.

Translating narrative theory raises two sorts of difficulties that, it must be observed, are unfortunately seldom faced head on in current research: how to adequately translate technical terms from one language to another, and how to transplant concepts and theoretical paradigms from one culture to another.

The first of these difficulties is addressed by Sylvie Patron, who discusses her experience in translating S.-Y. Kuroda's essays from English to French. Among other things, she points out the perils of "the illusion of translative transparency," noting, for example, the conceptual discrepancies between *histoire*, *récit*, *narration* and their standard English equivalents – *story*, *narrative*, *narration* – and what measures can be taken to avoid the misconceptions that result from such translations.

The obstacles faced when translating narrative theory from English into languages far removed from the European languages, notably Japanese and Turkish, are taken up in two very interesting complementary studies offered by IWAMATSU Masahiro and Bahar Dervişcemaloğlu, respectively. In Japanese, whereas the process of word formation is no obstacle to providing satisfactory equivalents for narratological terminology, the lack of theoretical approaches in Japanese scholarship makes it difficult for scholars to assimilate narratological paradigms. The Turkish language, by

contrast, is not well adapted to the process of word formation when it comes to scientific terminology. It is thus difficult in Turkish to find appropriate terms for current narratological concepts. The solution proposed by Derviřcemalođlu for translating narrative theory into Turkish is to refer to the so-called *belâgat*, the Ottoman Turkish rhetoric derived from Arabic and Persian sources. Recent Turkish scholarship has uncovered a number of fruitful parallels between *belâgat* and, for example, Roman Jakobson's theory of verbal communication, potentially opening the way to a properly Turkish form of narratology.

It will not escape the reader's attention that the authors of these fifteen studies hail from no fewer than twelve countries. This in itself is a sign of the extent to which narratological approaches have come to bear on the study of narrative phenomena. More than that, however, the internationalization of these approaches and their spread to and incorporation of disciplines other than literature attest to the growth of a shared awareness of the issues at stake as narrative scholars continue to both deepen and diversify the objects of their research.

## References

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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<sup>1</sup> 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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<sup>1</sup> 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,”<sup>1</sup> 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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<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup> 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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<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup> 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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<sup>1</sup> 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 translanguistic, 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; Ricoeur 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.<sup>1</sup> 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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<sup>1</sup> 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 cosmopolitan (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 syncretization 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, *onna 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 – chronotopes 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*.<sup>1</sup> 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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<sup>1</sup> *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 hypothesis 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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## 1. Narrative, information and actual-world/fictional world encyclopedias

Evidently, narratives, from their beginnings, have served as important tools for modelling the human world: if, for the moment, I omit the cognitive potential of narratives and stay at the level of pure information delivered by narrative genres, I can randomly suggest that ancient tragedies introduced the will of the Gods to their audiences, travelogues uncovered the unknown world before their reader's eyes, and realist novels taught their readers about contemporary social theories. In more recent times, narratives have served as mediators of information regarding human experience of distant cultures, religions and political regimes. In sum, narratives play many important *functions* in the world of humans.

The functional approach to literature teaches us that fictional narratives, although dominated by the poetic (or aesthetic) function, also display other functions – to various degrees, of course. The proclaimed domination of the poetic (aesthetic) function is the main argument for viewing literary artworks as specific, self-referential signs. Nevertheless, the self-referentiality of literary artworks does not mean that they cannot serve other functions, some of which are connected with their external reference. Indeed, among others, one of the most important 'side-functions' of literary artworks has been considered the referential function, as Roman Jakobson terms it:

The verbal structure of a message depends primarily on the predominant function. But even though a set (*Einstellung*) toward the referent, an orientation toward the CONTEXT – briefly, the so-called REFERENTIAL, "denotative," "cognitive" function – is the leading task of numerous messages, the accessory participation of the other functions in such messages must be taken into account by the observant linguist. (1960: 353)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The functional approach has been developed especially within the structuralist investigation of The Prague School since the 1920s. This approach represents the background of modern functional linguistics in the fields of general and functional stylistics in particular. The concept of functional linguistics is based on an assumption, borrowed from the general model of communication, that particular language statements represent specific messages from a sender to a receiver in the act of language communication. These messages are designed in order to carry specific meaning: "The sender in the act of speaking follows some aims/functions and according to the aims uses specific language devices, a specific functional language" (Starý 1995: 36). Consequently, the functional approach leads the Prague School scholars to two major fields of literary theoretical investigation:

In order to not to become embroiled in the complex issue of fictional reference, I shall call this function the *informational function* – a function that concerns information provided by fictional narratives through the description of real states of affairs. Nevertheless, this seems to be the furthest point we can reach with the functional approach: it is understandable that the relationship between the dominating poetic (aesthetic) function and the informational function in works of fiction is highly dynamic, since it is determined by many more or less variable factors such as the work's appurtenance to a particular genre, the context of its genesis and the context of its reception.

In light of these variables, instead of imposing general rules on the appearance and strength of the informational function in fictional narratives, which is an unachievable task, I shall rely on two theoretical concepts which, in my view, can help one to swim in this tricky current. I thus propose to employ the notions of *actual-world encyclopedia* and *fictional encyclopedia*, both developed and used within the realm of fictional worlds theory.

Fictional worlds theory borrows both of these *encyclopedias* from Umberto Eco, who has deployed the term *encyclopedia* repeatedly since the 1980s. In his *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods* (1994), Eco suggested that fictional worlds are “parasites” of the real world, and he called them “small worlds”: they are somehow based on the real world, but at the same time they are ontologically poorer. Eco does not rigidly differentiate between fictional and actual knowledge, considering both important sources of the (universal) *encyclopedia*, viewed as a general storage of communal knowledge regardless of the exact source of that knowledge: “the way we accept the representation of the actual world scarcely differs from the way we accept the representation of fictional worlds” (Eco 1994: 90). Nevertheless, the supremacy of the actual world over fictional worlds leads Eco to declare that “in fact, not only are authors supposed to take the actual world as the background of their story, but they constantly intervene to inform their readers about various aspects of the actual world they may not know.” (93)

As stated, fictional worlds theory borrows from Eco's encyclopedia and divides it into an *actual-world encyclopedia* and a *fictional encyclopedia*. Lubomír Doležel provides us with their definitions:

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the analysis of narrative models and situations (which are an important part of general narratological investigation) and the investigation of poetic language, bearing on the identity of literary artworks.

the actual-world encyclopedia is just one among numerous encyclopedias of possible worlds. Knowledge about a possible world constructed by a fictional text constitutes a fictional encyclopedia. Fictional encyclopedias are many and diverse, but all of them to a greater or lesser degree digress from the actual-world encyclopedia. [...] In fact, to orient themselves in the fictional world, to make valid inferences and to recover implicit meaning, the readers must include in their cognitive store the corresponding fictional encyclopedia. (Doležel 1998: 177–178)

However, it seems that at this point we are reaching the limits of fictional worlds theory with regards to our task: apart from the statement just quoted, namely that fictional encyclopedias “digress” from the actual-world encyclopedia, the general relationship between the actual-world encyclopedia and the fictional encyclopedia within fictional worlds theory remains relatively unelaborated. Not surprisingly, the influence of fictional encyclopedias on the actual-world encyclopedia has not been elaborated on at all. This state of affairs results from the fundamental precondition of fictional worlds theory which holds that between the actual world and fictional worlds there exists an impenetrable ontological barrier:

Possible-worlds semantics makes us aware that the material coming from the actual world has to undergo a substantial transformation at the world boundary. Because of the ontological sovereignty of fictional worlds, actual-world entities have to be converted into nonfactual possibles, with all the ontological, logical, and semantical consequences that this transformation entails. (Doležel 1998: 21)

The existence of this barrier significantly complicates our ability to describe the process of transformation of fictional information into actual information. As a result, there is no rule which would define the specific circumstances under which fictional information, forming part of the fictional encyclopedia, can become actual information, a part of the actual-world encyclopedia. However, I do believe that it is possible, at least in some particular cases, to describe the influence of fictional encyclopedias on human perception of the actual world by contributing to the latter’s encyclopedia. Nevertheless, the question is: how can we really detect and measure the impact of particular fictional encyclopedias on the actual-world encyclopedia? At this point, I wish to draw inspiration from Felix Vodička who, in his famous study (“Literární historie. Její problémy a úkoly” [Literary History: Its Problems and Tasks], 1942), claimed that in order to restore the literary aesthetic value of a particular period, it is necessary to analyse the critical echo of the literary artistic texts of that period. For the purpose of my work, this claim can be rephrased as follows: in order to realise the impact of a particular fictional encyclopedia on the actual-world encyclopedia, it is necessary to analyse the (critical) echo of the text which is the basis



of the fictional encyclopedia. Indeed, the reception of an artistic text, embodied in both reviews as well as in the readers' general reaction to the text, is the only source, although indirect, for examining the ways in which fictional encyclopedias intertwine with or replace the actual-world encyclopedia.

## 2. The reception of Milan Kundera's *The Joke*

With these considerations in mind, I now wish to focus on the situation during the late 1960s and early 1970s that emerged after the publication of Milan Kundera's famous novel *The Joke* (published as *Žert* in 1967 and subsequently in English translation in 1969). This novel attracted the attention of a great number of readers as well as that of reviewers and was generally regarded as highly successful. At the same time, however, it gave rise to a certain misunderstanding between the author and his readers, a misunderstanding which, as we shall see later, is ultimately not too difficult to explain. I shall also explain how this misunderstanding strongly influenced the relationship between the author and his audience in a somewhat negative way while at the same time forming this relationship by thematising it and bringing a pervasive dynamics and tension to the novel. Indeed, the history of *The Joke* and its echo seems to be a history of very specific moves, especially on the side of the author, who brilliantly adopts counter-positions in relation to commonly accepted opinion.<sup>1</sup>

In his foreword to the fourth English edition of the novel in 1982, Kundera describes a moment which occurred two years earlier at a panel discussion devoted to the novel: according to Kundera, someone had called *The Joke* a "major indictment of Stalinism." Kundera replied: "Spare me your Stalinism, please. *The Joke* is a love story" (vii). So is *The Joke* a political novel about the period of Stalinism in post-war Czechoslovakia, or is it a love story using this historical period in order to augment the "love-storiness" of the novel? To answer this question, one must focus on three different levels of the novel and its "life" in the literary communication process: a) the author's intention and ambition; b) the thematically and stylistically analysable features of the novel itself; and c) the circumstances of the novel's reception. This third level is firmly connected to the previously used terms of the actual-world and fictional encyclopedias: the circumstances of reception actually determine the possibility for the readers to replace a part of their actual-world encyclopedia with

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<sup>1</sup> It could be assumed that Milan Kundera in fact consistently re-models his real readers according to his idea of the ideal reader of his texts by all possible means: not only by the fictional narratives as such, but also by a vast number of paratexts such as forewords, afterwords, interviews and polemics. If Eco's notion of the *model reader* were not restricted to fictional narratives and their structures, it could be that Kundera actually attempts to turn real readers into the model readers of his work. From a different viewpoint, it might be suggested that the reception history of *The Joke* has been the history of a constant (aesthetic) struggle between the author and his readers.

the fictional one, as we shall see later.

Before proceeding further with an investigation of these levels, let me first provide a brief outline of the book's history. *The Joke* was first published in Czech in the former Czechoslovakia in 1967, reaching an astounding circulation of 170,000 copies between 1967 and 1969.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, the book became a great success.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, after the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact armies in August 1968, the content of the novel was deemed "vile" and "dangerous" – as Milan Kundera describes the situation in his foreword to the 1982 edition: "Immediately thereafter [the invasion], *The Joke* [...] was banned, removed from public libraries, erased from the history of Czech literature" (Kundera 1982: ix). The popularity of the novel as well as its ban and removal from the shelves of Czechoslovak bookstores and libraries could hardly have resulted from the fact that *The Joke* was interpreted as a pure love story: no authorities in Europe during the late 1960s were afraid of love stories, for they pose no threat to regimes, totalitarian or otherwise. Evidently, *The Joke* was being read politically in former Czechoslovakia.

The first translation of *The Joke* into English appeared in 1969,<sup>3</sup> both in England and in the United States. Immediately after its release, the author expressed deep concerns about the "correctness" of the final form of the work. Kundera in particular protested against the fact that the publishers deliberately brought the book closer to a purely political reading and interpretation, mainly (according to the author) due to crucial changes to the general layout of the novel.<sup>4</sup> This situation triggered a heated discussion between the highly displeased author and the publishers, who tried to justify the changes to the novel. The author complained of "double politicisation," which he described as follows:

*Habent sua fata libelli.* Books have their fates. The fate of the book called *The Joke* coincided with a time when the combined inanity of ideological dictatorship (in the Communist countries) and journalistic oversimplification (in the West) was able to

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the population of Czechoslovakia of the late 1960s was just over 9 million.

<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, Kundera describes in one of his paratexts how the publisher hesitated for two years before finally agreeing to publish the book. The publisher was not convinced that publishing the book in the particular political situation of Czechoslovakia during the late 1960s was a good idea. What the editor was afraid of was not the readers' reception of the book, but rather refusal by the authorities to publish it.

<sup>3</sup> *The Joke* was published in two different editions, one in the United Kingdom and the other in the United States, both in 1969.

<sup>4</sup> The author published his concerns about the UK version of *The Joke* in the *Times Literary Supplement*. The translation removed some episodes of the novel and changed the particular layout of the novel's chapters. Kundera's dissatisfaction resulted in a new, recast version of the novel in 1982 which was, in terms of its parts and general layout, identical to the original. However, this time the author was not satisfied with the style of the revised translation.

prevent a work of art from telling its own truth in its own words. The ideologues in Prague took *The Joke* for a pamphlet against socialism and banned it; the foreign Publisher took it for a political fantasy that became reality for a few weeks and rewrote it accordingly. (Kundera 1982: xii)

So what is so special about *The Joke* that, contrary to Kundera's wishes, causes it to be interpreted in these ways? What kind of chemistry seduces its readers, publishers<sup>1</sup> and the authorities to adopt a purely political reading, clearly against the proclaimed intention of the author? I believe that it is not too difficult to see that *The Joke* displays a considerable potential to deliver a highly political and in-actual-world-anchored message during the act of its reception. First of all, the historical and political map of the world of *The Joke* closely correlates with the political and historical map of the actual world: many of the fictional events are fictional counterparts of actual-world events acted out by fictional counterparts of actual-world people and that occur in fictional counterparts of actual-world places. In other words, the events, people and places described are shared by the fictional and actual-world encyclopedias. This results in a strong *effect of reality*.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, *The Joke* combines narrative strategies typical of classical realist novels with those employed by the reportage genre and with essayistic passages which analyse the actual world's historical and political situation, i.e. those means which, in combination, enhance the *effect of reality* in fictional texts: "Critics have called it a realistic novel because of the way it exemplifies the conditions of Czechoslovak society in the two first decades of the Communist regime" (Němcová-Banerjee 1990: 11). In sum, a unique combination of formal narrative devices and clear reference to the actual world result in specific information used for the plausible construction of a possible actual world. Nevertheless, the third and final aspect supporting a political reading of *The Joke* lies in the specific historical and political situation at the time of its reception. The specificity of the situation consists in the ways in which totalitarian regimes would deal with information about their practices, the ways in which they falsify history and the ways in which they make adjustments to the present. Undoubtedly, the period of Stalinism in Czechoslovakia substantially increased the number of gaps in information about the actual world behind the Iron Curtain. For example, the regime

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<sup>1</sup> It is obvious that the readers and the publishers of *The Joke* approached the novel from similar positions and that the novel's reception is a product of joint moves: the reader's will to read the novel politically and the publisher's attempt to situate the novel in the language and cultural context of the target public.

<sup>2</sup> Here I deliberately use the term *effect of reality* in order to avoid any confusion with Roland Barthes' ([1968] 1986) term "the reality effect" (*effet de réel*) introduced in his famous essay. Whereas Barthes connected this term to the notion of the *referential illusion* which he firmly attached to the reference of a literary sign ("the very absence of the signified, to the advantage of the referent alone, becomes the very signifier of realism"; 148), I use the term "effect of reality" to refer to the overlap between fictional and real-world encyclopedias.

did not want to share any information about its corruption such as political trials, prisoners and executions, the atmosphere of fear and the overall corruption of democratic values.

At this point I wish to draw attention to an important fact which strongly divides the reception of *The Joke* in Czechoslovakia from its reception in the Anglophone world. In this respect, we shall see that the time and place of reception of *The Joke* strongly influences the book's potential with regards to its informational function. We can see this in a passage from the book itself:

And so I was very glad when September came at last, bringing classes and (several days before classes began) my work at the Students Union, where I had an office to myself and all kinds of things to keep me busy. The day after I got back, however, I received a phone call summoning me to the District Party Secretariat. From that moment I remember everything in perfect detail. It was a sunny day, and as I came out of the Students Union building I felt the grief that had plagued me all summer slowly dissipating. I set off with an agreeable feeling of curiosity. I rang the bell and was let in by the chairman of the Party University Committee, a tall thin-faced youth with fair hair and ice-blue eyes. I gave him the standard greeting, "Honor to Labor," but instead of responding he said, "Go straight back. They're waiting for you." In the last room of the Secretariat, three members of the committee awaited me. They told me to sit down. I did, and understood that this was out of the ordinary. These three Comrades, whom I knew well and had always bantered with, wore severe expressions.

Their first question was whether I knew Marketa. I said I did. They asked me whether I had corresponded with her. I said I had. They asked me whether I remembered what I wrote. I said I did not, but immediately the postcard with the provocative text materialized before my eyes and I began to have an inkling of what was going on [...]

And you, what do you think of optimism? they asked. Optimism? I asked. What should I think of it? Do you consider yourself an optimist? they went on. I do, I said timidly. I like a good time, a good laugh, I said, trying to lighten the tone of the interrogation. Even a nihilist can like a good laugh, said one of them. He can laugh at people who suffer. A cynic also can like a good laugh, he went on. Do you think socialism can be built without optimism? asked another of them. No, I said. Then you're opposed to our building socialism, said the third. What do you mean? I protested. Because you think optimism is the opium of the people, they said, pressing their attack. The opium of the people? I protested again. Don't try to dodge the issue. That's what you wrote. Marx called religion the opium of the people, and you think our optimism is opium! That's what you wrote to Marketa. I wonder what

our workers, our shock workers, would say if they were to learn that the optimism spurring them on to overfulfill the plan was opium, another added. And the third: For a Trotskyite the optimism that builds socialism can never be more than opium. And you are a Trotskyite.

For heaven's sake, whatever gave you that idea? I protested. Did you write it or did you not? I may have written something of the kind as a joke, but that was two months ago, I don't remember. We'll be glad to refresh your memory, they said, and read me my postcard aloud: Optimism is the opium of the people! A healthy atmosphere stinks of stupidity! Long live Trotsky! Ludvik. The words sounded so terrifying in the small Party Secretariat office that they frightened me and I felt they had a destructive force I was powerless to counter. (Kundera 1982: 36–37)

It can be assumed that in 1967 Czechoslovak readers of this passage must have found this particular quotation fully realistic, given the years in which the documents of the practices of the Communist regime during the period of Stalinism were suppressed. The only information about such practices was unofficial and came from those who were actually oppressed by the regime, so that information of this type was very limited. Nevertheless, the recently opened archives finally have proved these facts to be true, both in content and in form. This fictional interrogation overlaps not only with what might have happened but, more likely, with what very probably did happen many times during that period. In 1967 this information clearly referred to Stalinist Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, the situation for Anglophone readers at the time of the release of the English translation of *The Joke*, i.e. in 1969, was completely different.

The period of liberalisation in the late 1960s concluded with an act of severe aggression: the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact armies, an act which actually “promised” a new era of corruption and new gaps in history. Moreover, the release of *The Joke* coincided with such a situation, as Hana Nemcova-Banerjee describes it: “There is a tendency in the West to interpret *The Joke* in light of the events of August 1968. After all, the novel burst upon the consciousness of European readers just as images of tanks on the streets of Prague were vanishing from their television screens. But the association of the two is misleading, like an optical illusion” (1990: 74–75). All the above-mentioned realistic features of *The Joke* and the historical circumstances of its reception thus made its readers merge the actual-world encyclopedia and the fictional encyclopedia of the novel and use them both to interpret the novel so as to understand what was happening in the actual world. And it is, indeed, a matter of fact that many of the readers and reviewers directly related *The Joke* (finished in 1965) to the Czechoslovakia of 1968, probably considering the Communist oppression there as invariable. A prime example of this confusion is the

discussion which appeared in *The New York Review of Books* in 1970.<sup>1</sup> This discussion, originally focused on the relevance of the publisher's work with the first American edition of *The Joke*, consequently turned into evaluating the potential of *The Joke* to refer to the political situation of contemporary Czechoslovakia. In the heat of the ensuing discussion, Erazim V. Kohák, a prominent Czech *émigré*, published a contribution in which he pontificates about some of the contributors to this discussion who confused the period of Stalinism in former Czechoslovakia (to which *The Joke* actually refers) with the period of Dubček's liberation and its violent termination by the invasion of the Warsaw Pact armies (during which *The Joke* was published in English). It can be observed that Kohák, when discussing these topics, actually accedes to a large extent to a purely political reading of the novel. However, whereas confusing the events described in the novel with the Prague Spring 1968 was not acceptable to Kundera, nor to some of the reviewers who considered these two sets of events to be parallel, this seemed to be an important tool for the promotion of the book to the foreign public. At one point, the author himself "allows" his close friend, Louis Aragon, to draw a parallel between the two sets of events in his foreword to the 1968 French edition of *The Joke*, commenting on this foreword as follows: "Aragon wrote what is probably the most eloquent and penetrating piece anyone has written on the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia: his foreword to *The Joke*." (Kundera 1982: ix). In this case in particular, it would be fair to ask whether, for example, this paratext may (or may not) have contributed to the political reading of the novel (so vigorously objected to by the author) and if so, to what extent. It might also be wondered whether Kundera's attitude to the politicisation (or purely political reading) of his first novel has been consistent at all the levels at which he approached his readers.

Regarding these questions, it must be borne in mind that many of the contemporary commentaries on *The Joke* did not insist on a purely mimetic reading and that they viewed its political world as the background for an analysis of the existential dimension of the characters in a very specific and unfortunate political situation. It must be emphasized that Kundera himself has repeatedly advocated a reading of *The Joke* in which a mimetic representation of the Czechoslovak political situation should not play the main role. The author expressed this wish explicitly in his foreword of 1982 in which he draws a parallel between history and private lives:

But if a character is condemned to triviality in his private life, can he escape to the stage of history? No, I have always been convinced that the paradoxes of history and private life have the same basic properties. (Kundera 1982: viii)

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<sup>1</sup> Here I refer especially to the exchange of views and ideas between D.A.N. Jones (1970), Oliver Stallybrass (1970) and Erazim Kohák (1970).

In his foreword to another edition of *The Joke*, in 2008, the author is explicit about his interest in existential themes which can be magnified by the historical situation:

the historical situation is not the very topic of the novel – its meaning lies in the fact that it throws new, extremely bright light on the existential topics which fascinate me: revenge, oblivion, reputation and disrepute, the relationship of history and man, alienation of one's own deeds, the split between sex and love, etc. (Kundera 2008: 36)

Clearly, *The Joke* expresses a strong potential for being read in a way which focuses on the characters who are “examined” under a specific political situation as objects of some kind of a social experiment in which the political situation described plays an important role. In this respect Kundera himself speaks about a man caught up in “the trap the world has become.”<sup>1</sup> This principle can be easily extended to (almost) all of Kundera's work.

Nevertheless, it is possible to say that most of the interpretations of Kundera's novels, and especially those of *The Joke*, are not purely political and do not focus only on the existential dimension of characters living under oppressive regimes: rather, they draw from both views, considering the political and existential dimensions inseparable. Indeed, the majority of the more recent interpretations of Kundera's works (interpretations outside the periods in which TV screens show tanks on the streets of Prague) are based on a similarly existential perspective: “Nearly all of Mr. Kundera's work is animated by a concern with politics – that is, politics as manifested in the ironic, even absurd, conditions of life in a totalitarian regime” (Howe 1982).

It seems that such interpretations not only correspond to the author's confessed intentions but that they also support the more general suggestion concerning the historical aspects of the actual-world encyclopedia:

Cultures and periods enjoying a stable world view will tend to seek minimal incompleteness by adopting various strategies [...] By contrast, periods of transition and conflict tend to maximize the incompleteness of fictional worlds, which supposedly mirror corresponding features outside fiction. (Pavel 1986: 108–109).

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<sup>1</sup> Going even further, some critics followed the “character trace” so strictly that they were able to focus primarily on *The Joke's* characters and evaluate their qualities as if they were really living in our actual world: “Ludvik would be a loser anywhere, because he is simply uninteresting: a self-pitying, self-dramatizing and unimaginative man, bitter for as many wrong reasons as right ones. His personality infects *The Joke* and gives its style a heavy, pedestrian quality” (Broyard 1982).

If we extend Thomas Pavel's penetrating observation regarding the short period of liberalization in former Czechoslovakia, it can be argued that in those relatively stable historical periods which suffer from a lack of political information about the previous periods, fictional texts tend to be used as sources of information about the actual world. Consequently, this historical period was sufficient in terms of the supply/demand relation, and the political information available in fictional encyclopedias did not contribute to filling gaps in the actual-world encyclopedia with regard to the period itself.<sup>1</sup>

From all that has been said up to this point, it is obvious that Kundera spent a great deal of energy in attempting to convince his audience that *The Joke* possesses the ability to deliver a general message about various aspects of human existence and that the novel should not be reduced to the pure political testimony of a particular part of actual-world political history, even though history itself plays an important role as background. "One sympathizes with Mr. Kundera's evident wish not to be type-cast as a 'dissident' or 'political' novelist, but the truth is that, even as his books tell love stories and offer meditations on folk culture, they are saturated with politics" (Howe 1982). In conclusion, we may agree that the author's intention was to conduct a somewhat futile battle with the overall general realist form of the novel, and especially with the very specific political circumstances of its reception.

This can be considered the end of this particular story and one can only express the belief that both the author and his audience have learned their lesson. But if this is the case, why would an author who once displayed a strong dissatisfaction with a purely political reading of his book, and spent years fighting against the misinterpretation of the events described with the actual invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, write and publish a novel called *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984), which actually describes the events of the invasion, a novel that contains parts constructed as a highly plausible reportage of the invasion and elements of whose realism actually exceed those of *The Joke*? One example of this strong realist trace in the novel will suffice:

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<sup>1</sup> Here I would like to draw attention to the connections between Kundera's *The Joke* and George Orwell's *1984* (1949), referred to at the very beginning of this article. Both novels, describing wide contexts of topics from the political to the privately human, offer the possibility of being read in completely incongruent ways. Nevertheless, both novels continue to be widely read and interpreted. It is a matter of interest that one of the reviewers of Kundera's *The Joke* views the connection between the two novels also on another level. Anatole Broyard, who definitely does not belong to the large group of admirers of *The Joke*, compares Kundera's style to Orwell's famous topos: "As far as I'm concerned, at least in this book, Mr. Kundera, who is generally highly praised, is not writing well. His language seems to be somewhere between George Orwell's Newspeak and the querulousness of certain kinds of narcissistic fiction. And there isn't an interesting or convincing character in the book." (Broyard 1982)



Jan Prochazka, a forty-year-old Czech novelist with the strength and vitality of an ox, began criticising public affairs vociferously even before 1968. He then became one of the best-loved figures of the Prague Spring, that dizzying liberalization of Communism which ended with the Russian invasion. Shortly after the invasion the press initiated a smear campaign against him, but the more they smeared, the more people liked him. Then (in 1970, to be exact) the Czech radio broadcast a series of private talks between Prochazka and a professor friend of his which had taken place two years before (that is, in the spring of 1968). For a long time, neither of them had any idea that the professor's flat was bugged and their every step dogged. Prochazka loved to regale his friends with hyperbole and excess. Now his excess had become a weekly radio series. The secret police, who produced and directed the show, took pains to emphasize the sequences in which Prochazka made fun of his friends – Dubcek, for instance. People slander their friends at the drop of a hat, but they were more shocked by the much-loved Prochazka than by the much-hated secret police. (Kundera 1987: 133)

As can be seen, this part not only refers to actual living protagonists and leaders of the Prague Spring of 1968, but it also more or less accurately describes the exact events of that period witnessed by the citizens of Czechoslovakia. In addition, other parts of the novel express the strong effect of reality based both on the reference to the actual world as well as on the devices and techniques used in narration. In contrast to the above quoted passage from *The Joke* which was structured as a subjective description of the very probable interrogation of a young Communist by his Comrades, the passage taken from *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* shows an objective narrator describing a real political situation which is part of the actual-world encyclopedia and therefore does not have to be replaced by the fictional one. There is no need to emphasize that, in the case of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, the political situation of the time of the book's reception was similar for all readers, due quite simply to the fact that the beginning of the 1980s, when the book was published, was not accompanied by any important political events that were likely to determine the book's reception. Therefore, it seems that the conditions of the reception of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, unlike those of *The Joke*, together with the fictional world itself described in the novel did not support its potential to replace substantial parts of the actual-world encyclopedia by the fictional encyclopedia.

And finally, let us come back to the specific relationship between Milan Kundera and his readers, a relationship I characterised as a misunderstanding at the beginning of my study. In the case of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, it can be argued more strongly than anywhere else that this misunderstanding is actually an inevitable part

of the author's general aesthetic program. Again, this is a result of the author's attempt to model the author/reader relationship in every possible way, sometimes to the extent that the author actually undermines the reader's competence to read and interpret fictional texts and also their competence to understand the political world in which they live. Only then can the final aesthetic effect be achieved, based on a constant tension and fed by all the discussions involved: "Playfully mixing history with philosophy and fantasy, Mr. Kundera creates a world in which routine expectations are undercut, ideas and reason mocked" (Howe 1982). In the diction of fictional words theory, by using specific realist means and historical/political contexts, Milan Kundera not only constantly replaces the real world encyclopedia with the fictional encyclopedia, but he also constantly models his fictional encyclopedias by telling the readers how to read his fictional texts properly. This strategy actually shows that the relationships between the real world encyclopedia and the fictional encyclopedia have to be viewed at multiple levels and examined and described with multiple sets of tools.

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## 0. Introduction

The primary subject of this article, the narrativity of lyric poetry, overlaps with the issues of the literary genre theory, which now makes up a wider field of interdisciplinary research. This is done partly to think about the ways in which literary theory might come together with cognitive science and partly to argue, together with Brian McHale (McHale 2009) and other scholars promoting transgeneric narratology (Hühn 2004, 2014; Hühn and Sommer 2012), that contemporary narratology's relative neglect of poetry is "a scandal" (cf. McHale 2009: 3).

Lyric poetry has always been opposed to the narrative poetic genres, on the one hand, and to the other two basic genres within the triad "epic – drama – lyric," on the other. Gérard Genette in *The Architext: An Introduction*, however, modernized the map of genre theory by proposing the concepts of intertextuality and architextuality as ways in which texts allude to one another and resemble one another enough to be categorized as the same literary type (Genette [1979] 1992; Gorman 2005). He also debunked the long-held doctrine that the three genres doctrine was Aristotelian, demonstrating that it dates back to Romanic and Germanic Romanticism. However, whether or not the narrativity of poetry is an object of analysis is an issue that has sparked new discussions between classicists and narrative theorists in the last few years. The point that I wish to make in this article, originally presented at the ENN 3 Conference in Paris, was criticized later at the *Belye Chtenia* Conference in Moscow (see the reply to my article in *Narratorium* 2013 – the follow-up of *Belye Chtenia* 2012 [Tataru 2013; Chevtajev 2013]). Furthermore, a special issue of *Narrative* in 2014, devoted to "narrative in poetic form," features, along with the seven other essays, polemics between Brian McHale (2014) and Bruce Heiden (2014). Heiden, a true classicist, claims that "narrative in poetry" is a mirage created by structuralist narratology and that approaching poetry "through the lens of narratology" leads to misconceptions that "block and distort one's view of poetry and of narrative as well" (2014: 270). McHale advocates a position, previously expressed in his essay

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<sup>1</sup> Comuzzi is a surname I have taken recently. My previous publications and conferences have appeared under the name Ludmila Tataru.

“Beginning to Think about Narrative in Poetry” (2009), that inquiry into narrative in poetry might “capture something [...] that the reader experiences” and poses a question in return: “if that something isn’t what narrative theory calls “narrative,” then what is it?” (McHale 2014: 286, 287).

Monika Fludernik’s (2008) and Ansgar Nünning and Roy Sommer’s (2008) studies on the narratology of drama (see also Hühn and Sommer 2012) have brought further evidence to shake the myths still besetting poetics which hold that narrativity obtains in epic only. However, even though narrative and poetry and narrative and drama cut across each other, the very possibility of consolidating the efforts of literary theory and those of cognitive science has yet to bear all its fruits. This can be explained partly as a result of specialization: some scholars concentrate on narrative, others on poetry (or drama), but few specialize in both (McHale 2009: 2). Genre, a phenomenon of immense scope with numerous manifestations and functions, has every right to become a “crossroads” for literary theory, narrative theory and the natural sciences.

## 1. Genre and gene

Literary-theoretical discussion around the term “genre” can be roughly summed up in the question “Is it a stable structure or a metamorphic substance?” In the 1920s this question triggered a polemical dialogue between the two Russian literary theorists, Mikhail Bakhtin and Jurij Tynjanov. Bakhtin laid stress on genre’s stability in the sense that literature, as well as other spheres of communication, have their lives and their stories driven by collective orientations toward a completion: “Literary genre by its nature reflects the most stable, ‘dateless’ tendencies in the evolution of literature. Genre always retains undying *archaic* elements. [...] Genre is self-productive and self-rejuvenating in every individual work of a particular genre. [...] Genre represents creative memory in the process of literary development. This is exactly the reason why genre can secure *the entity* and *the continuity* of this development”<sup>1</sup> (Bakhtin 1972: 178–179, original emphasis). Tynjanov insisted on genre’s variability and transformation in the course of evolution in literature: from epoch to epoch, from one author to another, genres would change beyond recognition, more in their essential traits than in the minor ones (cf. Tynjanov 1977a: 273). Regarding Puškin’s *The Prisoner of the Caucasus* as a case of radical generic change in respect to the poem’s historical predecessors, Tynjanov stressed that it was more “*a leap*” than a stage in “*regular evolution*,” more “*a displacement*” than “*a development*” (1977b: (255–256, original emphasis). In an afterthought to this observation, however, he admitted that,

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<sup>1</sup> All translations from the Russian are my own.

in spite of its transformation, the poem “has retained something that is enough to make this ‘non-poem’ a poem” (256).

Tynjanov didn't come to a definition of literary genre, having confined himself to a rather paradoxical statement to the effect that the problem of genre is “the most difficult, the least investigated” (1977a: 273) of all problems of literary theory. Nor did he follow to completion the biological parallel to his theory of evolution in literature, which was conceived by him in the simile “genre as gene” jotted down in his notebook.<sup>1</sup> This biological image and Bakhtin's famous metaphor “the memory of genre” imply in their core more ideas in common than in contradiction.

Further evidence to the essential congruity of Bakhtin's and Tynjanov's “genetic” visions is the idea Bakhtin set forth in *The Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel*, notably that literary genres are analogous to genealogic lines. This is best illustrated in Bakhtin's analysis of the powerful Rabelaisian image of a huge, self-renewing collective human body which is born, grows, dies and renew itself in the course of time (cf. Bakhtin 1975b: 316–355). It is also clearly implied in the anatomical imagery that pervades his writings on the novel, as in the opening paragraph of “Epic and Novel”: “The generic skeleton of the novel is still far from having hardened, and we cannot foresee all its plastic possibilities” (1975a: 447). Bakhtin portrays the novel as “the only genre, born and raised by the new epoch of the world history and for this reason much akin to it”; while the other big genres are “partly dead by now,” they “are received by this epoch by inheritance ready-made and all they must do is adapt to [...] the new conditions of existence” (Bakhtin 1975a: 448).

The two theories sketched above seem to have been reconciled in contemporary Russian literary theory with its systemic approach embraced by the methodology of historical poetics which, in turn, has driven out of fashion the concept and principles of structure. Russian followers of the historical (diachronic) tradition consider the morphological-structural treatment of genre as a “classificatory cell,” popular in the 1970s, but overly restrictive and inappropriate. Proceeding from the philosophical idea of its genesis, they define genre as “a historically cognized type of a form-content unity (entity) in literature” (Lukov 2006: 143). Structuralists, however, never denied the fact that the walls between the “genre cells” are penetrable, or that in the course of historical development there emerge “transitory, mixed and hybrid forms” that co-exist with ‘pure’ genres (Kagan 1972: 423). Indeed, after Bakhtin, Tynjanov

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<sup>1</sup> The analogy between genre and gene as well as between literary and natural evolution in general might have been a consequence of Tynjanov's lasting friendship with the biologist Leo Zilber. In his writings about literary evolution, Tynjanov used a number of biological terms: “convergence,” “divergence” and the like. He may have taken these terms over from Zilber to apply them to philology (see *Commentaries* of A. P. Chudakov and M. O. Chudakova to Tynjanov 1977b).

and the French philosophy of language, it is impossible to conceptualize genres as rigid structures: they are recognized as “genes of discourse,” both literary and non-literary, permeating every form of human existence. Thanks to the achievements of the relatively new linguistic theory of speech genres, derived from Bakhtin (1979), an isomorphism of the two forms of existence – the “unconscious” genres of everyday discourse and the consciously created genres of literature – is now well established. In Russia, the first research center devoted to speech genres emerged at the Saratov University a few decades ago. Its leading researchers, Olga Sirotinina, Konstantin Sedov, Vadim Dementjev and others, have identified the psycho- and sociolinguistic traits of numerous “everyday-life genres” extending from children’s speech acts, anecdotes, gossip and domestic rows to political discourse and beyond (cf. Dementjev and Sedov 1998; Sirotinina 1999; ARJ 2007; Dementjev 2011).

To date, however, few practical steps have been taken in Russian scholarship to apply interdisciplinary approaches to literary and non-literary genres. In this respect, an hypothesis that deserves greater attention than it has enjoyed so far in Russian literary theory is Vladimir Vaxrušev’s conception of literary genre as an element within the universal system of connections: “gene (nucleus-prototype) – microcosm (organism, text) – macrocosm (history, the Universe)” (Vaxrušev 2003: 24; see also Vaxrušev 2004, 2007). The biological parallel Vaxrušev outlines starts from his etymological analysis of the term “genre,” which triggers a chain reaction of associations between the literary genre and the biological gene: genre – genealogy – genotype – genitive – genius, etc. This is very much in tune with Bakhtin’s metaphor “genre memory” and enhances Tynjanov’s literary-evolutionary concept of “genre as gene.” The parallel between literary genres and the genres of history (from the great tragedies and farces of history to the minor tragedies, dramas and comic episodes in the lives of common people) analyzed by Vaxrušev correlates with Richard Dawkins’ (2006) theory of “meme” (a unit of information in human memory) and Charles J. Lumsden and Edward O. Wilson’s (1981) culture-gene co-evolutionary theory, which posits that cultural values act like genes.

The third line of argumentation, which is philosophical, has led Vaxrušev to assert that “Genre as an ideal type is a variant of Plato’s idea of a model generating other phenomena, analogous to it, though not necessarily similar to it in appearance” (Vaxrušev 2007: 8). On this philosophical basis, genre is defined as an entity built around “an idea-image-concept nucleus” (Aristotle’s *entelechy*) – the inner motive and at the same time the aim of a phenomenon which, potentially, contains its composition, style and form. This model-idea generates phenomena and processes which have two basic functions: they are “self-aimed” (thus performing a ludic function) and at the same time they aim at cognition and reproduction of life (thus

performing the cognitive function) (Vaxrušev 2003: 24; 2007: 8). These two functions dictate a distinction between the two basic types of genre: 1) *subjective* (those created consciously by people in science, art, etc.) and 2) *objective* (the genres born out of life itself, historically and socially) (Vaxrušev 2003: 22).

Drawing on the conceptualizations of genre outlined above, we come to a more or less comprehensive understanding of genre that can be summed up in the following two theses:

- 1) Genre is an entity, a structure with a nuclear concept which programs the meaningful development and form of a process or an object. Generic ideas program texts, organisms, natural and historical processes. In its structure and properties, genre is analogous to DNA. If a DNA molecule represents a duplex of two polymeric spirals connected by hydrogen chains, the structure of a speech genre consists of, at minimum, four spirals generated by the generic “polymers”: theme, image, ideology (involving emotions and evaluations) and language (or style). Like a DNA molecule, genre is stable (it encodes and preserves information – the “memory” of genre) and is capable of transmitting information through matrix processes from generation to generation, thus ensuring new combinations of properties open to new combinations of the linked “genes.”
- 2) Genre is a cognitive model generating power that enables an organism to cognize the environment as well as adapt to it and transform it. Poems, and literary works in general, being variants of “real life genres,” carry the same concepts and traces of cognitive processes that are intrinsic to man’s thought in every other sphere of activity. What distinguishes the meanings born by poetic types of discourse is that they are more artistically elaborate and emotionally charged than those in other forms of expression. Analysts should be concerned not so much with looking for unique concepts akin solely to a specific, poetic mode of thinking, but with the peculiarities of concept representation in a particular poetic genre.

## **2. Narrative vs. non-narrative genres of poetry: a formal opposition or a fuzzy set?**

Western scholars are more open-minded than Russian scholars in terms of the ways to apply to traditional studies of literary narratives the tools provided by cognitive science, rhetoric and linguistics. The results obtained by Seymour Chatman, Monika Fludernik, David Herman, James Phelan, Marie-Laure Ryan, to name a few, make up the foundations of postclassical narratology, a matter I will not elaborate on here. Special mention must be made, however, of the work being carried out by the American literary scholar Patrick Colm Hogan. Starting with his book *The Mind and its Stories* (2003), Hogan has embarked on a cross-cultural study of the relation

between two crucial elements of literature and the human mind: narrative and emotion. He claims that the tendency to think of narrative and non-narrative verbal arts as distinct from one another “is a misconception” if the structure of plots and the universal features of lyric poetry are taken into consideration (152). Moreover, he argues that his theory, cognitive in nature, can be extended “even beyond literature to aspects of our ordinary lives, such as religious belief [...] and the narrative study of lyric poetry helps us to see this” (152).

Indeed, instead of opposing narrative and non-narrative genres of poetry, it is possible to see them as a fuzzy set of text types embracing those having prototypical, historically rooted generic traits as key reference points, as well as those with varying degrees of modification. The latter might have marginal and hybrid forms created in the course of historical development.

Thanks to the fundamental accomplishments of poetics, the problem of classifying the prototypical genres of poetry is actually solved (suffice it to mention in this regard Boris Tomaševskij’s “Poetics” [1925]). The typical traits of the ode, the elegy, the epigram, the epistle and the poem, which Tomaševskij presented as “the non-fabulary” (*nefabulyarnye janri poezii*), seem to be radically transformed by fragmentary modernist discourse and by “the language games” of postmodern art. On closer observation, however, they turn out to be nothing more than the new products of modernization, “the upgrades” of the original, historically rooted genres, but with the aim of reconstructing or searching for “eternal truths” and meanings.

A sample of such an upgrade could be the poem “*Nemota*” (literally, “muteness, voicelessness”) by the Russian-writing Ukrainian poet Viktor Letzev (2003):

|                   |                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| HEMOTA            | MUTENESS <sup>1</sup> |
| <i>это</i>        | this                  |
| <i>нет</i>        | no                    |
| <i>так ни это</i> | so neither this       |
| <i>нет нет</i>    | no no                 |
| <i>это так</i>    | this is so            |
| <i>нет уже</i>    | not already           |
| <i>так ни это</i> | so neither this       |
| <i>это совсем</i> | this at all           |
| <i>так нельзя</i> | can’t be so           |
| <i>это все</i>    | this all              |
| <i>не сказать</i> | can’t be said         |

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<sup>1</sup> Translation from the Russian, as far as it was possible, was done by the author of this article.



A structurally direct question – “What’s the genre of this poem?” – would stir up a host of opinions, going as far as “postmodernist bullshit.” But if we put the question another way: “Which of the following generic traits are more recognizable here: those of an epic poem or those of an elegy?” this would open the way to some degree of consensus.

“Muteness” is part of Letzev’s cycle of poems, awarded the Andrej Belyj Prize in 1997, the highest poetic award in Russia. Its very composition seems to follow the stages of the lyric speaker’s growing consciousness. His consciousness grows from dumbness in Part 1, called “Sostoyaniya. Proyavleniya. Somneniya” [“States. Revelations. Doubts”], to “Distinction” in Part 2 [“Razlichenija”] and “Maturing” in Part 3 [“Stanovlenija”]. “Muteness” appears in the first part of the cycle, recreating the states of a person who seems to have survived something like a serious accident and has lost the ability to speak and understand. Like “Muteness,” the other “songs” of Part 1 are as undecipherable, obscure and profoundly sad. Gradually, however, as the lyric teller’s inner vision puts together his memory puzzles, he starts to see the growth of a new “tree of life.” This extended metaphor is charged with positive emotions:

|   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| <i>Этот ствол зверей прямой золотой</i> | This trunk of beasts erect |
| <i>золотой прямой поток</i>             | golden                     |
| <i>этот росток прямой</i>               | golden erect stream        |
| <i>этот ребенок корней золотой</i>      | this sprout erect          |
| <i>этот человек...</i>                  | this golden child of roots |
|   | this man...                |

To put it briefly, the genre of “Muteness” would reveal the characteristics of an elegy packed up into the genre of a mad song. It is also part of a lyric cycle, the intention of which is similar to that of Biblical “Genesis.” This linguistically modernized imitation of the growth of “the man of Wasteland’s” voice-consciousness turns out to be alluding to the story of creation.

### 3. Specific traits of poetry and the relationship between narrative and lyric poetry

Most literary genres are “programmed” for storytelling although in narrative genres the teller’s discourse foregrounds the plot and eventfulness while in lyrics the speaker’s discourse is more about “psychological events” as a mental reaction to “what has happened.” The aim of narrativity is to tell “that something happened”

while that of lyricality is to tell “that something is” and “what the lyrical teller thought about something” (Phelan 2007: 22; qtd. in McHale 2009: 12).

While the distinctive traits of narrative and drama have long been recognized (narrativity and performativity, respectfully), that of poetry is still unclear. An evident answer would be “lyricality.” But lyricality can dominate prose as well, especially that of the modernist tradition; moreover, not all poetry is lyric poetry. Another supposed trait of poetry could be metaphoricity, but the evidence of linguistic and cognitive research has confirmed metaphoricity to be constitutive of language and thought in general, and not solely of poetry. The concepts associated with poetic thought – frames, gestalts, scenes, scenarios, images, etc. – are not much different from those found in human thought generally, be it in science, politics, religion or everyday life.

What is it then that makes poetry distinct from prose? The answer might seem superficial and naive: it is poetry’s formal structures that are noticeably measured and rhythmical. This assertion, more probably than not, goes against the preferences of the majority of literary scholars who believe that poetic form is supplementary. Yet, there is enough theoretical evidence specifying various formal ways of meaning-formation that are unique to poetry. Roman Jakobson, for one, considered meter (“verse design”) and rhyme (“regular recurrence of equivalent phonemes”) to be the constituent features of poetry (1960: 364, 367). He demonstrated, with a score of convincing linguistic arguments, that poetry is “a province where the internal nexus between sound and meaning [...] manifests itself most palpably” if compared to other types of speech where verse and rhymes can also be used (but for other purposes), and that particularly dense accumulation of similar or contrastive phonemes, patterned in lines and stanzas, “acts like an ‘undercurrent of meaning’, to use Poe’s picturesque expression” (373). In Yuriy Lotman’s structural-semiotic theory, a literary text, whether prosaic or poetic, is presented as “a structure of structures” or “a secondary semiotic system” in contrast to conventional code systems (including everyday communication) (cf. Lotman 1972: 21, 24). A poetic text, when compared to a prosaic one, is “a specifically organized semiotic structure” of heightened regularity in which the meaning-forming functions of graphics, repetition and elaborately ordered rhythmic patterns come to the fore (14, 33, 39).

McHale claims that the three criteria distinctive of poetry are segmentivity, gapping and measurement/countermeasurement. Segmentivity – the ability to make meaning by selecting and arranging segments of varying sizes – is “the underlying characteristic of poetry as a genre” (McHale 2009: 16). It makes poetry fragmentary, leaving it full of gaps such as blank spaces caused by line terminations, “gearing up

the reader's meaning-making apparatus [...] to bridge the gap and heal the breach. A gap is a provocation to meaning-making; we intervene to make meaning where ready-made meaning fails. [...] we know it from narratology, which acknowledges narrative gaps and gap-filling to be one of the engines driving narrative progression" (16).

The significance of the balance of "measurement/countermeasurement," as McHale presents it, is close to "co-opposition" (*so-propotivopostavlenie*), the term coined by Lotman to designate the inseparability of the two basic relations between textual elements: binary opposition and equivalence (difference and similarity, contrast and identity) (Lotman 1972: 38, 40). Lotman's method consists in examining the text through its basic pairs of oppositions to comprehend its structural-meaningful unity and coherence. The web of meaningful interrelations within a literary text structure is woven on different levels: phonic, lexical, grammatical, narrative, mimetic and ideological. The literary text is the product of interrelations of the various textual subsystems, such as sound and sense, rhyme and reason, style and plot, character and ideas, etc. (cf. Lotman 1972: 63–119). McHale finds it useful to countermeasure one "segment" of a poetic text to another, stating that this

gives us tools for beginning to think about narrative in poetry. If poetry is measured and countermeasured, so, too, is narrative. [...] narrative is certainly segmented in various ways, at various levels and scales. On the level of story, the "flow" of events is segmented into sequences of various scales – "moves," subplots, episodes – and ultimately into discrete events. On the level of discourse, narration is segmented into multiple, shifting voices [...] while "point of view" is segmented by constant micro-shifts of focalization. [...] In poetic narratives, narrative's own segmentation interacts with the segmentation "indigenous" to poetry to produce complex interplays among segments of different scales and kinds. (McHale 2009: 17)

Thus, segmentivity, which is conditioned by poetry's peculiar rhythmic pattern, helps us "capture something of the fine-textured counterpoint of verse, syntax and narrative" (McHale 2014: 268). It drives or slows down a poem's narrative progression, counter-measuring its metric scheme by phrases, lines and feet, thus foregrounding "the point" which would be less audible if told in prose.

#### **4. Meter vs. Rhythm: the core principle of narrative text**

All the distinctive features of a poetic text, as characterized briefly in the previous section, are manifestations of one universal law: the law of rhythm, *regulating the physiological, psycho-emotional, cognitive, speaking and aesthetic activities of a speaker or writer which are reflected in his or her speech acts (texts) in the alternations of periodical*

*discourse units of different levels.* A rhythmic unit of discourse can be realized by *any* speech or text segment insofar as it is isochronous. It can be a prosodic unit, a word, a clause, a phrase or a supra-phrasal unit. It is also rhythm that governs the alternations of images, characters, voices, events and other meaningful dimensions of a text.

It is obvious that the meter/rhythm correlation, crucial for poetry, lies at the base of all its co-oppositions or its possible correlations of measurement/countermeasurement. The Russian poet and theoretician of modernism, Andrej Belyj, once wrote that meter (as a regular alternation of feet) is the dominant principle in the poem, while rhythm counterpoints meter, making the poem variable and dynamic (cf. Panov 1989: 343–344). Originally a term of versification, meter is seen today in a much broader sense as a structural norm of rhythm, capable of triggering: a) an expectation of reiteration of a certain element in a discourse or other process as it unfolds; b) the feeling of “a breach” when an expectation is unfulfilled (cf. Volkova 1974: 81). Meter functions as a measure of proportion and correlation of any text’s segments. The metric scheme enables the reader’s mind to build up a mental network of “expectations”: it functions as a metronome, correlating the current experience with a projection to the future, that is, as an organization of expectancy and cognition.

The meaning-making correlation of meter/rhythm (or measurement/countermeasurement) is crucial for all narratives, but in poetry it is amplified. Evident fragmentariness together with greater measurement (symmetry) makes the process of meaning reconstruction more efficient. Gaps, caused by segmentation, make poetic frames quasi-empty. Consequently, they contain fewer “triggers” for activating scenes and scenarios. The reader is forced to make a greater effort to reconstruct the mental schemes, since the gaps often occur at the poem’s turning points or transitions from one state to another. These points contribute to the “tellability” of the poem, that is, to its “point.”

To “measure” the sense-making countermeasurement in a narrative text, an analyst must decide on a text unit relevant for its formal and semantic structure. I have adopted as the basic unit of composition point of view, which is also basic for narrative rhythm. My reasoning is related in principle to Boris Uspenskij’s theory of point of view and perspective as it was presented in his *Poetika kompositsii* (1970; Uspensky [1970] 1973). What I focus on is the countermeasurement of a narrative text’s metric structural pattern to the deviations from this pattern caused by the dynamics of the points of view in it.

Formally, as our previous research in the linguistic nature of narrative has shown (Tataru 2011), a point of view is usually expressed within one supra-phrasal unit, so that the transition from one point of view to another can be followed as one supra-phrasal unit is followed by the next one.

Semantically, point of view is a multifaceted unit which involves the subject's spatial-temporal position, his voice and his axiology. It represents one fabula-motivated event or state from the perspective of the narrator or the participant of the story. In other words, point of view is the highest hierarchical feature of a narrative text within which all four basic planes of the story world – the spatial, the temporal, the plane of discourse and the plane of modality – are synthesized and guided by one perceiving and speaking subject.

Point of view is also a category surpassing the limits of the narrative text. As David Herman pointed out in "Narratology as a Cognitive Science" (2000), it can be brought into a productive reciprocal relation with research by ecological psychologists on affordances, originally a psychological term related to the ways animals react to the environment: "in the case of humans, narrative can be thought of as a sort of 'meta-affordance,' a global framework for dovetailing perception and action (including communicative action) in an emergent, information-rich environment" (Herman 2000). In this sense, point of view can be understood as a social-cultural "affordance" enabling a human to adapt to the environment.

Turning back to measuring the correlations between the metrical patterns of a narrative text, whether poetic or prosaic, and the dynamic fluctuations of its rhythm, it is possible to start from following its formal segmentation into supra-phrasal units as the formal "bearers" of points of view and proceed to interpret the specific patterns of their combinations. Here the linguistic category of "textual network," which involves interplay of the spatial, temporal, discursive and modal subsystems of the text, has proved to be helpful (cf. Tataru 2011: 35-37). Briefly stated, analysis of the textual network involves two procedures:

- 1) an overview of the system of referential (linguistic) means signifying each of the four planes of the point of view (spatial, temporal, modal and various types of narration – direct speech, represented speech, free indirect discourse, stream of consciousness, etc.); and
- 2) identifying the regularities of their combinations. The alternations of the subjective/objective points of view result in specific rhythmic patterns on each of the

four levels. These patterns capture “schematically” the text’s deeper, cognitive structures: frames, scripts and gestalts.

## 5. Narrative rhythm in Robert Herrick’s and Ernest Hemingway’s lyrics

To illustrate how this model of narrative analysis might apply to poetry, I propose to consider several non-narrative poems of different genres, written in different epochs.

We start with a mini-verse by Robert Herrick, “the greatest song-writer ever born in England” (Herrick 1898: ix-x), a poet-cavalier at King Charles’ II court and a vicar who, paradoxically, proselytized in his lyrics in favor of the Epicurean philosophy of *carpe diem*. The first of his works selected for analysis is a distich of a highly generalized quality (Herrick 1898):

### 30. PRESENCE AND ABSENCE

When what is lov’d is present, love doth spring;  
But being absent, love lies languishing.

This couplet is the philosophical mini-monologue of a lyric speaker, but the abstract scenario it represents is not devoid of narrativity. Firstly, it is meant for the reader’s inner reflection. The character – “love” – is personified: the verb “spring” is suggestive of vigorous physical activities typical of a person (to move upward or forward in quick motions, to leap); the verb “lies” signifies immobility, lack of motion. The actions involve a counterpoint of emotions: excitement, agitation/apathy, depression. The spatial frame is empty, giving freedom for the reader’s mind to reconstruct it. A spring of excitement would rather move a person outside, in nature, or make him walk back and forth in his parlor. An ebb of emotions would make him lie in bed. The participle “languishing” is suggestive of the Baroque atmosphere of the scene and of the character’s appearance. In the seventeenth century it was fashionable to faint in every possible circumstance, especially when a person was in love, and to look pale. That fashion was accentuated by the fashions in dress and makeup: tightly drawn corsets (playing their part in making their owners swoon now and then), white powdered faces, white wigs, jabots, frills, etc. The “voice” articulates the speaker’s involvement with the character’s states and emotions, conveying a sense of sympathy and similar experience. The speaker does not only observe and reflect on some abstract lover’s typical actions, but simultaneously sums up his own experience.

The temporal frame actualizes the recurrences of the universal plot. The anaphoric “when” creates parallelism (symmetry) and frequency: “every time in similar circumstances there happen the same things.”

The couplet’s measure is obvious: two scenes generated by two different spatial points of view are co-opposed by an antithesis enhanced by the repetition of the key word “love” in parallel clauses. On the syllabic-tonic level, the text is almost perfectly measured by iambic pentameter. But the perfection of measurement is broken by a spondee in the final clause: three stressed syllables in succession made still weightier by alliteration in the sonorous *l* (*love lies languishing*). Extra stresses slow down the tempo of energetic iambs and draw our attention to the state of the lover. This counter-measurement makes up the turning point in this mini-narration.

To sum up: this lyrical-philosophical mini-monologue, however abstract and non-narrative it might appear, has a generalized plot summed up in two mini-scenarios and a teller who is partly identified with the character to express his own evaluations through the states and actions of that character. It is also a perfectly clear mini-lesson on Epicurean philosophy actualized through the gaps in the lines, frames and scenes: “love is life, absence of love is illness.” All these meaningful shifts are made prominent via a rhythmical deviation from the almost perfect metric scheme at the levels of versification (iambic pentameter) and syntax (parallelism).

Herrick’s other poem, “The Mad Maid’s Song,” is one of his best-known. The title names the genre and its variant – “mad song,” which became popular after Shakespeare’s Ophelia.

412. THE MAD MAID’S SONG.

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Good-morrow to the day so fair,    | I’ll seek him there; I know ere this   |
| Good-morning, sir, to you;         | The cold, cold earth doth shake him;   |
| Good-morrow to mine own torn hair, | But I will go or send a kiss           |
| Bedabbled with the dew.            | By you, sir, to awake him.             |
| 1                                  | 5                                      |
| Good-morning to this primrose too, | Pray, hurt him not, though he be dead, |
| Good-morrow to each maid           | He knows well who do love him,         |
| That will with flowers the tomb    | And who with green turfs rear his      |
| bestrew                            | head,                                  |

Wherein my love is laid.  
2

Ah! woe is me, woe, woe is me,  
Alack and well-a-day!  
For pity, sir, find out that bee  
Which bore my love away.  
3

I'll seek him in your bonnet brave,  
I'll seek him in your eyes;  
Nay, now I think th'ave made his grave  
I' th' bed of strawberries.  
4

And who do rudely move him.  
6

He's soft and tender (pray take heed);  
With bands of cowslips bind him,  
And bring him home; but 'tis decreed  
That I shall never find him.  
7

The spatial and temporal frames together with the portrait are given in much greater detail than in "Presence and Absence": early morning, the heroine at her lover's tomb. The vegetation images of the scene (primrose, bands of cowslips, green turfs) allude to Ophelia who died while hanging her wreaths over the willow tree. The symbolism of the vegetative "deadly language" is similarly encoded in John Millais' famous painting.

The girl's loose torn hair together with a satin shirt were such stale attributes of a crazy woman in seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries' literature and theater that Richard Sheridan, a hundred years after Herrick's "Hesperides," ridiculed this stock image in his burlesque comedy *Critic* (Sheridan 1779). In the scene of the rehearsal of a pompous tragedy, the two characters, the theater amateur Mr. Dangle and the critic Mr. Sneer, make sardonic comments about the absurd moments of the performance directed by Mr. Puff. In the following dialogue, they deride the "white satin" worn by the "stark mad" heroine and her confidante, who "is to be mad too, according to custom":

Puff. Yes, sir: now she comes in stark mad, in white satin.

Sneer. Why in white satin?

Puff. Oh, Lord, sir, when a heroine goes mad, she always goes into white satin – don't she, Dangle?

Dan. Always – it's a rule. (Sheridan 1880: 40)



Just a single detail, “torn hair,” is enough for the reader to reconstruct the culturally stereotypical appearance of the heroine. The girl’s hair is contrasted to the gentleman’s bonnet, which he wears in full accordance with etiquette.

The choice of heroine, who is also the lyric teller, determines the type of discourse: a stream of consciousness. This term might seem inappropriate here since it is normally associated with modernist techniques of writing, not with traditional verse. I use “stream of consciousness,” not just “monologue,” keeping in mind the difference between “controlled” and “free associations,” the latter driving attention from one object to another by a sudden or striking stimulus – a process of thought typical for altered states of mind and captured by the stream-of-consciousness method of writing (cf. Chatman 1978: 189). Herrick surely couldn’t have been aware of twentieth-century theories of stream of consciousness, either psychological or narrative, but his heroine’s monologue, though presented in traditional verse, is actually a verbalization of irrational “free associations” typical for a person stricken by madness. I thus use the term “stream of consciousness” in this psychological sense. Textually, this mad maid’s monologue belongs to the generic consciousness of the late Renaissance, so in its technical traits it is different from the stream of consciousness of the modernist novel. Herrick, however, masterfully models the irrational flow of the girl’s associations of images. For instance, in stanza 4 the pronoun “him” in the first two lines refers to a bee, probably a real bee the girl could see on the flowers growing on the grave. The bee is then associated with an evil power that had taken her beloved one away from her. Repetition of this image in the two parallel clauses reinforces her strange intention to seek the bee in the gentleman’s hat and in his eyes. In stanzas 6 and 7 the irrational idea to bring her dead lover back pops into her mind, but then there occurs a sudden bitter return to reality: “but ’tis decreed / That I shall never find him.” These alternations of real/mental objects of the girl’s points of view make up a rhythmic pattern carrying the key concept in fluctuations that terminate at the most desperate note – a momentary return to sanity, recognition of irreparable loss.

The exclamations “Ah! woe is me, woe, woe is me, / Alack and well-a-day!” enhance the affectation of the monologue. This phrase, from *The Old Testament*, is also uttered by Ophelia who falls in despair because of Hamlet’s fake madness: “O, woe is me / To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!” (Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, Act 3, scene 1, lines 168–169).

The metric scheme of a ballad is evenly measured, the breaches marking the turning points. The pitiful exclamation “Ah! Woe | is me, | woe, woe | is me” contains two spondees, halting the flow of iambs and at the same time the perception of the objects

of her attention. In stanza 3, for instance, a stress on negation “**Nay, now** | I **think** | th’ave **made** | his **grave** | | I’ th’ **bed** | of **straw-** | ber- **ries**” turns the first foot in the third line from iamb to spondee and marks an unmotivated transition from “the bee in the bonnet” to “a bed of strawberries” (stanza 4). The repetition “cold, cold earth” in stanza 5 causes three stresses abreast and again marks a turning point in the heroine’s flow of thoughts, from the decision to find her lover (the focus of her mental vision) to affectation to him as if he were alive: “The **cold,** | **cold earth** | doth **shake** | him.” But these unexpected breaches do not prevent the song from being musically rhythmical. “The Mad Maid’s Song” has been set to music in various genres, from classical (Diamond [1960] 2010) to progressive rock (see the official clip of “The Crimson Trinity” [2012] 2015).

In this analysis we have attempted to follow the ways in which the metric scheme of the poem is countermeasured at the levels of spatial and discursive planes of the lyric speaker’s point of view, the psychological perspective guided by the shifts from one object of her attention to another (real / imaginary / real / imaginary ... real) and the subtle breaks in predominantly regular feet alternations to accentuate the ideological message behind the story of a girl weeping for her dead lover. The scenario of the girl’s love is most probably stereotypical and is deliberately omitted by the poet. He leaves only the final episode and represents it in a scene stretched in time by imitating her crazy discourse interrupted by recurring lamentations. Intertextual “crossing” of various generic traits makes the end of her story as stereotypical and thus predictable: like Ophelia, the girl will die. It was a clichéd scenario in literature that madness is caused by despair as a reaction to neglect (as in Hamlet) or death of the hero (as is the case with the “stark mad” heroine in Sheridan’s play). It is the foregrounding of the girl’s frustrated incoherent erotic discourse that slows down the narrative dynamics of this “mad song” and enhances the reader’s co-experience, makes him feel what it is like to lose one’s love. This co-experience is caused by Herrick’s hedonistic perspective and, not to a lesser extent, by the counterpoint which lends a resonant chord to the poem’s regular metric order thanks to the rhythmical discursive fluctuations. This effect would be different were this story told in prose.

Herrick’s poems, with their clear ideological and stylistic tinge of the late Renaissance, can be classified generically without much effort: they bear prototypical features of the epistle, the ode, the song or the epitaph.

Making now a sharp turn to Ernest Hemingway’s poem “Riparto d’Assalto,” based on the writer’s World War I experience, we must be more sensitive not only to the

modernist character of its narrativity, but also to its genre, which will be more difficult to recognize.

In his lyric poetry, Hemingway was as obsessed with the idea of telling the truth as he was in his novels and journalistic essays, which are much better known to the public. Moreover, Hemingway's poems, more than his prose, reveal "a real man, not a myth [...] Hemingway himself, rather than a fictional counterpart" (Gerogiannis 1992: xi). The effect of bitter performativity (the impression that we are hearing Hemingway himself) is even more stunning than in his prose because there he is particularly irascible and profane, as in the poem we quote below (Hemingway 1992: 46):

Riparto d'Assalto<sup>1</sup>

Drummed their boots on the camion floor,  
Hob-nailed boots on the camion floor.  
Sergeants stiff,  
Corporals sore.  
Lieutenants thought of a Mestre whore --  
Warm and soft and sleepy whore,  
Cozy, warm and lovely whore:  
Damned cold, bitter, rotten ride,  
Winding road up the Grappa side.  
Arditi<sup>2</sup> on benches stiff and cold,  
Pride of their country stiff and cold,  
Bristly faces, dirty hides --  
Infantry marches, Arditi rides.  
Grey, cold, bitter, sullen ride --  
To splintered pines on the Grappa side  
At Asalone, where the truck-load died.

Paris, 1922

Toponymically, the frame is to be evoked in the reader's cultural memory. Mountains Grappa and Asalone were the sites of violent war actions in 1917-1918, when the Italian army was fighting the Austrians. The speaker eliminates from his account the culminating episode of the battle, focusing his attention on the state of mind of the participants (the Italian attack troopers) as they ride the camion to the scene of action. The ellipsis makes up a meaningful gap in the narration and marks

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<sup>1</sup> A division of "assault wagons" under the command of the Italian Army in 1918.

<sup>2</sup> Italian: "bravehearts" is the name of the Italian assault battalions.

the trauma of the speaker's consciousness as he tries to block those mad bloody meaningless battles from his memory.

The discourse unfolds as the point of view alternates from the exterior to the interior: now the teller reports his own and the participants' visual perceptions; now he shifts to their states of mind and thoughts:

- The teller's *represented audio-visual perception* (boots on the camion floor);
- The characters' *represented states* (the corporals evidently had drunk the night before);
- The characters' *stream of consciousness* (of the drowsing lieutenants: "the Mestre whore");
- The teller's/characters' *represented states* ("Damned cold, bitter, rotten ride");
- The teller's/character's *represented visual perception* ("Winding road up the Grappa side");
- The characters' *represented states* ("Arditi on benches stiff and cold") with an intertextual inclusion of the patriotic slogans which Hemingway detested ("Pride of their country");
- The teller's *represented perception* ("Infantry marches, Arditi rides");
- The teller's/characters' *represented states* ("Grey, cold, bitter, sullen ride");
- The teller's/characters' *represented perception* ("To splintered pines on the Grappa side");
- Narrative report of the event* ("At Asalone, where the truck-load died").

The astonishing metric scheme closely parallels the mechanized butchering of the soldiers. It is governed by a regular alternation of the external and internal planes of the point of view, generating a general narrative pattern: "Story Plane - Discourse Plane - Story Plane - Discourse Plane..." It is broken at times by the inclusion of a fragment of the lieutenants' thoughts and, at the end, by a sharp turn in the perspective to a detached position of the all-knowing narrator who depersonalizes himself, calling the bravehearts "the truck-load." In effect, the story is represented in two scenes - "In the truck" and "After the battle" - separated by a gap in the plot and in the perspective of its representation.

The temporal network reveals a similar model of segmentation: the first segment, including the first 15 lines (the scene "In the truck"); and the second, the final line, which, syntactically, is a clause of the compound sentence. The whole of the first segment is built on elliptical sentences ("Hob-nailed boots on the camion floor. / Sergeants stiff, / Corporals sore. //") and the use of present tense verbs ("Infantry marches, Arditi rides") to represent the scene in the "here-and-now" mode. The

effect of the time shift is enhanced by stretching it out through the use of time lapses, particularly through immersion into the thoughts of the drowsing lieutenants with their focal image of a whore, rather irrelevant for the present situation. The shift to the past simple tense ("died") in the final clause creates a sharp temporal counterpoint, marking the narrative past. The effect of such an illogical montage of the episodes is that of breaking the temporal succession: "the present" of the story turns out to be its "past" while "the past of the story" refers to its present, also viewed from a distance by the detached narrator who contemplates the outcome of that battle from the present moment.

The modal network is more varied but still resonant with the spatial, temporal and discursive patterns. Its segmentation follows the pattern Evidential modality – Emotive modality – Hypothetical modality (stream of consciousness) – Emotive modality – Evidential modality – Epistemological modality. Again, it's only the final clause that is marked by the narrator's epistemology, revealing a great deal of reservation. Still, it is in his very coldness and reservation, in the purposeful selection of the scenes – one representing the physical and psychological state of the *arditi* before the mortal combat and the other stating detachedly their death – that his bitter social invective and personal pain for the perished are encoded.

Despite its crude vocabulary and lack of loftiness, "Ripparto d'Assalto" sounds like an epitaph. It is also a camouflaged invective epistle to those who reduced these young men to a mere "truck-load." The sharp, mechanical four-beat "war march rhythm" also makes the epitaph barely recognizable. The metric measurement is counterbalanced by the spondees in which the free indirect discourse ("**Damned cold, bit-ter, rot-ten ride // Grey, cold, bit-ter, sul-len ride**") is couched, adding extra stresses and breaking off the course of narration, as if echoing the bumpy "rotten ride."

The vignette which concludes our analysis is a condensed case of Hemingway's modernist fragmentary discourse (Hemingway 1992: 57):

I'm off'n wild wimmen  
An Cognac  
An Sinnin'  
For I'm in loOOOOOOOve.  
Paris, 1922

In spite of its minimalism, the frame and the scenario of the character's escapades are depicted most vividly. The apostrophes, the irregularity of the lines' length and the

graphic deformation of the word “love” are all devices imitating the faltering tongue of a drunken man, the accentuation on “love” conveying a maudlin emotional evaluation. The metro-rhythmic pattern reinforces this effect, for the speaker seems to start singing and dancing awkwardly to anapests and amphibrachs, but suddenly falls out of the rhythm to start another song:

\_\_/ | \_\_/\_ |  
 \_/\_ |  
 \_/\_ |  
 \_\_\_/.....

The vignette is also counter-measured at the level of logic: the teller-character’s “adventures” and their motive appear to be disconnected. The irrational logic of this “drunken song” makes a sensitive reader recall the classical “mad songs.” Though the formal traits of an authentic “mad song” are not evident here, there is a palpable similarity between Herrick’s mad maid’s song and Hemingway’s drunkard’s discourse. The mad maids of the past sang to lament their lovers’ deaths while Hemingway’s singer’s stream of consciousness is a desperate cry for love, one of the dead values of modernity. The character’s mind, soaked in cognac, releases its irrational subjective “I” to articulate a discourse of alienation and sexual frustration.

## 6. Conclusion

Dividing poetic genres into “narrative” and “non-narrative” is an issue in need of reconsideration. Many lyric poems, traditionally categorized as “non-narrative,” evoke or imply narrative situations or display some degree of narrativity. Moreover, they employ a range of narrative devices, though less varied than in prose fiction.

The property intrinsic to poetry is its high degree of regularity, characterized by specific segmentation and fragmentariness, measurement and countermeasurement (the latter two resulting from the co-opposition of various text units). It is these features that underlie the formal manifestations of meaning-making.

Poems, including lyric poetry, can be thought of as a specific sphere of speech genres, with the nucleus or center formed by intrinsically narrative ballads and epic poems. Elegies, epigrams, odes and other traditional genres, where narrative events and happenings are either backgrounded or concealed in order to foreground the speaker’s emotional-intellectual reaction to them, would form the layer surrounding the nucleus. Other poetic genres form various layers around the center extending from those bearing modified and mixed but still recognizable generic traits to the periphery “inhabited” by the creations of modernist and postmodernist generic

consciousnesses featuring radical transformations of the historically rooted genres. In their gnoseological dimension, poetic genres are types of literary texts marked by the epoch, national culture and-writer's individual "genre consciousness." But however far culture might swerve away from its roots, however sophisticated or deconstructive specific genres might become in the minds of poets, no radical artistic developments or innovative techniques will annihilate genre as a prototype. Similarly, the course of natural evolution does not annihilate or radically change the structure of a living organism's genes, for organisms can only mutate.

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## 1. What we talk about when we talk about space and narrative

Since Michel Foucault's suggestion that ours may be "the epoch of space" ([1984] 1998) and the post-Sojan "spatial turn" (Soja 1989), we often imagine any early theoretical neglect of space in narrative theory has long been compensated. Some may have thus been surprised when, as late as 2006, James Phelan suggested that "narrative space" was one of several directions still to be explored by narratology (Scholes, Phelan and Kellogg 2006: 336). In continental theory, too, Dietrich Jägers (1998) has written of an "*erzählten Raum*" still largely ignored by German theory, on which Armin von Ungern-Sternberg more recently concurred: "Um den literarischen Raum hat sich die Literaturwissenschaft kaum je gekümmert" (2003: 548). In a more recent overview of notions on space in narrative theory, Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz note that "despite some earlier notable efforts by A.J. Greimas and Gabriel Zoran," narrative theory has only recently ("as a result of work by David Herman and Susan Stanford Friedman, and others") "begun to take up more sophisticated questions about space and setting and to give them the attention they deserve" (Herman et al. 2012: 84). Aside from setting's often overly-simplistic associations with symbolism, two problems, Phelan and Rabinowitz surmise, have delayed such work. First, they note, the notion of setting, in being conflated with "background" generally, often "begins to merge with character," as "'environment' and psychology begin to intertwine."<sup>1</sup> Second, a tendency to conflate setting with "description" often turns setting "(one element *within* narrative) into a discursive mode that is, from certain philosophical perspectives, *in opposition* to narrative" (Herman et al. 2012: 85).

There are, of course, good reasons why "narrative space" has been closely tied with character, environment, "psychology" and description. Indeed, such "conflations" are perhaps less pitfalls to analysis than essential to consider: speaking about "narrative space" makes little sense without considering the places within it and our relationships with them. It is, after all, our own sense or understanding of spaces and places from which we create narratives about them, or project narratives *onto* them. This article takes up a number of ways space has been talked about and conceived by theory, pointing to gaps where we might begin to dig further, particularly in one of the several directions Marie-Laure Ryan has laid out as topics on space for further investigation in narratology: "studies of the historical and cultural variability of the

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<sup>1</sup> Mike Baynam (2003) has offered one article engaged in such issues.

semiotic oppositions (such as 'high-low,' 'inside-outside,' closed-open') that determine the topology of narrative worlds" ([2009] 2014: par. 31). Before looking at how we have conceived of space's relationship to narrative causality, it begins by looking at how our notions of diegetic "setting" have been elaborated, what, exactly, we mean by "place" and "space" when we talk about narrative, and how we might usefully import understandings of these terms as they appear in other fields.

### 3. Setting, landscape and place

In more or less classical narratological terms, setting is "a set of propositions referring to the same (backgrounded) spatio-temporal complex" (Prince 1982: 73), a sort of meaningful blueprint for a "complex" of interrelations in space and time, while "backgrounded" in a way which may leave it difficult to pin down. To determine setting's function *within* narrative, Rabinowitz and Phelan divide "setting" into three components. Setting's "synthetic" or "formal" component has a "framing dimension" (Herman et al. 2012: 85–87), making a story possible. This frame setting, in "[m]ost narratives," takes advantage "of the way representation of distinct spaces [...] can signify, support, or heighten differences of various kinds." By putting distinct settings in contrast, "it may be the contrast itself, rather than the inherent qualities of the settings, that's crucial." A second component of setting is its "purely mimetic aspects" of description, presumably provided only for "readerly pleasure." Finally, setting's "thematic" component is more or less its symbolic or semiotic function: the socio-political or cultural "meaning" setting reveals to the careful or initiated reader, again often prompted by dramatic contrasts between "spaces" within it.

A year after Prince offered his definition, Leonard Lutwack called attention to the lack of theorization on setting's outlying areas. "Setting," he wrote, "denotes a place of action," but "is not adequate to describe the use of places unrelated to action, such as metaphors or evocations of places in the speeches or unconsciousness of characters" (Lutwack 1984: 28) – which indeed, as Phelan and Rabinowitz suggest, often provide or imply important contrasts establishing values and meaning. Two years later, Ruth Ronen hit on a solution in the matter by suggesting the term "frames" to describe "places and locations which provide a *topological determination* to events and states in a story" (1986: 423). Ronen's frames "differ according to their position in the overall organization of [...] the fictional universe." While a setting is "the zero point where the *actual* story-events and story-states are localized," what Ronen called "distant frames" are "spatial locations capable of extending over a sequence of actions, events and situations," but "independent of any of them." These literary spaces "outside the spatial focus of the narration (i.e., outside story-space), are no less significant than frames forming part of the actual story-space" (423). Much as visions of an unvisited South America in Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* or

in Joyce's "Eveline" provide contrasts to Paris or Dublin, and indeed help establish these settings' meanings, "[a] distant frame incorporated into the structure of the fictional space may draw attention to an aspect of the setting with which it is juxtaposed" (428). Setting, it would seem, is a set of propositions backgrounding action when action itself, not place, assumes primary importance.

Marie-Laure Ryan began delving into these complications by defining setting as "the general socio-historico-geographical environment in which the action takes place," as contrasted with "spatial frames" (the immediate surroundings of actual events, shifting scenes of action), "story space" (the space relevant to the plot), and the "narrative (or story) world" (diegetic space completed by the reader's imagination on the basis of cultural knowledge and real world experience) ([2009] 2014: § 2.1) – the latter forming the basis of contributions to the journal *Storyworlds*, edited by David Herman. Ryan's story spaces are, as Ruth Ronen wrote, "the *inactualized* parts of narrative space" (1990: 32), imagined spaces perhaps implying inactualized events, indeed often setting contrasts and thus marking setting more clearly as unactualized *places* outside setting's "set of propositions."

Our understanding of such spaces and worlds might be linked to the idea of a landscape, a term curiously under-used in literary narrative theory, though one Ryan ([2009] 2014: par. 28) mentions in her discussion of recent trends in narratological thinking on space ("landscape narratives," as in Azaryahu and Foote's [2008] research). How such landscape narratives might relate to literature, however, often remains unclear, as such theory becomes entangled in the geography of real extratextual spaces referred to in texts themselves, as in the work of Moretti (1998) and Piatti (2008) – and even more so in classical geocritical texts like those of Julien Gracq or the more recent geocritical theory proposed by Bertrand Westphal (2007). Landscapes, "characterized by all those features that Ricœur identifies as definitive of a text" (Barnes and Duncan 1992: 6), much like narratives, as J.B. Jackson wrote, are "the place where we establish our own human organization of space and time," where "we speed up or retard or divert the cosmic program and impose our own" (Jackson 1984: 157). W.J.T. Mitchell proposed that landscape, again much like narrative, "works as a cultural practice" and is "an instrument of cultural power" (1994b: 1–2). It is, he wrote, a medium "in which cultural meanings and values are encoded," an "emblem of the social relations it conceals" (Mitchell 1994a: 14–15), much as Ann Bermingham found that landscapes teach viewers to observe their surface as "an ordered, coherent pictorial whole rather than as a chaotic collection of bits and pieces" (1994: 86). Likewise, for David Bunn, a landscape, much like a narrative, is "a system of aesthetic, conventional, and ideological ordering useful in the management of political contradictions" (1994: 127). As Edward E. Casey writes, "[b]ody and landscape present themselves as coeval epicenters around which particular places pivot and radiate" (1993: 29). Essential for understanding how and

why, as Phelan and Rabinowitz suggest, our notions of setting are often conflated with character is that, as Casey writes, “place” is “what takes place between body and landscape” (1993: 29). Indeed, as Ryan writes, readers “gather spatial information” from literary texts largely from “the movements of characters” ([2009] 2014: par. 21), who themselves provide the focus of “interest in the fictional world [...] rather than, for instance, fictional time or space or narrative situations” (Ryan 2003: 236). Characters’ movements provide readers with “mental models of narrative space” which, “centered on the characters,” thus “grow out of them” (236). Yet, as Donald Polkinghorne (2014) has recently suggested, little work has been done on narrative and embodied schemas or “image schemas” which arise from recurrent bodily movements through space.

#### 4. Place, space and narrative

##### 3.1. Place

“Place,” writes David Harvey, has an extraordinary range of metaphorical meanings. We talk about the place of art in social life, the place of women in society, our place in the cosmos, and we internalize such notions psychologically in terms of knowing our place, of feeling we have a place in the affections or esteem of others. We express norms by putting people, events and things in their proper place and seek to subvert norms by struggling to define a new place from which the oppressed can freely speak. Place has to be one of the most multi-layered and multi-purpose words in our language. (1993: 4)

As Harvey’s work suggests, “place” often has more to do with where we place ourselves than with abstract notions of space. “The question ‘what is place?’ presents many difficulties,” wrote Aristotle, one of the first to comment on the question. The very existence of place, he contended, is proved by the fact that things can take each other’s place, for “[w]here water now is, there in turn, when the water has gone out as from a vessel, air is present,” suggesting that “clearly the place or space into which and out of which they passed was something different from both” (*Physics*, Book IV, Part 1).

Meanwhile, place’s ties to character, as many of the theorists above highlight, are not so easy to cut. “[P]lace is ‘the most basic way’ in which one thing can be *in* another,” writes Casey quoting Aristotle (1997: 58; cf. *Physics*, Part II). Something counts as a place only when it is a “possible habitat” for a possible body (or an imagined “virtual body”), he goes on, referring to Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception* (235). Place is lived place (226), and “all places are resting places” (228). Yet “[t]he body itself is place-productive, bringing forth places from its expressive and orientational

movements" (236). "If we think of space as that which allows movement," writes Yi-Fu Tuan, "then place is a pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place" (1977: 6). We "discover new places by means of bodily movement," finding ourselves "in the midst of places we already know thanks to the intimate link between their abiding familiarity and our own corporeal habituality" (Casey 1997: 233). Moreover:

[I]f I move my body in a certain way, *then* things will appear differently – including the places in which they appear. Put more directly: the way I feel my own body being/moving in a place will have a great deal to do with the way I experience that place itself, [for a place] is a complex qualitative whole that answers to my kinesthetic experience of it. (219)

As such, then, a place "is more an *event* than a *thing*," observes Casey (26).<sup>1</sup> Given that much early narrative theory worked under the assumption that events are narrative's most essential feature, Casey's suggestion is one worth taking note of. For Sextus Empiricus, writes Casey, "place" (*topos*) is space when occupied by a body (1997: 83), while sites, imagined places, once occupied, are often found to be spaces more than the places we expected. Space, wrote Michel de Certeau, "*is practiced place*" ([1980] 1984: 117) and may or may not be what its "site" represents – or its schema suggests. Imagined from a distance as fixed sites of meaning, places become spaces when "practiced."

### 3.2. *Space*

Henri Lefebvre ([1974] 1991) underlined a difference between "'ideal' space" (what I will here call "place") and "'real' space" (what I will here call "space"). Lefebvre's "ideal" space (place) has to do with mental categories and symbolism, while "real" space (space) is the space of social practice, though "each of these two kinds of space involves, underpins and presupposes the other" (14). Place is semiotically manifested space, while space is physically and socially construed (Knox and Marston 2001). Lefebvre's third type of space, "conceived space," is more or less what we mean by "site," a representation of space used, for example, in planning. We might speak, then, of "sites" within storyworlds but outside of "real space" (such as Eveline's Argentina, a conceived location with meaning, to be sure, but unexperienced), "places" (perhaps more personally semiotically-charged, known spaces of representation) and "space" itself, where social practices and socio-political

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<sup>1</sup> Chaudhuri evidently coined the term "platiality" to mean "a recognition of the signifying power and political potential of specific places" (1995: 5), in much the same way Casey and Foucault use the term "site," which is "defined by relations of proximity between points or elements" (Foucault [1984] 1998: 238).

interactions, still unsettled, may leave a definite, immediately readable semiotics more obscure. And yet place overlaps with both space and site: Argentina is certainly symbolically-charged for Eveline; her home in Dublin, while a space where social powers play out, is no less symbolically-charged for her and becomes perhaps even more so once she finds herself in the position of leaving it behind.

Place, for Kant, is simply parts of space related to one another by fixed positions (cf. Casey 1997: 182). Yet, as Casey glosses Deleuze and Guattari, "*where something is situated* has everything to do with *how it is structured*" (302, original emphasis). For Neoplatonist Iamblichus of Apamea (c. 245-325 AD), Casey writes,

[o]ne has to conceive place not only as encompassing and establishing in itself the things existing in place, but as sustaining them by one single power. Regarded thus, place will not only encompass bodies from outside, but will fill them totally with a power that raises them up. And the bodies sustained by this power, falling down by their proper narrative, but being raised up by the superiority of place will thus exist in it. [Place is] a power that acts. (1997: 89, 90)

Indeed, its schema, suggesting an established narrative, "acts" on the character in the place.

For Lefebvre, "spatial practices," dependent on certain levels of competence and performance, ensure continuity and a degree of cohesion in society, while "representational spaces" are embodiments of complex societal symbolism. They are first and foremost constructed. In literature, writes Zoran, there are three levels of spatial construction: 1) a "*topographical level: space as a static entity,*" 2) a "*chronotopic level: the structure imposed on space by events and movement, i.e. by spacetime,*" and 3) a "*textual level: the structure imposed on space by the fact that it is signified within the verbal text*" (1984: 315). The first two levels correspond roughly to our definitions of place and space, respectively seen as the product of movement between places. For Lefebvre, space is the product of energy, which is not content filling an empty container (space), for "empty" space does not exist, except as a mathematical abstraction ([1974] 1991: 13). Likewise, for de Certeau, "pedestrian movements form one of these 'real systems whose existence in fact makes up the city.' They are not localized; it is rather that they spatialize" ([1980] 1984: 97). Meanwhile, perhaps thanks to the traces and paths they leave, according to Casey, places "gather experiences and histories, even languages and thoughts [...] in their midst." This "gathering" is not "merely amassing," but implies having a peculiar hold on what is presented (as well as represented) in a given place. Not just the contents but the very mode of containment is held by a place. [...] it is a

holding *together* in a particular configuration; hence our sense of an ordered arrangement of things in a place even when those things are radically disparate and quite conflictual. The arrangement allows for certain things – people ideas, and so forth – to overlap with, and sometimes to occlude, others as they recede or come forward together.” This holding is both “a holding *in* and a holding *out*,” capable of moving “place-holders toward the margins of its own presentation while, nevertheless, holding them within its own ambiance. (Casey 1996: 24–25) Talking about space and place in narrative theory, then, certainly requires talking about character, as Phelan and Rabinowitz suggest, for it “begins to merge with character” much as “‘environment’ and psychology begin to intertwine” (Herman et al. 2012: 85). This hardly means one can speak of space as something in “opposition” to narrative. Quite the contrary.

### 3.3. Narrative

One can understand why place, as approached through literary description, is difficult to consider when theorizing on narrative. Place is, in a sense, static whereas we tend to think of narratives as dynamic structures. For de Certeau, a place is the order [...] in accordance with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence. It thus excludes the possibility of two things being in the same location (place), [for in] place [...] the elements taken into consideration are beside one another, each situated in its own “proper” and distinct location, a location it defines, [thus implying] an indication of stability. ([1980] 1984: 117).

A space, meanwhile, “exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements” and is “actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it” (de Certeau [1980] 1984: 117). Still, as Yi-Fu Tuan notes, “ideas of ‘space’ and ‘place’ require each other for definition. From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa” (1977: 6). Stories, meanwhile, “carry out the labor that constantly transforms places into spaces or spaces into places” and “organize the play of changing relationships between places and spaces” (de Certeau [1980] 1984: 118). “The story,” Mieke Bal once theorized, “is determined by the way in which the fabula is presented. During this process, places are linked to certain points of perception. These places seen *in relations to their perception* are called space” ([1985] 1992: 93, original emphasis). Space, and indeed narrative itself, *is*, after all, only as it is perceived from a place or point of perception. Much as de Certeau saw stories as organizing changing relationships between (experienced) locations, Bal viewed “contrasts between locations and the borderlines between them” as “predominant means of highlighting the significance of the fabula *or even of determining it*” (93, emphasis mine). If



narration is the act of sequencing of events, it can also be that of sequencing places. "Narrative structures," writes de Certeau, "regulate changes in space [...] in the form of places put in linear or interlaced series" ([1980] 1984: 115). Whatever role it plays in this "interlacing," time, wrote Lefebvre, "is known and actualized in space, becoming a social reality" through "spatial practice," while space is "known only in and through time" ([1974] 1991: 219). If space is "the envelope of time" (339), then for de Certeau "movement always seems to condition the production of a space and to associate it with a history" ([1980] 1984: 118).

Even so, Zoran wrote in 1984, space still lacks "a recognized and clear-cut status within the text." Space has been understood by narrative theory "in various ways," he points out, none of which is as clear and unambiguous as the term *time*. This lack of symmetry in the relationship between space and time is evident not only in their status in the text, but also in the extent of the progress of research on these concepts. Although the subject of space has been dealt with more than once, research in general on the subject is quite diffuse, and there are few assumptions that have become generally accepted. (Zoran 1984: 310)

Because of this, even today, literature is still often considered to be "basically an art of time." And though, wrote Zoran, "no one today would state this as baldly as Lessing did, the dominance of the time factor in the structuring of the narrative text remains an indisputable fact" (310). Zoran published these lines the year de Certeau's work was translated to English, and much has since been published to ameliorate earlier theoretical neglects of space.

Even before the development of classical narratology, there had been a great deal of general thinking on space and place in literature in the years after Joseph Frank, in "Spatial Form in Modern Literature," examined how modernist fiction allows readers to imagine elements juxtaposed in simultaneous space instead of "unrolling in time" ([1945] 1981: 10). By 1990, "many different theoretical approaches" had "seen a shift in focus from a poetological reflection oriented towards categories of time to an approach which tends to give precedence to categories of space" (Fischer-Lichte 1990: 15). Edward Soja (1989) was able to see, in the 1960s, 70s and 80s, a return to a focus on space, mainly through the work of Lefebvre and Foucault, and as Marxian theory took an interest in geography, geographers became interested in Marxism. And though there was in the late 1980s and early 1990s what has often been called a "spatial turn" in theory, Soja noted that while others joined Foucault to urge a rebalancing of this prioritization of time over space, no hegemonic shift has yet occurred to allow [critics] to see spatiality with the same acute depth of vision that comes from a focus on *durée*. The critical hermeneutic is

still enveloped in a temporal master-narrative, in a historical but not yet comparably geographical imagination. (1989: 11)<sup>1</sup>

Twenty years after Frank's work, Susan Sontag suggested that what literary studies in the United States (which still had yet to hear of "narratology") needed first and foremost was "a vocabulary – a descriptive, rather than prescriptive, vocabulary – for forms." Yet, she lamented, "[o]ne of the difficulties is that our idea of form is spatial (the Greek metaphors for form are all derived from notions of space)" (Sontag 1966: 12).<sup>2</sup> Sontag suggested that our shortcoming in speaking about literary form is deeply ingrained historically. But it is also, as Mark Turner (1996) observed, ingrained psychologically. Indeed, one of the most common ways we use spatial metaphors for speaking of form is in describing the form of time: "when we project spatiality onto temporality [...] we think of time itself, which has no spatial shape, as having a spatial shape – linear, for example, or circular" (Turner 1996: 17–18).

#### 3.4. *Spatial metaphors in narrative theory*

If Frank's spatial metaphor for literary form (highly influential in its day and still so today) is drawn from physically spatial, embodied arts, Ryan, like Frank, has pinpointed this "notion of spatial form in literature" as being "born out of dissatisfaction with Lessing's distinction between the temporal arts (music, literature) and the spatial arts (sculpture, painting)" (2003: 350).<sup>3</sup> Today, she writes, much as Turner suggests, "[m]any of the spatial concepts developed in literary and cognitive theory" are in fact only metaphorically spatial "because they fail to account for physical existence" ([2009] 2014: par. 3). Ryan mentions Fauconnier's mental spaces and mapping "whose origin in the visual representation of space has been overshadowed by its extension to any kind of analogical thinking" as well as Susan Stanford Friedman's "spatial reading" of narrative and Turner's "spatial stories"

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<sup>1</sup> Soja was writing specifically on a "transformative retheorization of space, time and social being" as "taking shape in contemporary social theory and philosophy" (1989: 163).

<sup>2</sup> In de Certeau's later writings, this problem of spatial Greek metaphors for form would be broadened: "narrative structures have the status of spatial syntaxes." They are "spatial trajectories" ([1980]: 1984 115). Meanwhile, one might note here Lévi-Strauss's idea (already available in an English translation at least eight years before Sontag's call for a focus on form over content), that it is precisely in the genre of myth that "*form* takes precedence over the *content* of the narrative" (Lévi-Strauss [1958] 1963: 204). Yet questions regarding this situation persist, as Ruth Ronen and Efrat Biberman point out: "Narrativity, according to analytic thought, either conducts the narrated content, or insulates it. In both cases the content is regarded as distinct from the act of narrating, although the narrative mode is clearly presented as constitutive of the final narrative object. The question that remains to be answered is how can these two assumptions co-exist: in what sense does the narrative modality manifest itself, and affect narrated content, and if so, how and to what extent" (2006: 127).

<sup>3</sup> More recently, Klaus Speidel (2013) has published work picking apart Lessing's distinction, arguing for the narrative potential of single images.

([2009] 2014: par. 3).<sup>1</sup> Indeed, in Friedman's "Spatialization: A Strategy for Reading Narrative," which proposes to consider narrative as "the play of desire in space" and in time (1993: 12), the "space" referred to is finally extratextual space.<sup>2</sup> Her *Mappings: Feminism and the Cultural Geographies of Encounter* perhaps finally moved closer than Fauconnier's and Turner's work to treating diegetic literary space itself as at least a means of comparing narrative forms of different authors, drawn as it is from "geographic formulations of the politics of identity" in which, she notes, the social sciences have already made "widespread use of spatial rhetoric" (Friedman 1998: 245). Because "the spatial dimension of narrative has been so relatively unexamined," Friedman suggests a focus on textual analysis "based in the spatial plotting of intercultural encounter" (139) and "emphasizing location instead of time to see what aspects of narrative emerge more visibly" (138). Once applied to individual texts, however, her "mappings" again tend use geographic metaphors to describe identity, character development and action rather than illuminating physical location in the diegesis as a "symbolic geography" (137) with a plot of its own. William V. Spanos at one point saw the focus on literature's "spatial element" as even broader and more long-standing than Ryan's examples suggest, tracing it back to Romanticism's and Imagism's perverted "appropriation" of "Platonic or Neo-Gnostic transcendentalism" (Spanos 1970: 94), Joseph Frank's work being simply the most obvious example of a long tradition. Nevertheless, one might argue that this "technique of spatial analysis," however pervasive, did not go far enough in dealing with space itself, rather using "space" as a metaphor for dealing with temporality in literature. Reflecting Sontag's complaint, Mihály Szegedy-Maszák has suggested that research in "the poetics of narrative"

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph A. Kestner, if his work might be taken as a precursor or at least a background to the texts Ryan mentions, typically, defines "four possible functions of space in the novel. First, space functions as the operative secondary illusion in the text [for Kestner, space is "secondary" to time, and thus illusory], the agency by which spatial properties are realized in the temporal art. Its second function is revealed through geometric qualities like point, line, plane, and distance. The relation of the novel to the spatial arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture constitutes its third spatial function. [...] Finally, spatiality influences the interpretive act, for the texts creates a 'genidentific' field, incorporating the reader in a dynamic relation with it" (Kester 1978: 21–22). Here, notably (and one fears typically), the enumeration of "space's functions" in the novel does more to obscure any specific study of diegetic space in and of itself, for though they are separated, these categories tend to be combined in comparisons that blur their boundaries. (For Kestner, the "geometric function" of space is essentially the diegetic space of the novel; yet any notions of the "space" of the setting are quickly conflated with the "space" between characters and the "space" of the plot or even genre itself.)

<sup>2</sup> According to Scholes, Phelan and Kellogg (Herman et al. 2012: 305), Friedman's "central point is that narrative has not only a horizontal movement through time but also a vertical dimension that brings back a spatial view of plot. The vertical dimension links the horizontal surface to literary, historical, and psychic intertexts. Literary intertexts include both generic patterns and specific prior narratives; historical intertexts involve the broader social order, including cultural narratives; and psychic intertexts involve the patterns of repression and return within the text itself as well as those involved in the author's relation to the material."

still cannot dispense with such spatial metaphors as surface and depth, inside and outside, linearity, intersection, and distance. It follows from the metaphoric use of these words that they refer to various, sometimes quite dissimilar phenomena. As a result, there is some deep-seated ambiguity in the language of most narratologists. (1990: 103)

Bertrand Westphal has gone so far as to suggest that such metaphors, arising in the late 1960s, were part of spatial theory's "counter-attack" on temporally-oriented theory (2007: 43). But they might just as well be seen as signs of lip-service to undercurrents of research from other, sometimes better-funded fields of the era. W.J.T. Mitchell's "Spatial Form in Literature: Toward a General Theory" distinguished four different ways we speak about spatiality in literary texts: first, the text itself as a spatial form in the non-metaphoric sense [i.e., the page or screen itself, font sizes, etc.]; secondly, the spatial realm that a text describes, the world it represents [setting or storyworld]; third, the spatiality that pertains to elements of structure and form, the patterns of coherence that a text seems to suggest; and fourth, the spatiality that characterizes the "overall meaning," "the metaphysics" that we assign to a text. (Mitchell 1980: 550–553; cf. Sielke 2004: 78) If Mitchell's first category has since been taken over by book and media studies, text/image studies, intermedial studies and the most basic poetics, his third and fourth categories provoked a storm of work following Joseph Frank's. As for his second feature, space, it is often relegated, much as Phelan and Rabinowitz suggest, to studies of "symbolism," "ambience" or "mood."

More simply, and in narrative theory more specifically, Andrew Gibson underlines that the approach of literary studies to narrative has "traditionally concerned itself with two distinct kinds of space" with "profoundly ideological" connections: On the one hand, there is the space of representation. This is understood as the space of the real, the homogenous space of the world. On the other hand, there is the space of the model or describable form. (Gibson 1996: 3)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> De Certeau, writing on Montaigne's "Of Cannibals," saw these two "spaces" as working in intertwined conjunction: "what is the place of the other? [...] This line of questioning places into question both the text's power of composing and distributing places, its ability to be a narrative of space, and the necessity for it to define its relation to what it treats, in other words, to construct a place of its own. The first aspect concerns the space of the other; the second, the space of the text. On the one hand, the text accomplishes a spatializing operation which results in the determination or displacement of the boundaries delimiting cultural fields (the familiar vs. the strange). In addition, it reworks the spatial divisions which underlie and organize a culture. For these socio- or ethno-cultural boundaries to be changed, reinforced, or disrupted, a space of interplay is needed, one that establishes the text's difference, makes possible its operations and gives it 'credibility' in the eyes of its readers, by distinguishing it both from the conditions within which it arose (the context) and from its object (the content). Montaigne's essay functions both as an *Index locorum* (a redistribution of cultural space) and as the affirmation of a place (a locus of utterance). These two aspects are only formally distinguishable, because it is in fact the text's reworking of space that simultaneously produces the space of the text" (de Certeau [1980] 1984: 67–68).

By focusing on this second kind of space, “the narratological imaginary has been haunted by [...] dreams of the geometric” (3). Gibson goes on to outline this “geometrisation” of theory in the work on Mieke Bal, Barthes, Greimas, Propp, Iser, Eco, Seymour Chatman, Stanzel and Genette (“the arch-geometrician of narrative”; 5), followed, in turn, by “revisionist” (7) American theorists including Peter Brooks, Ross Chambers, Karl Kroeber and James Phelan, who “only further reconfirmed narratological geometrics” (8), even though they have more recently issued a call to remedy the situation while at the same time highlighting the difficulties inherent in any eventual remedy.

Gibson’s “arch-geometrician of narrative” bears a visit in gauging this spatialization of our conception of literary form. In an early essay, Gérard Genette proposed that language itself has a primal, elementary spatiality and seems almost naturally apt to “express” spatial relations, leading it to symbolize all relations (and reality itself) as spatial, and to use space as a metaphor for any relationship. “Treating everything in terms of space, language spatializes everything,” he summarized (Genette 1969: 44, translation mine). Indeed, as Derrida wrote, spatial “metaphors” are not simply metaphors, but are inherent to phenomenological processes themselves: “The phenomenon of so-called spatializing metaphors is not at all accidental, nor within the reach of the rhetorical concept of ‘metaphor.’ It is not some exterior fatality” (1983: 78). Our “spatialization” of literary form would thus seem inextricably tied to the structure of language itself, or indeed even to phenomenology on a deeper level. But is it perhaps not also symptomatic, as Gibson seems to suggest, of our overlooking literature’s *other* spatiality? In theorizing on the spatiality of literary form, thought about narrative has often eschewed the seemingly more modest task of focusing on Gibson’s first “kind of space”: that of the fictional world itself. Hopefully our wealth of spatial metaphors for literary form has prepared us to look, too, at how diegetic space itself performs a narrative function. If “[f]orms and substances, codes and milieus are not really distinct,” but are “abstract components of every articulation” (Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 1987: 502, original emphasis), one might best fulfill Sontag’s call for a non-spatialized description of literary form by inverting it, considering not only “place as a formal element in literature” (Lutwack 1984: 2), but spatiality *as* content. Might one imagine literary space itself (setting or storyworld) as offering (or at least suggesting) its own “content” without speaking of literary form as spatial?

#### **4. Greek metaphors**

Before following up on this proposal, we might have a look at where Sontag’s “Greek metaphors” for form originate and at how form (and eventually literary form) came to be associated with space in western thought to begin with. One might start with Aristotle’s supposition that nothing exists without there first being a place for it, an idea resonating with the slightly earlier “Archytian Axiom,” which Casey glosses as

“Place is the first of all things” (1996: 16). For Aristotle, while a thing cannot exist without a place, places may exist quite well independently on their own. “Form,” meanwhile, is for Aristotle the boundary of a thing, while place “is the boundary of the body which contains” the thing itself (the form), much as place (*topos*) was, for Strato of Lampsacus, “the interval in the middle of the container and the contained” (Casey 1997: 85). Place “is thought to be a kind of surface, and as it were a vessel, i.e. a container of the thing.” Place is “coincident” with the thing it contains, “for boundaries are coincident with the bounded.” Tracing the boundaries of form (to be perfectly un-spatial, one would not say its outline), place is a more or less reliable spatial reference if one wishes to visualize any form (the boundary of a thing) within it (*Physics*, Book 4, part 4). Our own contemporary understandings of visual perception are that figure, not ground, signals shape to the human eye. We perceive a figure’s boundary or outline as part of the figure, not of the ground (place). Greek (visual) space, with Aristotle, merged “background [place] with form” (Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 1984: 495). How this was reasoned at the time deserves explanation. For Aristotle, “if place is what primarily contains each body, it would be a limit, so that the place would be the form or shape of each body [...]: for this is the limit of each body. If, then, we look at the question in this way the place of a thing *is* its form” (*Physics*, Book 4, part 2). This would seem to be the state of affairs Sontag saw as an essential difficulty in describing form without spatial metaphors. Still, Aristotle pressed his point yet further: “This is why Plato in the *Timaeus* says that matter and space are the same; for the ‘participant’ and space are identical” (*Physics*, Book 4, part 2). Place not only corresponds to form but provides a visual contour of whatever body is within it, which allows a body’s identification, perhaps shaping it, but certainly revealing its shape. For Aristotle, things correspond to “their proper” place almost in terms of *belonging* to it, and movement is only the result of a thing’s not yet being in its proper place. Of what effects place has on the things it contains (other than stopping movement), he writes only that “the typical locomotions of the elementary natural bodies – namely, fire, earth, and the like – show not only that place is something, but also that it exerts a certain influence” (*Physics*, Book 4, Part 1). Such notions may seem distant and abstract to us today, but they are not necessarily so for authors. As Elizabeth Bowen wrote, “[n]othing can happen nowhere. The locale of the happening always colours the happening, and often, to a degree, shapes it” ([1946] 1999: 39).

Aristotle does not describe exactly *how* a place’s “influence” exerts itself. Pre-Aristotelian Greek chorography, however, with which he was surely familiar, did describe this in detail: different areas of the earth (and their contents) are situated under different star constellations and are guided by a particular theme, sign or archetype, itself based on (or inspiring) a mythological narrative. This idea perhaps finds its clearest contemporary echo in Franco Moretti’s suggestions of a “narrative

matrix” based on “space.” Different geographic areas depicted as literary settings, Moretti theorizes, are “not just different landscapes,” but “different *narrative matrixes*. Each space determines its own kind of actions, its plot – its genre” (Moretti 1998: 84). “Space,” or at least *a* specific space, can thus be theorized as that from which a plot’s form takes its direction, a sort of template for a narrative within it. The word “plot,” interestingly, from Old English “plot,” meaning “small piece of ground,” took the sense of “ground plan” or of a map or chart in the 1550s, and by the 1580s, that of “plan” or “scheme” (likely because of its similarity to the French *complot*), and by the 1590s could also mean “to make a map or diagram,” while its meaning “set of events in a story” is only attested from the 1640s (Online etymology dictionary). If this may only be a curious coincidence, it’s worth noting that the meaning of “plot” changed from “a place” to “a way narrative is organized,” and that this change took place at just the time western philosophy began to reevaluate Aristotle’s work.

Michael Curry (2002), examining developments in the notion of place from pre-Aristotelian Greece to the 1990s, divides the original study of place into three areas: 1) chorography is the art of writing about regions (places conceptualized as areas within a larger spatial container and related to abstract terms which provide their identity and guide movement within them); 2) topography is the art of writing about places (mapping them by physically going, like Greek sailors along a coast, from one place to the next, and representing these places as points on a chart, together reproducing a coast’s outline); 3) geography is the art of writing about the earth as a whole. Chorography, founded on astrology, related places on earth to what was visible in the heavens above them, making visual mapping possible. From this, the earth was divided into horizontal bands, with each region and what it contained (objects, creatures, people and their dispositions) having different characteristics related to what lay above it in the heavens. *Choros*, Curry writes, “originally appealed to subjective meanings, to the emotional cast associated with a place, as well as to the more ‘objective’ features of location” (2002: 503). Meanwhile, “the newer *topos*, which appeared for the first time in Aeschylus in about 470 BC,” typically referred to a “more objective” sense of “place” (503) as a point mapped in relation to other points.<sup>1</sup> By the third century BC, “*topos* had begun to be used in the expression for holy places, while *choros* had begun to be used to refer to what we would now think of as regions, to administrative districts, and in the process had begun to lose its emotional tinge.” By the second century AD, the topographic tradition “appeared to require skill in drawing, and the chorographic dealt ‘for the most part, with the nature rather than the size of the lands’ and with ‘qualitative matters’ (Ptolemy, 1948: 163)” (Curry 2002: 503).

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<sup>1</sup> Archytas (c. 428–347 BC) made a distinction between *topos* (place) and space, the latter which “differs from matter and is independent of it” (Jammer 1969: 10).

Topography's origins are quite different from what this later conceptualization of the study of space might lead us to imagine. Narrative, intertwined with the notion of *choros* from the beginning, also left its mark on the development of *topos*: "in classical geography 'Topography' was defined as the order of discrete units one to another" with topographical location "referent solely to the contiguity of places" (Curry 2002: 503). An "essential feature of topographical accounts" is that they do not only provide "a simple list of the order of places (one would have the equivalent of a railroad timetable, without the time)" but also take "the form of a chronology or narrative of what was seen as one went from place to place" (503). Curry suggests that topographical mapping itself developed out of a series of terms in a narrative – that narratives were used as maps, or maps used to signify narratives – in *periploi*, Greek accounts of sailing explorations describing the order in which travelers came to different places *through* story (504). One can imagine the usefulness of narrative as a mnemonic device for keeping account of the positions of these places and as a system for ordering space. And, much as Phelan and Rabinowitz note our difficulty in talking about space without conflating it with symbolism, Curry writes, these early topographic accounts describe a world awash in symbols, [a world in which, for example] the snail can be a sign of the season for work, but where the snail is connected with the heavens, with the place of the Pleiades, and where both are connected to what one sees on the earth – the labour of farmers, [with] the snail, the heavens and the farmer [all] elements of a larger web of symbols, where the elements that make up the world are all and always actively signficatory. [This is] not a world captured in maps, or lists, or other written descriptions, [but rather] a world in which people inhabit places, where the relationships between those places and others are represented just in terms of narrative and symbol. If within the topographic tradition places are represented through narrative accounts, we can see the places themselves as constituted through the practices that are the subject matter of those accounts. (2002: 504)

These narratives "describe what is acceptable and what is not" within a given place, defining places "as constituted of sets of possibilities and constraints" (504), much as in Bowen's description.

Curry goes on to describe how, between the time of Hesiod (who, according to Aristotle, implied that "things need to have space first, because [...] everything is somewhere and in place. If this is its nature, the potency of place must be a marvelous thing, and take precedence of all other things"; *Physics*, Book 4, part 1), and that of Ptolemy, "the discourse about places underwent a subtle but dramatic set of changes":

[While] within the topographic tradition a description of places did not involve a clear distinction between the question 'What is next to this?' and 'What did we come to next?', [leaving] distance and extension [...] in a certain way equivalent to time



and sequence, [by the fourth century BC], the conceptualization of space and place [was formalized, as empirical observation] showed that the world tends toward stasis. Objects move until they stop. [Essential here, explains Curry], is why they stop: they stop because they have reached the place where they belong, [their] natural place. (Curry 2002: 506)

Aristotle's work is thus "based on a conceptualization within which place is absolutely central, and in which an adequate account of the world needs to be couched in terms of the question of what goes where" (506), rather than of what *goes on* where. Following developments from this point up to a Newtonian switch of emphasis on space over place, Curry concludes with references to contemporary theorists who stress that space (in the Cartesian sense) is imaginary, while only places are real, a position Curry himself champions.

Space can only be defined by the measurements of distances between named points within it – places – distances that themselves only derive any physical relevance from their relationship to speed of movement. Space, in effect, can only be conceived in terms of time, for, as Aristotle put it, "we measure both the distance by the movement and the movement by the distance; for we say that the road is long, if the journey is long, and that this is long, if the road is long – the time, too, if the movement, and the movement, if the time" (*Physics*, Book 4, part 12). Speed itself being relative, space is thus in a sense always differently mappable, while place, in contrast, is named, marked and fixed to the symbolic. Space, the space of movement between places, is both experienced (as time) and (because of this) unmappable with any permanent certainty. An extreme case of this unmappable yet experienced space would be Deleuze and Guattari's "smooth space" (as opposed to "striated space") – of which the sea, they wrote, is, as it was for Greek sailors, "perhaps principal" ([1980] 1987: 387).

If Aristotle's is a physics "grounded within a world of places, and their relationships one to another" (Curry 2002: 506), it is so in no small measure because form can be apprehended in place. Thus, reasoned Aristotle, form corresponds to place in a direct and measurable way – in terms of shape, rather than of movement and sequence in time. Thus, he writes,

we measure the movement [of a thing] by the time, but also the time by the movement, because they define each other. [As] time is neither movement nor independent of movement, [yet] belongs to movement, [and as] what is moved is moved from something to something, [the distinction between] 'before' and 'after' holds primarily, then, in place. (*Physics*, Book 4, part 11)

This is an idea whose implications for narrative theory have been largely overlooked. Within space, writes Casey, there is never merely *one* place anywhere, not even in the process of creation. It is as if cosmogony respected the general rule enunciated by Aristotle in another

connection: 'the minimum number, strictly speaking, is two.' To create in the first place is *eo ipso* to create two places. (2002: 12)

While Ryan has suggested that readers understand literary space through the movements of characters, might narrative itself not be read in the very patterns formed between places and self during movement in space between places?

## 5. Description and schemata

### 5.1. Description

Auerbach saw descriptions of diegetic space (which he suggested earlier Hebraic works would have mistrusted as iconography) as developing in western literature from Homeric texts. Given that Monika Fludernik's (2003) work on early English written narration finds evidence of development from episode-based to non-episode-based, with descriptions of setting eventually included as a later addition, one might wonder why and under what circumstances descriptions of place became important to western fiction and what function they play, if any, other than to provide "readerly pleasure" (as if action, plot and character were not equally obvious sources of a reader's "pleasure"). Henri Lafon surmises that European authors began including lengthier place descriptions in fiction to guarantee an effect of realism (1997: 160). Whether "realism" or "readerly pleasure," the differentiation of "narrative" (typically linked to action and time) from "description" (often imagined as narrative's antithesis, linked as it is to lyric forms) has long been entrenched. For Louis Marin, for example, "[e]ven though description, being language, must yield to the same basic laws of narrative, it develops against the grain of narrative. [...] Description's time is present: a timeless present," creating an illusion that the thing or place described is present at all times, with or without the subject's presence, unlike narrative (Marin [1973] 1984: 202). Philippe Hamon nuances this view by suggesting that while "description is the point where the narrative comes to a temporary halt, while continuing to organize itself (with foretokens of what will happen, redundancy or content, metonymic duplication of the psychology or fate of the characters)," an author's job is to "turn this empty thematic into a full one," so that "the anaphoric redundancy of content becomes a dialectic of content" (Marin [1981] 1982: 170). Description, for Marin, puts plot on hold, while for Hamon the pause it creates can be fully engaged in a productive critique of action and plot development.

More recently, Kelly A. Marsh (2009) has suggested one way such a "dialectic of content" - "timeless" description's active part in plot itself - might be accomplished. "Frequently," she writes, "elements of a narrative that appear to be expository, merely background, are signs of the submerged plot" (79). This "submerged plot," for Marsh, is the story which cannot be told directly, due to societal, generic, formal, or authorial convention: the "unnarratable." Much as Robyn Warhol's "Narrating the Unnarratable: Gender and Metonymy in the Victorian Novel" "focuses on textual details to explain how the unnarratable [is] rendered through metonymy," Marsh's

approach “focuses on details of the surface plot to reveal how this subcategory of the unnarratable is rendered through the interaction of surface and submerged plots” (2009: 79). Marsh (like Warhol) focuses on textual “details” to outline a secondary (indeed perhaps primary) plot that cannot be directly voiced. Just as important as “details” in finding a “submerged plot” is something perhaps easier to overlook simply because it is not a detail: descriptions of setting and the ways various settings and spaces are arranged.

Aside from such touchstones, and despite Mikhail Bakhtin’s ([1920–1930] 1990) famous insistence on the inseparability of time and space in literature, theory, as Susan Stanford Friedman notes, has historically set “narrative” off as a binary opposite to “description.” Citing H. Porter Abbott as an example of this view (“Narrative gives us what could be called the shape of time”; 2002 [2008]: 3), she suggests that, instead,

[we] need a compensatory emphasis on space in order to bring back into view Bakhtin’s continual attention to the function of space as an active agent in the production of narrative. We need a *topochronic* narrative poetics, one that foregrounds *topos* in an effort to restore an interactive analysis of time with space in narrative discourse. (2005: 194)

Space would in this way be seen as “the container of history and the generator of story.” For in literature, frontiers between spaces “are not the background of narrative, mere description where time unfolds its plot,” but “the generative energy of narrative, the space that contains time” (203).

Little work has explored this fascinating proposal in detail, elucidating concrete examples. But even traditional theory suggests entry points for doing so. For Wolf Schmid, description is set against action in narrative, but he admits that both are essential to narrative, as, “by necessity, the presentation of a story [at least in novels] combines narrative and descriptive modes” in order to function (2003: 21).

Description is crucial to narrative when the two states it requires (the “before” and “after” of a tale which must somehow both differ and in some way be similar) are not connected to a single element of setting (21). Noting Tomaševskij’s distinction between descriptive texts and narrative, Schmid insists that travel writing is merely descriptive when only what is seen is narrated, and not the personal adventures of the traveler. “However,” he adds, “a description of travel can become a narrative without explicitly thematizing the traveler’s internal state” when a transformation of the traveler (necessary for narrative) “becomes apparent from the selection of what is seen” alone. Changes in a character can be “indirectly suggested by indices or symptoms in the description” (22). Thus, in certain cases, description of setting would in itself constitute narrative development, just as action or event might. Here, then, is a place one might begin to think about space’s centrality to narrative. Indeed, as Alice Jedličková suggests, Felix Vodička had already noted in 1948 that

individual textual types [like action and description] exercise typical functions in the structure of fictional prose but are flexible enough to substitute for each other. In other words, a description is capable of conveying a part of the plot, while what appears as a temporal narrative structure may fulfill a mainly descriptive function. (Jedličková 2010: 16)

Since then, Jedličková observes,

the history of narratology suggests that the vindication of description as a narratological issue during the heyday of structuralist research was purchased at the price of confirming or even producing prejudices against it, both by theoreticians, and readers. [...] The idea of modernist description considered as prone to melt into the narrative discourse even results in Lubomír Doležel's claim that the distinction between description and narration loses its legitimization eventually (in his 1960s stylistic research). (2010: 11)

The "canonical description of description as non-narrative should be given up," claims Jedličková (13), a position also put forth by Ruth Ronen (1997).

### 5.2. *Schemata*

Schmid's reference to "narrative" description in travel narratives is interesting, for "prose fiction and the travel account have evolved together" and "are heavily indebted to each other" (Adams 1983: 279) in terms of both descriptive passages and action. James Buzard (1993) has suggested that through descriptions of places in nineteenth-century narrative, texts became attenuated because novels no longer served only as story-telling devices but, with the advent of mass travel, did double duty as guidebooks. With the advent of global travel, novels no longer only modeled textual space by describing what protagonists saw, but modeled readers' own potential (or even simultaneous) personal experiences in the "real" space depicted by the novel. Lists of places could even serve as sketches or outlines of inferred but undisclosed chains of action. In Sinclair Lewis's *Dodsworth* (1929), for example, the otherwise zeroed events of what the protagonist *does* in Paris, concludes the narrator, "may be deduced by studying a newspaper list of 'Where to Lunch, Dine, and Dance in Paris,' the advertisements of dressmakers, jewelers, perfumers, furniture-dealers, and of revues" (Lewis [1929] 1941: 370). Without describing specific events here, place offers (with a bit of narratorial prompting) a "script," that is, a prototypical structure for narrative, and

a memory structure that specifies the list of actions people perform in repeated situations [belonging to] a more general type of memory structure called *schemas*, which gather experiences [...] into units that function during narrative experiences [and allowing readers] to delineate a scene with quick gestures. (Gerrig and Egidi 2003: 41)

Place and space play an essential role in such "gatherings," as Theresa Bridgeman writes, for "[a]s a basic mechanism of reading, in texts which develop more than one

plot-line at once, location allows us to identify rapidly a return to an already-established ongoing scene ('back in Gotham City')" (2005: 56).<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, Emma Kafalenos, focusing on causality in narratives, suggests that "interpretations of the causes and effects of something someone does or something that happens depend on the context in which the action or happening is considered" (2006: vii). While timing may be everything, an oversimplifying aspect of her study, I would suggest, is its consideration of temporal contexts while largely ignoring spatial contexts. Kafalenos comes closest to such considerations in noting that "mention of a character's change of [geographic] position or preparations to change position often signals that character's adoption" of a new function in the text – going somewhere, or preparing to go to a new location often indicating a new role (function) for the character (14). Her work, drawing on Todorov's, adopts the idea of narrative functions (a position in a narrative sequence). As Barthes wrote, however, the "'soul' of any function" is "its seedlike quality, which enables the function to inseminate the narrative with an element that will later come to materiality, on the same level, or elsewhere on another level" ([1966] 1975: 244). Barthes never specifically mentions setting or place as a "function." Tellingly, though, in his closing example of a narrative kernel, drawn from the first passages of an Ian Fleming novel, he insists that a telephone call James Bond receives from Hong Kong (which opens the story) is not simply a detail added as a bit of realism, but that mention of this place is *itself* a kernel: "the true information, the information that will spring up from its seed later, is the tracing of the call back to its origin, namely *Hong Kong*" (271). Here, the final, most detailed example Barthes offers of narrative's smallest, most essential unit, this "kernel," "function" or "nucleus" – the seedlike "soul" from which the novel's plot will grow – is a *place* or site. Barthes' suggestion in this seminal essay, that the aim of narrative analysis is to dechronologize, then "relogify" narrative (as its chronology is essentially an illusion), is a thesis that has not prospered since (Ricoeur's *Temps et récit*, Meir Sternberg's view of narrative as the play of temporalities and Phelan's "narrative progression," among many others, would, like Seymour Chatman's work, focus on time). Certainly it is not easy to talk about space without talking about time when dealing with narrative.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, two points seem settled. First, pure "description" of diegetic space is in itself enough to constitute a narrative if it indicates changes in a focalizing character. Second, a change of diegetic "location" can "identify," trigger or activate narrative

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<sup>1</sup> In time, writes Fludernik, "[w]hile sequentiality and thus strict adherence to chronological order are the norm, so that simultaneity stands out as an exception, this situation is reversed in respect of place and space: spaces are static; what needs to be stressed is change of scene. Many narratives," she notes, "switch to and fro between two (or more) locations. Key points in the plot are reached when characters travel from one location to another, or converge in one place; in doing so they bring separate plot strands together" ([2006] 2009: 43–44).

<sup>2</sup> My thanks go to John Pier for this observation.

schemas (or, as Kafalenos suggests, prepare readers to consider the approach of a narrative reordering). Bridgeman's careful use of the term "location" in the quote above is telling, avoiding as it does two words by now so over-charged that one might be forgiven for hesitating to employ them for fear of treading on such metaphor-laden ground.

## 6. Future directions

### 6.1. Questioning temporality's essentiality

The role of space in narrative was often relegated to theory's sidelines in the years following Tzvetan Todorov's assertion that "the spatial order" functions, "in a certain measure, independently from" the orders of logic/causality and temporality (1969: 20, translation mine). Genette in that same year expanded the notion of space in literature so generally as to include even the shape of the printed word on the page – certainly an important line of thinking as work on paratexts developed, but weakening prospects for an immediate focus on the relation of diegetic space to plot. Barthes, meanwhile, tied causality and temporality in plot together further when he observed that

[e]verything suggests, indeed, that the mainspring of narrative is precisely the confusion of consecution and consequence, what comes *after* being read in narrative as what is *caused by*; in which case narrative would be a systematic application of the logical fallacy denounced by Scholasticism in the formula *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* [...]. ([1966] 1977: 94)

This claim has been examined in more detail by Kafalenos (2006), and John Pier (2008), studying the issues from the perspective of inferential reasoning, takes exception to Barthes' use of syllogistic logic. Gerald Prince would write that narrative could be defined as "the representation of *at least two* real or fictive events or situations in a time sequence, neither of which presupposes or entails the other" (1982: 4), suggesting widespread agreement that narrative requires (only) two non-simultaneous events or situations (145). Later, he would reiterate that "story always involves temporal sequence [...] and [that] this is its most distinctive feature," only to state later: "Of course, temporal relations between the situations and events making up a story are not the only ones possible: these situations and events may be related causally, for example" ([1987] 2003: 59).

### 6.2. Focus on causality

More recently, Kai Mikkonen has questioned what is more essential to our understanding of a text as a narrative: the temporal ordering of events or inferred causality. Citing Brian Richardson's (1997) reading of Tomaševskij, Mikkonen argues that "the ability to infer causal relations between events is a necessary condition of narrativity" (2007: 291). And not only is the reader's inference of causality essential for a series (or group) of events to be considered a narrative, it is perhaps even *more* essential than an author's temporal arrangement of events. Richardson himself suggests "it is not clear that temporal succession is a necessary condition of any

possible narrative,” as “one may imagine four or five utterly simultaneous though causally connected events that would constitute a narrative” as at least “a theoretical possibility” (1997: 106).<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, Mikkonen cites Todorov as noting that “the logical series is in the reader’s eyes a much stronger relation than the temporal series; if the two go together, he sees only the first” (2007: 303). He goes on to refer to Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan’s proposal that “causality can often (always?) be projected onto temporality” ([1983] 2002: 3).

If causality is thus so easily projected onto temporality (and is, following Richardson, possibly even more essential to narrative, adhering even to situations of *simultaneous* events), might it not also be projected onto relationships between (inherently simultaneous) fictional places? As early as 1978, Joseph A. Kestner had reiterated [Émile Borel’s] idea that causality, which we presume to be based on time, is in reality much more spatial, dependent on distance and our identity with a particular group of observers. Thus, the position one chooses to take vis-à-vis a novel is critical to whether he perceives causality in the work at all [leaving] the concept of ‘temporal’ causality [...] hardly certain. (17)

Travel writing, or writings fixated on place, might provide a window for such theorizing, for “[i]n travel writing,” Mikkonen notes, consecutiveness and change over time relate directly to a place or a geographic space; time can be said, so to say, compressed into space, into synchronous spatial representation, while space is also translated into the temporality of writing and possibly also that of narrative. (2007: 292)

Mikkonen insists that no such causality could be imagined without a “goal-oriented” subject, for

[i]n travel literature, typically, an individual or a group of people engage here and now in an act of movement and perception, [and] the cognitive foundations and communicative functions of the ‘narrative is travel’ metaphor are based, to a significant degree, on the representation of the human experience of space and movement. This involves, even when we are dealing with examples of pure description of the place of travel, the portrayal of human consciousness engaged in goal-oriented activity. (299)

Indeed, the goal-oriented subject has even been imagined by David Antin (among others) as being narrative’s most central element: “Narrative is a desiring subject’s confrontation with the threat or promise of transformation” (McHale 2004: 96). Antin would consider the following Aztec “definition” of a cave a narrative, though there is no plot:

“It becomes long, deep; it widens, extends, narrows. It is a constricted place, a narrowed place, one of hollowed-out places. There are roughened places, asperous places. It is frightening, a fearful place, a place of death. It is called a place of death

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<sup>1</sup> Richardson (1997) refers to Borges’s “The Aleph” and Robbe-Grillet’s “The Secret Room.”

because there is dying. It is a place of darkness; it darkens; it stands ever dark. It stands wide-mouthed, it is wide-mouthed; it is narrow-mouthed. It has mouths which pass through. I place myself in the cave. I enter the cave." (McHale 2004: 96) Here, for Antin, an (almost) eventless series of described places becomes a narrative, much as Schmid suggested it might, because of its "threatened" "transformation" of a "desiring subject." Mikkonen, referring to Fludernik's *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* (1996: 28–29), goes on to note that "recent cognitive-linguistic approaches in narratology" see "the representation of experientiality (and embodiment) as an essential condition for narrative" (2007: 299). He further notes that "[f]or Marie-Laure Ryan, fictional narrative is an imaginative 'recentering' in another possible world [...] In this regard, travel narratives are prototypical cases of all narratives" (299).

### 6.3. Cultural mythologies

Along with taking fuller account of travel narratives (and of how traveling readers use them to construct personal narratives of their own experiences while on the road), another key here might be in more narratological examinations of mythologies, or in reading any narrative *as* an anthropological myth. For Lévi-Strauss, any myth itself is a narrativized ideology, whose diachronically unfolding plot must be read synchronically. Friedman's "spatialized readings of narrative" echo this concern with a focus on narrative's a-temporal elements. Her goal, taking Lévi-Strauss's own material, is to "break open" the Oedipus myth by laying aside Oedipus's temporal development (and plot-driving desires) to focus on the geographic locations in the story that form his identity (Friedman 1998: 40). "[L]inear time," wrote Kristeva, "is that of language considered as the enunciation of sentences (noun + verb; topic-comment; beginning-ending)" ([1979] 1981: 17). Yet space exists without language or sentences, and verbal descriptions are, in a sense, always a means of chronologizing space. In another vein, Thomas Bender has observed that narrative history "in Christian, Jewish, and Islamic cultures has always been linear, always beginning with a beginning," but its linearity coming at the cost of screening much out, narrowing history, and reducing "the plenitude of stories." Bender suggests a solution might be found in "allowing a greater spatialization of historical narrative" (2002: 8).

Louis Marin suggested that such narrative structures can only be seen by comparing various narratives in relation to each other, in "correlations whose distinction consists in escaping from temporality, [...] not a succession but an order [...] a-chronic" ([1973] 1984: 35). Such an "a-chronic system of correlations of relations in mythic narrative constitutes a complex interchange of transformations between poles and contrary functions" where "meanings" are less "clear" than when expressed with "temporal connections" (37). While temporality "regularizes" their relationships, a travel narrative "is a narrative whose events are places," "stops or stages" "marked out by incidents, accidents, or meetings" which are not themselves



“the essential elements,” but only “signals of a possible ‘memorization.’ [...] The travel narrative is thus the remarkable transformation into discourse of the map, that geographic icon” (Marin [1979] 1984: 42). Examining narrative in terms of the geographic relationship between places, as Marin suggests, instead of in terms of the temporal relationship between events, might be a useful way to more fully explore the repression Lacan describes as the reason we have narrative in the first place. If, as Gabriele Helms writes, cultural narratology works under the assumption that as “ideology is located in narrative structures themselves,” and that analysis of texts’ narrative structures can reveal unspoken assumptions and ideologies inherent to a genre or period (Helms 2003: 14), then studies of narrative might do well not only to focus on the causal relationship between two places whose relationship is maintained by temporal movement of characters between them, but also to look at those places in stories as co-existing, atemporal states, existing even without their “antagonism’s” repression through “logical” movement in time. Whether in fiction or in other narrative texts, characters’ movements in diegetic space might be read as a symbolic shorthand in and of themselves, either complementing “surface” plots, or undermining or subverting them.

This might be one step toward a more truly cultural, intercultural, or even anthropological narratology. In imagining what events “mean,” might we not only ask “what do they lead to in a causal chain?” but look more closely at where they happen and what this “where” means to those involved, be they readers, characters or narrators? Such a task would involve delving into the unsteady ground of hermeneutics (sometimes skirted around by focusing on a text’s “ethics”). Yet, more and more in the world we live in, we see our environment as “an instantaneous configuration of positions” (de Certeau [1980] 1984: 117) – one we are required to make sense of as much as to act in. Narrative is our faithful standby in this task. To use it well, we need to focus not only on place and space, and what we mean by those words, but on others’ notions of them and on how we describe, inscribe and interpret the meaning of our own movements – and others’ – in them.

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To acknowledge that the beginning of the twenty-first century has witnessed the rise of literary narratives that make extensive use of visual or graphic elements such as photographs, typographical experimentations, unusual page layouts, drawings, illustrations, etc., is not a novelty *per se*. Neither is it, in recent years, to explore digital narratives and their affordances. Rather, these explorations have received much attention in narrative theory and in contemporary literary and cultural criticism. Since the digital turn, new studies have approached both subjects. However, while most of these studies are either inquiries into new digital devices and digital narratives (e.g., digital narratology) or focus on experimentations with the materiality of the book (e.g., multimodal narrative), this article will consider the two issues as part of the same phenomenon. On the one hand, literary experimentations with the materiality of the book have been especially flourishing since the emergence of new digital technologies. On the other hand, contemporary fictional writers, who are becoming more and more aware of the affordances offered by digital media, have started exploiting the properties of these new technologies to supplement their print narratives. These new but recurrent practices are thus both historically grounded in the socio-cultural context of the twenty-first century and consistent with a knowledge-sharing mode embedded in web 2.0 technologies.

As I will show, the correlation between (a) the materiality of the book and (b) the digital supplementary material to be found on writers' personal websites and blogs and in social media finds its origins in Gérard Genette's concept of paratext and, in particular, in his subdivision into (a) peritext, i.e. the paratextual elements situated in proximity of the text, and (b) epitext, i.e. the paratextual elements "not materially appended to the text within the same volume, but circulating [...] in a virtually limitless physical and social space" (Genette [1987] 1997: 344). In the first section of this article, I highlight how the concept of paratext, despite some lacks and ambivalences, is still able to offer a valuable perspective on contemporary practices. I will introduce recent investigations on issues of media, mode, and materiality in order to contextualize my study in a wider cultural and theoretical discourse. The second section analyzes how paratextual elements are employed in a contemporary novel, Jennifer Egan's *A Visit From the Goon Squad* (2010). This analysis sheds new light on the way visual and digital elements may be used in a literary narrative. Drawing on this paradigmatic case, the third section puts forth my proposal of "paratext 2.0." Formed by the categories of material peritext and digital epitext, the conceptualization of paratexts 2.0 allows for the identification of several functions.

Far from containing a definitive reconfiguration of paratext for literary narrative in the digital age, this article provides new a vocabulary and, more significantly, new insights to answer some of the urgent questions twenty-first century literary practices are posing to narrative theory.

## 1. Thresholds and interferences

Combinations of words and visual elements in literary narrative date back at least to *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* by Lawrence Sterne (1759–66). They were a characteristic feature of the Italian futuristic movement at the beginning of the twentieth century and of the French avant-gardes (Dadaism, Surrealism).<sup>1</sup> Since then, the merging of textual and visual forms has continued to be explored by, for example, the Oulipo group, William Burroughs and his cut-up method, and several postmodernist writers.<sup>2</sup> The new millennium, most likely as a consequence of the rapid development of digital technologies and new media,<sup>3</sup> has seen a tendency toward the literary production of hybrid narratives that integrate images, typographical variations, and specific design into the text.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, a renewed interest in research on word/image combination has emerged. Katharine N. Hayles, for instance, highlights the significant role of the materiality of the artifact: “an emergent property created through dynamic interactions between physical characteristics and signifying strategies” (2010: 3). Another new media scholar, Anne F. Wysocki, stresses how new technologies, the Internet, social networking sites, and the blogosphere have facilitated new ways of producing meaning, i.e. new media texts (2004: 1–41). According to Wysocki, new media texts “do not have to be digital; instead, any text that has been designed so that its materiality is not effaced can count as new media” (15). Or again, the concept of “remediation,” introduced by David Bolter and Richard Grusin (1999), describes the way in which media refashion other media forms according to two strategies, one that “erases or eliminates the signs of mediation,” and another that “multiplies and makes explicit signs of mediation” (2005: 497).

More specifically with regard to narrative theory, since Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen defined multimodality as the “use of several semiotic modes in the design

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<sup>1</sup> On writing as artifact, visual poetics and electronic media, see Drucker (1998).

<sup>2</sup> For a case study of William Gass’s *Willie Masters’ Lonesome Wife*, see Pier (2011).

<sup>3</sup> A correlation between the materiality of the artifact and the diffusion of electronic textuality has been advocated by Hayles (2002: 19).

<sup>4</sup> To name a few: *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* (2000) by Dave Eggers; *House of Leaves* (2000), *Only Revolutions* (2006) and *The Fifty Year Sword* (2012) by Mark Z. Danielewski; *Everything is Illuminated* (2002), *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005) and *Tree of Codes* (2010) by Jonathan Safran Foer; *Austerlitz* (2001) by W. G. Sebald; *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (2003) by Mark Haddon; *The Selected Works of T. S. Spivet* (2009) by Rief Larsen; *The Autograph Man* by Zadie Smith (2002); *Nox* (2010) by Anne Carson.

of a semiotic product or event, together with the particular way in which these modes are combined" (2001: 20), new investigations on narrative and multimodal narrative analysis have focused on the "dynamic interplay of semiotic resources as they contribute to narrative meaning" (Page 2010: 8). Scholars such as Alison Gibbons (2010: 285–311), Wolfgang Hallet (2009: 129–153), and Nina Nørgaard (2010: 63–80) have described contemporary novels like *House of Leaves* (2000) by Mark Z. Danielewski or *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005) by Jonathan Safran Foer as multimodal novels. Nørgaard defines these narratives in terms of a "high modality" effect, namely "what we see is what we would have seen if we had been there" (van Leeuwen 1992: 35–58, qtd in Nørgaard 2009: 148), and she points out that images enhance the authenticity of narratives (2010: 73). Hallet defines the multimodal novel as "a type of novel that [...] incorporates a whole range of non-verbal symbolic representations and non-narrative semiotic modes" in such a way that they do not have a disruptive or disturbing effect on the reading process (2009: 129–131). Gibbons further explains that not only "multimodal literary novels [...] utilize a plurality of semiotic modes in the communication and progression of their narratives," but those modes "have distinct means of communicating [and they] constantly interact in the production of narrative meaning" (2012: 2).

Making all these proposals rely on the concept of semiotic mode may still cause some confusion, as the distinction between mode and media at times is not so clear-cut. For instance, while Ruth Page defines "mode" as "a system of choices used to communicate meaning [...] realized *materially* through particular media" (2010: 6, emphasis added), Marie-Laure Ryan distinguishes between a transmissive definition that describes media as channels of communication, and a semiotic definition that identifies them as "*Material* or technical means of artistic expression" (2005: 289, emphasis added). Despite the overlapping terminology – what Page defines as mode corresponds to what for Ryan is a medium in its semiotic acceptation – the transmedial approach to narrative has the merit of bringing to the fore the relevance for narrative studies of media and of medium-specific analysis. Indeed, as Ryan highlights, media are "material supports of information whose materiality, precisely, 'matters' for the type of meanings that can be encoded" (2004: 1–2).

These various lines of inquiry (new media studies, multimodal narrative analysis, transmedial approach) all indicate that the importance of discussing the medium, the mode, or the material quality of a literary text has been strongly acknowledged over the last few decades. Before the digital revolution, though, other attempts had been made in this direction. Among them we find Genette's idea of paratext. Paratextual elements, such as the cover, the typesetting, the title, the dedications, the epigraphs, the prefaces, the postfaces, the footnotes are, according to Genette, necessary



precisely to “present the book and [...] make it present, assuring its presence in the world, its ‘reception’ and its consumption” ([1987] 1997: 1) That is, these elements concern the materiality of a narrative. The concept itself, however, presents a number of problems that have prevented its usage in this acceptance, despite the evident correlation between what is now known as the materiality of the book and Genette’s idea of paratext as the sum of the elements that make this material presence possible.

First, we know that the definition of paratext is very broad, encompassing a “heterogeneous group of practices and discourses characterized by an authorial intention and assumption of responsibility, that functions as a guiding set of directions for the readers” (2–3).<sup>1</sup> Second, we may observe an ambivalence underlying Genette’s idea. On the one hand, the metaphor of the threshold is employed to describe the paratext as possessing an indeterminate quality. On the other hand, the elements composing the whole category are classified in a very systematic way<sup>2</sup> that leaves little room for such indeterminacy. The typology that results is too well defined to belong to a transitory, undefined space and, at the same time, not sufficiently descriptive to accommodate the many hybrid or unconventional elements that can be found in a literary narrative. All in all, an extensive categorization does not correspond to an adequate theoretical discussion.

Despite the ambivalences and lacks, however, the term paratext is now generally accepted and widely used. In recent years, probably due to the current interests in issues of authorship and media-affordances, as well as to the greater use of paratextual features in contemporary fiction (e.g., footnotes), the concept has received renewed attention. Paratextual investigations have simultaneously increased. Edward Maloney, for instance, taking account of the complexity of the paratextual category of footnotes, provides an extensive discussion of their use in fictional narratives where they are “incorporated into the story as part of the internal narrative frame” (2005: ii). Dorothee Birke and Birte Christ, more recently, started to map the field for studies dealing with the connection of paratext and digitized narrative, pinpointing three primary questions: the materialization of the object, the boundaries of the text, and the question of authorization (2013: 68–70).

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<sup>1</sup> Proposed by Genette for the first time in *The Architext: an Introduction* ([1979] 1992: 82), the concept of paratextuality was briefly introduced in *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* ([1982] 1997). Here, Genette describes the paratext (the second type of transtextual relationships) as “one of the privileged fields of operation of the pragmatic dimension of the work – i.e., of its impact upon the reader – more particularly, the field of what is now often called, thanks to Philippe Lejeune’s studies on autobiography, the generic contract (or pact)” ([1982] 1997: 3).

<sup>2</sup> According to their location (attached to the hard book or not); time of appearance; mode (verbal or other); communication agents; and function (Genette [1987] 1997: 4).

The question of authorization is indeed problematic in contemporary digital practices. Writers' websites are most likely written and designed in collaboration with software designers. This aspect, together with the impressive amount of (ephemeral) data present on digital platforms, pushed Birke and Christ to focus on a new functionality of the paratext that, according to them, results from the interplay of an interpretative, a commercial, and a navigational function (67–68). After all, Genette himself believes functionality to be “the most essential of paratext’s properties,” since “whatever aesthetic intention may come into play as well, the main issue for the paratext is not to ‘look nice’ around the text but rather to ensure for the text a destiny consistent with the author’s purpose” ([1987] 1997: 407). Genette’s paratext thus highlights its functions according to authorial intentions. On these grounds, more recent reformulations of the concept have sought to shift the emphasis from author to audience, such as Werner Wolf’s concept of framing borders and its six functions.<sup>1</sup> Wolf especially criticizes the excessive attention Genette directs to paratextual elements with a “text-centered” function (e.g., generic markers) at the expense of those with a “self-centered function,” i.e. *defamiliarized* framings that foreground “conventions of paratexts or constitute a space for experimental games” (2006: 29–30, emphasis added).

Wolf’s objection – especially as far as the questions of materiality and multimodality are concerned – seems particularly urgent today, although the practice of “foregrounding the materiality of the text instead of effacing it” was already a hallmark of postmodernist novels (McHale 2005: 459). According to Brian McHale, graphic experimentations are connected with the tension created by the juxtaposition of the real world of the material object and the fictional world projected by the narrative. What he calls “*iconic shaped texts*” either stress the ontological tension between the book as object and its narrative, or simply “illustrate [...] their own existence” (1987: 184, emphasis added). This unconventional use of typographical elements or other visual interventions were, on the contrary, scarcely contemplated in Genette’s typology.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, a “defamiliarizing” or “iconic” element is not necessarily less relevant to the concept of paratext. In this regard, Genette is explicit: “no reader should be indifferent to the appropriateness of particular typographical choices, even if modern publishing tends to neutralize these choices by a perhaps irreversible tendency toward standardization” ([1987] 1997: 34, emphasis added). What happens, though, when typographical choices challenge this standardization?

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<sup>1</sup> Text-centered, self-centered, context-centered, sender-centered, recipient-centered, and self-referential or meta-referential (Wolf 2006: 30–31).

<sup>2</sup> Jan Baetens pointed out soon after the publication of *Seuils* that from the typology proposed is missing “what is characteristic of modern literature: the paratextualization of the text and the textualization of the paratext, i.e. not the breakdown of boundaries, but the multiplication of relations between two poles that are no longer antagonistic opposites” (1987: 713–714). See also Pier’s (1992) case study of Nabokov’s *Pale Fire*.

What is their role in contemporary literary narrative? To what extent are “unconventional” paratexts linked with a new poetics?

On the other hand, the question of the materiality of the artifact, foregrounded by paratextual practices, represents only a part of the problem. While we can argue that the domain of paratext is mainly limited to the reader’s interpretation “within generic categories, historical epochs, author’s oeuvre, [and] sociopolitical controversies” (Herman, McHale, Phelan 2010: 308), it is also true that a piece of paratextual information outside a narrative may transform it “without, at the same time, changing a single word of it” (Abbott 2008: 31). Therefore, how can we account for the increasing use of digital media by fictional writers that has emerged since the diffusion of the Internet and web 2.0?

This question, together with the considerations above, strengthens my argument in favor of refining and re-contextualizing the category of paratext in line with today’s practices. In order to illustrate my proposal, I will now present the analysis of a paradigmatic twenty-first century novel that makes use of both unconventional paratexts that foreground the materiality of the book and supplementary elements to be found in the digital world.

## 2. *A Visit from the Goon Squad* as case study

Jennifer Egan’s *A Visit from the Goon Squad* thematically deals with the changes that new technologies are bringing to our lives. As the narrator in chapter two points out: “the problem [is] digitization, which suck[s] the life out of everything that [gets] smeared through its microscopic mesh. Film, photography, music: dead. An aesthetic holocaust!” (23, original emphasis). Through a disconnected temporal ordering, the novel addresses some cultural and ethical issues relative to the by-products of new media, such as the death of music as a business (at least, as we know it). The narrative maps the evolution of the music industry from the late seventies punk-rock bands to a not-so-distant future where people have never heard live music. The events involve several characters and narrators whose story lines intertwine throughout the narrative progression. Echoing Ryan’s concept of *proliferating narrativity*, according to which contemporary fiction “becom[es] a collection of little stories loosely connected through common participants” (2006: 10), the story lines of the two main characters – Bennie Salazar and Sasha Blake – function as larger narratives around which the other embedded stories are narrated. The rhetorical effectiveness of the overall narrative thus depends largely on discovering the multiple relations of the various characters despite the continuous analepses and prolepses.

The novel grants a significant role to the way media and technology affect our lives, but in what way are media *materially* approached? What kind of paratextual elements accompany the narrative? How does the paratext of Egan's novel function as a guiding set of directions for readers, and how does it challenge a more conventional mode? On the one hand, we have the usual suspects: a title and an epigraph, with the former offering a disparaging metaphor of time as a goon and the latter coming from Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* (1913–27). Both confirm readers' intuitions about the overall thematic dimension of the narrative, i.e. the consequences of the passing of time, especially in terms of the changes new technologies are bringing to humankind.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, we have several paratextual elements not so easily falling within Genette's typology. One of them is the two title pages employed to divide the thirteen chapters that form the narrative into two parts: one page shows the letter "A" right before the first chapter while the other shows the letter "B" before chapter seven. This graphic choice would not be so significant in itself, but as the narrative unfolds it becomes clear that the two letters mimic the structure of LP records, with the two letters standing for the two sides, and the chapters for the musical tracks.

The intermedial reference to a medium with an analog sound storage *materializes* the criticism of the relentless digitization of music expressed through the narrative. Similarly, the twelfth chapter, "Great Rock and Roll Pauses by Alison Blake," materializes its own story. The chapter is graphically realized as the printout of seventy-five PowerPoint slides. The fictional author of the slides is Alison, a young teenager who keeps track of her family life through a digital journal, written with a piece of presentation software. The material inclusion into the narrative of an unconventional medium – presentation software, which becomes itself part of the narrative world – is somehow justified by a futuristic setting, the year 202-something. The story level of a possible future in which writing will consist of combining new technologies and new software programs is materialized in its graphic realization. But why was this medium materialized? Or, to put it better, what is the function of such materialization? If we look at the story, there is an older generation (represented by Alison's parents) who tries to resist the idea of a life fully dependent on new technologies, and a younger one (represented by Alison and her brother Lincoln) that deals with it more spontaneously. Alison's digital writing is an exemplification of a possible (future) relationship with new technologies.

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<sup>1</sup> As remarked by Bennie's line: "'Time's a goon, right? You gonna let that goon push you around?'" The "goon squad" in the title refers to time. Instead, the epigraph states: "Poets claim that we recapture for a moment the self that we were long ago when we enter some house or garden in which we used to live in our youth. But these are most hazardous pilgrimages, which end as often in disappointment as in success. It is in ourselves that we should rather seek to find those fixed places, contemporaneous with different years." (Egan 2010: 332).

The graphic realization, moreover, has an iconic power. Lincoln is obsessed with pauses in rock and roll songs. (This is partly due to his slight autism, but the idea of pauses is itself embedded in the recurrent theme of the narrative, as pauses delimit a period of time.) The music pauses are graphically represented as empty frames whose iconic power can be compared to panels in sequential art: their dimensions influence the readers' perception of duration. But which other effects are they trying to elicit? Since the graphic realization of the narrative recalls an LP, with thirteen chapters/songs all following a similar (conventional) typographical pattern except one, we could further speculate that the exceptionality of pauses in rock-and-roll songs symmetrically recalls the exceptionality of the slides in a book. According to this simile, the slides would be the pause in the narrative. However, this exceptionality of pauses in rock songs is also linked, at the story level, with their ability to reproduce sounds, like "smokiness" (247), that are still non-replicable in digital formats. Therefore, when looking at the material slides as "narrative pauses," to which kind of additional abilities are they referring?

Following Ryan's idea that "narrative can actively fight some of the properties of the medium for expressive purposes" (2006: 30), we could first argue that in *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, Egan exploits the medium at her disposal for expressive purposes. Charts, arrows, and diagrams become artistic devices to convey narrative meanings. Thus, the overall effect of the paratextual feature will not be disruptive but rather enhancing. The telling of the slide-journal is substituted with its material reproduction, as though the material presence would make it more real, more authentic. This meta-discourse on paratextual devices is then juxtaposed onto a sort of generational clash in terms of how much we rely on technology to express ourselves. Alison's mother, Sasha, seems not to understand her daughter's writing habit to the point that she does not even consider this activity as writing at all. As Alison reports in her journal, Sasha would ask her "Why not try *writing* for a change?" A question to which her daughter replies, laconically: "Ugh! Who even uses that word?" (253, original emphasis.) The question of whether the slides are a "valid" writing medium, therefore, turns back to the readers who, through the reproduction of Alison's journal, are better able to judge them.

Significantly, PowerPoint slides are not a new medium in themselves, but rather, borrowing Wolf's terminology, a *defamiliarized* one. The slides are, at the same time, generally familiar *per se* but uncommon in fictional narration. In this way, they reinforce an overall thematic dimension devoted to showing how much digitization is already part of our lives, thanks to devices that are becoming, whether one likes it or not, increasingly familiar. Adopting a postmodernist perspective, we could further

connect the unconventional usage of the slides to the destabilizing effect provoked by the ontological tension between the real world of the artifact and the story world of the narrative. The slides (and the physical turning of the book necessary to read them) are a constant visual reminder of the material object that frames the narrative and “makes it present.” Readers’ interests, in rhetorical terms, focus on the narrative as artificial construct. The epistemological question relative to whether a slide format is a satisfactory mode of expressing meaning overlaps with an ontological incertitude. If it is true that the slides foreground the presence of mediation, the peculiarity of their printout (as opposed to their digital presentation through a slideshow) also highlights its very limits. The narrative both *lights* the properties of print and, at the same time, limits those of the presentation software.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the slides do exist in their digital format, and they can (quite intuitively) be found on Jennifer Egan’s website.<sup>2</sup> On [jenniferegan.com](http://jenniferegan.com), in a section called “Court Street, July 2009” (as well as in another one, aptly entitled “Great Rock and Roll Pauses”), the seventy-five slides composing the twelfth chapter of *A Visit from the Goon Squad* are presented in a slideshow format. In this format, Alison’s slide journal better exploits the properties of the presentation software. Here, the slides embed the actual sound of Lincoln’s rock-and-roll songs with pauses. They appear in full color, increasing their iconic power as compared with the printed ones, which are in black and white. With sound, color and motion, the digital version of chapter twelve offers a different, somehow in turn remediated, narrative form.

Chapter twelve in the slideshow format is not the only supplementary element to be displayed on Egan’s website. There are several sections with information on Egan’s creative process of writing the novel. She provides, for each chapter, the chapter’s original title; the location where she came up with the idea of writing the story, and/or where she experienced a personal life event that triggered the idea of writing such story, and/or where she actually wrote it (e.g., a café, a room, an armchair); a short life narrative about such event; a soundtrack, either as verbal suggestion or as a link on the iTunes Store, the video-sharing website YouTube, or the online retailer Amazon.com; some memories about her experience related to the thematic component of the narrative; and the beginning of the chapter.

To exemplify the kind of additional materials offered, let’s take a look at one of the sections of the website, the one concerning the first chapter of the novel. While the first chapter, “Found Objects,” opens with one of the main characters, Alison’s

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<sup>1</sup> It might also be argued, in terms of processes of remediation, that the old media form refashions the new one.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps to assume that readers will surf the internet to search for further information on the narrative is too bold a statement, but to consider it a possibility seems necessary nowadays.

mother Sasha, stealing a wallet left unattended on the lavatory in a hotel bathroom (she suffers from kleptomania), on the author's website, readers are provided with the information that Egan personally experienced a similar situation. She was at "The Regency Hotel, on Park Avenue and 61st Street" when, "washing [her] hands in the bathroom, [she] noticed a fat green wallet inside a wide-open bag beside the sink"; afterwards, she "sat down with that wallet in [her] head and a pen in [her] hand, to see what might happen." In addition, Egan indicates that the original title for the story was "Happy Ending;" she provides another personal narrative about her experience as the victim of thefts in Spain, Lisbon and New York; and she suggests a soundtrack through a link to the iTunes Store for Death Cab For Cutie's concept album "We Have The Facts And We Are Voting Yes" (2000). For each of the thirteen chapters of *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, Egan's website offers additional content of this kind. Are these elements part of the narrative's paratext? If so, what is their relationship with the narrative? How could they be re-contextualized alongside Genette's typology?

A first observation concerns a sharing aptitude underlying the digital addenda. Consistent with social media affordances, it emerges especially in Egan's nonfictional descriptions of the creative process and in the references to music embedded in the various sections through hyperlinks that direct readers toward other artworks. This sharing mode can also be found on another archetype of the digital era used to provide additional material to the narrative: a blog site. Created with the open-source blogging tool WordPress, *avisitfromthegoonsquad.com* contains the materialization of the intermedial references to music in the form of YouTube music videos embedded in the webpage, a blogroll featuring interviews with Jennifer Egan, a link to her Facebook profile, and again excerpts from the novel. Through the blog site, it is also possible to download an application software (app) for the novel.

This intermedial transposition of *A Visit from the Goon Squad* is not a mere reproduction of the printed format. Rather, it features additional elements as far as temporal ordering and sharing options are concerned. At the opening of the app, readers are asked to make a choice between: "read, listen or liner notes." The "Liner Notes" section (again a reference to music) is interactive concerning temporal ordering. It displays thirteen round drawings, each of which depicts an iconic object to represent the corresponding chapter. By choosing the "Original" option, the chapters' icons are displayed following the temporal (dis)order consistent with the printed version of the narrative. Conversely, by choosing the "Date" option, readers are allowed to read the narrative without its continuous analepses and prolepses. The "Shuffle" option is meant to offer a casual temporal order. Additional features include several pop-up windows appearing when chapters' icons are pressed. The

content of these pop-up windows can be divided into three main sections. The first section, called "Sharing," allows (by clicking on the link provided) to share chapter excerpts on the readers' Facebook walls. The second and the third sections offer almost the same extra material as can be found on Egan's website. The second section, called "Jennifer's Notes," shares again nonfictional information about "Jennifer's" writing. The third section, called "Discography," provides once again a soundtrack with hyperlinks.

The sharing mode characterizes all three supportive devices considered above. While readers are invited to share an excerpt of their reading activity on a social network site, the author shares her personal life stories, such as her "notes" or her soundtrack. The soundtrack of the particular occasion of Egan's writing may, in turn (through the hyperlinks), become the soundtrack for the particular occasion of reading. To conclude, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* is a narrative that employs paratextual elements in an unconventional way, both with regard to the foregrounding of the book's materiality and concerning the additional materials provided through digital media. In the following, I will draw on this paradigmatic case to delve deeper into these two phenomena that the novel brings to the fore.

### 3. Paratexts 2.0: A proposal

As the brief analysis above shows, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* is an exemplary case study with regard to many important issues concerning twenty-first century literature. First, it is a novel in line with many others employing visual and graphic elements in their narratives (see note 2). Second, the author exploits new media technologies to offer additional material and supplementary (personal) narratives. In so doing, Egan also offers an image of herself as author within a public discourse which goes beyond the image implied in the narrative. Arguably, both phenomena affect narrative communication, but their modalities and functions have not been thoroughly explored yet.

The idea of paratext, from a rhetorical perspective at least, may still provide a coherent conceptualization in this regard, precisely because it offers to distinguish between the peritext and the epitext of a given narrative. The overarching category of paratext is thus able to account both for the unconventional visual elements in the printed text (in the case of *Goon Squad*, the slides) and the elements interacting with the narrative communication, although not materially attached to it (e.g., the slideshow, the author's personal narratives, the sharing and interactive options). On the other hand, these new elements also challenge Genette's typology, since it mainly describes paratextual elements neutralized by publishing conventions and located in



proximity to the material book. For these reasons, I propose to extend Genette's categorization in accordance with twenty-first century literary practices. The up-to-date version, which I will call "paratexts 2.0,"<sup>1</sup> accounts for issues relative to the peritextual (positioned not exclusively at the beginning of narrative progression, or merely used as generic markers)<sup>2</sup> and epitextual elements. More specifically, the reconfigured framework I propose aims at providing a heuristics for contemporary narratives whose authors exploit various semiotic modes in their printed books and the affordances of Web 2.0 technologies in the digital world. At the same time, the idea of paratext 2.0 brings to the fore issues that go beyond the creation of an analytic typology. Rather, my proposal aims at setting the stage for further explorations of some key issues of narrative theory, such as medium-specific analyses of printed literature, the narrative communication model, a theory of authorship and the relationship between digital and printed narratives. As a result, this new discussion of paratext would serve two aims: (a) the creation of a theoretical framework for contemporary narratives that foreground their (new) paratexts; and (b) the extension of the categories and functions formulated by Genette to include issues of media affordances and digital support.

Building on the peritext/epitext distinction and their joint use in contemporary fiction, I propose to define *material peritexts*, or the visual, iconic and material elements (i.e., the multiple semiotic modes), as "graphic realization inseparable from literary intention" (Genette [1987] 1997: 34); and *digital epitexts* the digital paratextual elements officially produced or released by the author as support to her narrative. While material peritexts consist of unconventional typography, color, drawings, images, illustrations and so on employed by an authorial agency in combination with the verbal medium, what I call digital epitext comprises extra-textual elements to be found on authors' websites, blogs, videos, social network sites and intermedial transpositions. But if we agree with Genette (and Birke and Christ) on the primary role of the functionality of paratextual elements, how can we further describe the functions to be associated with material peritexts and digital epitexts?

A cluster of recurrent functions can be identified building on what we may now call *A Visit from the Goon Squad's* material peritexts and digital epitexts. Let's first consider material peritexts. When peritextual elements materialize the narrative at

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<sup>1</sup> The label 2.0 is in part meant to create a connection with the practices of Web 2.0. Coined by tech guru Tim O'Reilly in 2005, the term 2.0 refers to the higher degree of interaction featured on social media. Social media – i.e. Internet-based applications such as social network sites, video sharing, blogs, discussion forums, microbloggings, wikis – are primarily characterized by user-generated content.

<sup>2</sup> Although contemporary literature has challenged Genette's categories also in this regard (see, for instance, the recent rise of the personal essay and memoirs), a discussion of the question of paratexts and genre is beyond the scope of the present article, as it opens up to several other highly debated issues.

the story level (such as the slides materialize a future, hybrid literacy), they serve what we may call, for lack of a better term, a *narrative* function. Further examples from twenty-first century literary narrative include: Jonathan Safran Foer's *Tree of Codes* (2010) and its cut-out words, materially missing to remind readers page after page that the story is made out of another story to which, in turn, some words are missing, as its author, Bruno Schulz, was assassinated by a Gestapo officer in 1942; Mark Z. Danielewsky's *The Fifty Year Sword* (2012), which employs colored quotation marks to delineate the five alternating narrative voices; Reif Larsen's *The Selected Works of T.S. Spivet* (2009), whose drawings graphically narrate part of the story.

Since by foregrounding the materiality of the book, material peritexts urge readers to focus on what the rhetorical approach (Phelan and Rabinowitz 2012: 7) calls the synthetic component (the narrative as artificial construct), peritextual elements could also serve a *synthetic* function. The significance of the synthetic function concerns especially the ontological tension that McHale pointed out with regard to postmodernist fiction. For twenty-first century fiction, however, the ontological juxtaposition would include not only the real world of the material object and the fictional world projected by the narrative, but also the digital world, intended as both the place where the narrative is artificially created and as the place where the same narrative can be supplemented with extra materials. For example, in *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, the slides allow for a juxtaposition of the fictional world in which Alison writes her journal, the real world in which readers hold the book in their hands, and the digital world in which they find another (digital) version of the slide journal. In this sense, narratives whose material peritexts serve a synthetic function may also be accounted for by Brian Richardson's framework for antimimetic narratives, as they "refuse to obey or openly flout mimetic conventions" (2012: 21).

When material peritexts invite readers to explore additional material on digital platforms, we may say that they serve a *cross-referential* function. Although such functionality is open to further criticism,<sup>1</sup> it might also outline a future tendency. In *A Visit From the Goon Squad*, the black and white reproduction of the PowerPoint slides might function as a cross-referential device for the readers to find them on Egan's website in their conventional medium, a slideshow format. The cross-reference works symmetrically, for if material peritexts refer to the digital epitexts, digital epitexts may also serve a cross-referential function for their print narrative. Arguably, in addition to the communicative or guiding intent, digital epitexts serving a cross-referential function are also partially committed to advertising the

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, how exactly would readers spot such invitations? Still, if the aforementioned extra material is created by the author as a sort of appendix to the print narrative, it is not too implausible to assume that the print narrative would contain cues to trace back the narrative's digital epitexts.

narrative. The presence of promotional intent, however, should not prevent us from identifying possible further functions relative to digital epitexts.

When digital epitexts visually enhance and/or extend the printed narrative (e.g., materializing intermedial references; adding colors, sound, animation; sharing life events relative to the writing), they may serve what we could call an *augmentative* function. Other than the epitextual elements observed above on *jenniferegan.com*, on *avisitfromthegoonsquad.com* and on the app, digital epitexts with these augmentative and cross-referential functions can be found on, for example, *tsspivot.com* (a website for Larsen's *The Selected Works of T.S. Spivet*, with narrative-related interactive material); Danielewsky's *onlyrevolutions.com*, which includes the author's readings of the corresponding narrative together with music and pictures with interactive sequences; Jonathan Safran Foer's *eatinganimals.com*, which offers links to get involved against factory farming; and Jonathan Lethem's *jontathanlethem.com*, where the section Promiscuous Stories is dedicated to a project of co-authorship.

The question of intermedial transpositions of print narratives in application softwares or eBooks might seem more problematic to tackle in terms of paratext. After all, they "contain" their own text, and in most cases they do not offer further paratextual material to the narrative. They are, by all means, narratives with their own medium specificity. There are cases, however, in which they offer extra features, such as music, animation, colors, sharing options, interactive choices. Such extra features might just as well be considered digital epitexts to the print narrative as material peritexts to the narrative in the digital format. The app of *A Visit From the Goon Squad*, for instance, presents a certain level of interactivity and a sharing option that could guide us to identify another function to be served by digital epitexts, something we may call a *social* function. Analogously, a functionality of this kind can be found also on authors' websites or social networks, which embed the very idea of sharing experience. Significantly, many contemporary fiction writers, among whom are Nathan Englander, Alison Bechdel, Mark Haddon, Douglas Coupland, Salman Rushdie, Margaret A. Atwood, Chuck Palahniuk, engage in social activity, sometimes daily, interacting with their audience through several social platforms (e.g., Twitter, Instagram, Facebook) or websites that allow them to share videos, photos or life narratives. These contemporary authors are not only challenging the established definition of paratext, but they also seem to urge a reconfiguration of authorship for those approaches to narrative that exclude "real" authors. Indeed, as the digital age has stimulated a new media awareness – of which material peritexts are an example – the affordances to which the new technologies give rise are fostering a new awareness of the (public) *social* presence of fiction writers.

#### 4. Conclusion

From a diachronic perspective, it is remarkable that a diffusion of epitextual elements in digital media has corresponded with an increasing use of unconventional peritexts in the print book. As observed, both events can be linked to the rise of digital technologies and new media culture. While many studies have focused on the two phenomena separately, I seek to draw attention to the combined use of these paratextual practices. Moreover, paratexts 2.0 preserve and propagate the ontological uncertainty intrinsic in their prefix “para.” The elements forming the paratext, according to Genette, have no clear-cut boundaries. Rather, they belong to an undefined, but also undefinable zone. The prefix “para” is meant to express this uncertainty: “*Para* is an antithetical prefix which indicates at once proximity and distance, similarity and difference, interiority and exteriority [...] a thing which is situated at once on this side and on that of a frontier, of a threshold and of a margin, of equal status and yet secondary, subsidiary, subordinate” (Miller 1979: 217–253, qtd in Genette [1987] 1997: 1).

My proposal, therefore, far from being an exhaustive account of the whole range of functions to be associated with twenty-first century paratextual practices, suggests some patterns that contemporary literary narratives seem to follow. At the same time, the reconfiguration of paratexts 2.0 maintains the core property of the original formulation. The categories of material peritexts and digital epitexts necessarily conserve a blurred ontological quality, even though Genette’s typology was not able to place enough emphasis on this aspect. While he defined the boundaries of the various paratextual elements quite systematically (leaving little room for many practices that stretched those boundaries long before the digital revolution had actually happened), the boundaries of the functions outlined in this article are not meant to be clear-cut. On the contrary, the elements are seen to be in a relation of fluid interconnection (see figure 1 below).

| Paratexts 2.0             |  |  |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Categories                |  | Possible Functions   |
| <b>Material Peritexts</b> | Visual, iconic, material elements (e.g., unconventional typography, different colors, layout, images, illustrations, drawings)               | <b>Narrative</b> (materialization of the narrative at the story level)<br><br><b>Synthetic</b> (foregrounding of the narrative's synthetic component)  |
| <b>Digital Epitexts</b>   | Digital elements officially produced or released by the author on authors' websites, blogs, social network sites, intermedial transpositions | <b>Cross-referential</b> (references to additional material on digital platforms/to the print narrative)<br><br><b>Augmentative</b> (visual enhancement)<br><br><b>Social</b> (sharing options/mode) |

Figure 1. Paratexts 2.0: Categories and Possible Functions

To conclude, the reconfigured pattern of paratexts 2.0 is meant (a) to complement Genette's original typology with twenty-first century practices; (b) to open a channel for investigations of such practices; and (c) to suggest a twofold phenomenon of media-exploitation that links the new pivotal role given to the materiality of the artifact with the extension of print narrative through digital media. Moreover, since the reconfiguration of paratexts 2.0 attempts to provide a framework to address contemporary (and future) tendencies for literary narratives, it may also serve as a comparative model for contemporary narratives that reject its patterns. Digital epitexts and material peritexts denote a certain disposition toward new media, for instance. Therefore, their use or rejection may signal different authorial stances toward digitization, new technologies and social media. Finally, paratexts 2.0 may become a distinguishing feature of twenty-first century fiction and, as such, set the stage for a renewed discourse on authorship and the author-reader relationship for literary narrative in the digital age.

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## 1. Introduction

Since Gérard Genette coined the term 'narrative metalepsis' (hereafter 'metalepsis') in *Figures III* (Genette [1972] 1980: 234), the topic has gradually developed from a marginal observation into a central notion in narratological theories. The phenomenon drew critical attention during the heyday of postmodernist literature and contributed significantly to the establishment of postclassical narratology. Since then, a number of theories and typologies on metalepsis have been developed.

The different categorizations and descriptions outlined over the past decades (see Pier 2014 for an overview) illustrate the lack of consensus on the definition of metalepsis. The dichotomy ontological/rhetorical is widely adopted, although each researcher tends to provide these terms with a different meaning. As to whether horizontal transitions, for example, there is no unanimity as to whether they constitute metalepses. Based on the already existent definitions and typologies, I have drawn up my own working model, paying particular attention to the effects caused by metalepses. These effects are highly text-dependent, so that systematizing metaleptic effects cannot easily be achieved. I argue that there are nevertheless tendencies to distinguish these effects depending on the 'place' where metalepsis appears. As I will argue in this paper, some metalepses appearing on the extradiegetic level tend to cause a different reading experience than metalepses on the diegetic plane.<sup>1</sup>

In what follows, I shall briefly present my definition and classification and then go on to discuss its most important factors: 1) the story-discourse dichotomy, 2) the agent of metalepsis, 3) the structural paradox created by metalepsis and 4) horizontal metalepses. In the second part of this paper I shall clarify the main distinction of my model: on the one hand are those transgressions that allude to the creation of the text and thus remind the reader of his extratextual reality: extradiegetic metalepses which implicitly or explicitly involve the reader in the plot development. On the other hand, there are more innocent metalepses that do not draw the reader in: diegetic metalepses. The first type, extradiegetic metalepsis, is often dissolved into other subgroups. In contrast, I think this type should be regarded as a separate class

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<sup>1</sup> The terms extradiegetic and diegetic refer, respectively, to the highest narrative level of a text and to the entire diegesis, i.e. intradiegesis and possible hypodiegeses as well.



because of the particular effect it produces in and on the text. This will be illustrated with examples from highly metaleptic texts as *Niebla* (Miguel de Unamuno 1914), *At Swim-Two-Birds* (Flann O'Brien 1939), "Built Up Logically" (Howard Schoenfeld 1950) and *Die Rättin* (Günter Grass 1986).

## 2. Working model

The starting point for my definition is Gérard Genette's original definition of metalepsis as he presented it in *Narrative Discourse*:

any intrusion by the extradiegetic narrator or narratee into the diegetic universe (or by diegetic characters into a metadiegetic universe, etc.) or the inverse (as in Cortázar), produces an effect of strangeness that is either comical (when, as in *Sterne* or *Diderot*, it is presented in a joking tone) or fantastic. (Genette [1972] 1980: 236)<sup>1</sup>

I concur with this definition of metalepsis but wish to nuance two factors: 1) I do not agree that a metalepsis can be realized only by the narrator, and 2) I stress the text-internal appearance more than Genette does. This leads me to the following definition: *narrative metalepsis is a text-internal transgression of hierarchically ordered diegetic universes which reveals the internal structure of the text*. As such, a metalepsis is a paradoxical narrative element because it confronts the reader with the artificial quality of the text. The paradoxical quality of metalepsis will be explored in section 2.3. In my opinion, it is vital to distinguish between diegetic and extradiegetic metalepses. Diegetic metalepses occur between extradiegetic, diegetic and/or hypodiegetic<sup>2</sup> levels; extradiegetic metalepses involve extratextual reality and lend the entire text a self-referential character. A special subclass of extradiegetic metalepses are the 'unmarked' forms, to speak with William Nelles (1997: 153). Both the extradiegetic and diegetic variants can be specified as either story or discourse metalepses (cf. 2.1); depending on the agent of the metalepses, they can be labelled narratorial or figural metalepses or metalepses of the narratee (cf. 2.2).

### 2.1. Story-Discourse

My classification of metalepses is based on the distinction between discourse and story metalepses. Discourse metalepses occur only in language, whereas story metalepses 'literally' happen in the text.

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<sup>1</sup> French: "toute intrusion du narrateur ou de narrataire extradiegétique dans l'univers diégétique (ou de personnages diégétiques dans un univers métadiégétique, etc.) ou inversement, comme chez Cortazar, produit un effet de bizarrerie soit bouffonne (quand on la présente, comme *Sterne* ou *Diderot*, sur le ton de la plaisanterie) soit fantastique" (Genette 1972: 244).

<sup>2</sup> I follow Mieke Bal's proposal to speak of hypodiegesis instead of metadiagesis (Bal 1981: 43).

A survey of the different typologies developed during the past decades shows that most researchers divide metalepsis into these two basic classes: in the one group we find metalepses which 'literally' take place in the text; the other group contains metalepses which do not literally occur but are referred to verbally. Concerning the terminology of those two classes, there is little agreement.<sup>1</sup>

In what has become a widely acknowledged distinction, Marie-Laure Ryan opposed ontological metalepsis to rhetorical metalepsis.<sup>2</sup> The rhetorical variant "opens a small window that allows a quick glance across levels, but the window closes after a few sentences, and the operation ends up reasserting the existence of the boundaries" (Ryan 2005: 441). The ontological form, on the other hand, contains a 'literal' crossing of boundaries. This distinction has to a large extent been adopted by other narratologists. I, too, adopt this distinction, but using the terms 'story' and 'discourse'.

Ryan's distinction already has a predecessor in William Nelles' classification. Nelles divides metalepses into, among others, an ontological (or modal) and an epistemological (or verbal) form, a distinction between physically moving to another world and only displaying knowledge of that other world (cf. Nelles 1997: 154). Ryan's suggestion to break metalepsis down into a rhetorical and an ontological variant is thus derived partly from Nelles' typology. Nelles further breaks metalepsis down into 'unmarked' and 'distinctly' marked metalepses. Unmarked border crossings have no independent meaning but only a structural function (153). To illustrate unmarked metalepsis, Nelles refers to an example from Honoré de Balzac's *Illusions perdues*: "Pendant que le vénérable ecclésiastique monte les rampes d'Angoulême, il n'est pas inutile d'expliquer..." ("While the venerable churchman climbs the ramps of Angoulême, it is not useless to explain..."; 153).<sup>3</sup> He describes this type of metalepsis not as a pure movement of the narrator or of one of the characters but as a "temporary sharing of a common level" (153). Distinctly marked metalepses, on the other hand, do contain a clear movement from one diegetic level to another. How he distinguishes between distinctly marked metalepses and ontological metalepses is not made clear. Nelles was one of the first scholars to pick

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<sup>1</sup> We encounter, among others, the following pairs: ontological-rhetorical (Ryan, Fludernik), story-discourse (Cohn), *in corpore-in verbis* (Meyer-Minnemann, Schlickers), modal-verbal (Nelles), ontological-epistemological (also Nelles), which all refer (more or less) to the same dichotomy.

<sup>2</sup> This distinction between ontological and rhetorical follows Nelles' proposal to break metalepsis down into an epistemological and a modal variant.

<sup>3</sup> This example was first used by Genette ([1972] 1980: 235) and has since then been used by numerous other narratologists to illustrate a metalepsis.

up the Genettian narratological term and categorize it. His classification, however, contains so many different subtypes that in the end it is hardly workable.

Monika Fludernik, like Ryan, calls the two subtypes ontological metalepsis and rhetorical or discourse metalepsis (Fludernik 2003: 383). Her classification is based on Genette's theory, which, according to Fludernik, implicitly distinguishes five subtypes: 1) authorial metalepsis, 2) narratorial metalepsis (or ontological metalepsis type 1), 3) lectorial metalepsis (or ontological metalepsis type 2), 4) rhetorical/discourse metalepsis and 5) pseudo-diegetic or reduced metadiegetic form (which Fludernik, like Genette, does not recognize as being properly metaleptic). These types overlap to some extent, as it is unclear, for example, where the difference lies between authorial and narratorial metalepsis, because both forms refer to the narrator in his capacity as author of the story, thus revealing the fictional nature of the story. Furthermore, her examples of ontological metalepsis type 1 and of discourse metalepsis follow, in my opinion, the same principles. She illustrates the second type of metalepsis (narratorial or ontological metalepsis type 1) with an example from *Joseph Andrews* which runs as follows: "and indeed Fanny was the only creature whom the daughter would not have pitied in her situation; wherein, tho' we compassionate her ourselves, we shall leave her for a little while, and pay a short visit to Lady Booby." (Fielding 1745: 314). As a rhetorical or discourse metalepsis, she cites Balzac's example from *Illusions perdues* as well. The "while" formula, according to Fludernik, implies a synchronization of narrating time and narrated time which causes a "projected simultaneity," giving the illusion that the narrator enters the fictional world he is portraying. Only if he does so, says Fludernik, is he able to talk while the cleric is climbing the stairs (2003: 387). In my view, this metaleptic subform and the narratorial metalepsis quoted from *Joseph Andrews* overlap to a large extent. Both in the Balzac example and in the one from *Joseph Andrews*, there is a projection of the narrator – and no literal movement, as the qualification 'ontological' implies – into the story, resulting in a synchronization between narrating time and narrated time. Both crossings are, to speak with Nelles, examples of unmarked metalepses. How to distinguish between the ontological type 1 variant and the rhetorical variant thus remains unclear. Fludernik further makes a distinction between literal and metaphorical metalepses. In my opinion, however, this subdivision largely reduplicates her ontological/rhetorical dichotomy, leaving it unclear how the two subdivisions – ontological/rhetorical and literal/metaphorical – can coexist. Fludernik's classification thus proves not to be as concise as necessary.

Dorrit Cohn distinguishes between metalepsis at the discourse level and metalepsis at the story level, as well. Crossings at the story level result in a violation of the boundary between "the primary story (the reader's story) and the secondary story

(the framed novel)” (Cohn 2012: 106). She describes metalepsis at the discourse level as a kind of figure: the narrator interrupts narration of the related events and gives some side remarks. This leads to a “light-hearted and playful synchronization of the narration with the narrated events” (105). This distinction also fits Ryan’s subdivision into ontological and rhetorical variants, although Cohn specifies that discourse metalepses are realized by the narrator. Her discourse metalepsis thus coincides with Nelles’ unmarked variants.

As mentioned in the introductory remarks, I also differentiate between an ontological and a rhetorical metaleptic form. But to avoid confusion, I opt to use Cohn’s terms ‘story’ and ‘discourse’: a metalepsis can never be an ontological transgression (only four-dimensional art forms have the possibility to put ontological metalepses on stage). I thus prefer the term ‘story metalepsis’. While ‘rhetorical metalepsis’ could also refer to the trope metalepsis, I speak of ‘discourse metalepsis’ instead. As mentioned above, story metalepsis ‘literally’ takes place in the text, whereas my category of discourse metalepsis contains all linguistically realized metaleptic forms. This contrasts with most other typologies in which discourse/rhetorical metalepses refer to metalepses realized by the narrator. Furthermore, I also distinguish Nelles’ subform of unmarked metalepses from the other variants. This subtype will be clarified and illustrated in the second part of this paper.

## 2.2. Agent

Most scholars present a typology in which the rhetorical/discourse variant only refers to a metalepsis established by the narrator or an “authorial voice.” The possibility that characters know about their fictionality and display this knowledge without ‘really’ crossing a diegetic border is overlooked in the majority of the classifications. In my opinion, the agent who realizes the metaleptic movement can give us crucial information considering its textual effect. Metalepses realized by characters often influence the text in a light-hearted way. On the other hand, metalepses produced by the narratee of the story, for example, often offer food for thought about the text-reader relationship. Though it is impossible to systemize the effects *an sich*, I include the agent of the crossing in my typology, for this can bear directly on the effects of metalepsis. The agent of a metalepsis, whether a discourse or story metalepsis, is either the narrator or a character or the narratee. Metalepses realized by the narrator I refer to as *narratorial metalepses*. A *figural metalepsis*<sup>1</sup> is realized by one of the characters. If the narratee is the agent of the metalepsis, I describe the crossing as a *metalepsis of the narratee*. Thus, if a character in a novel, for

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<sup>1</sup> This term can cause confusion as it may seem to refer to the metalepsis as trope. When referring to the trope, I will use the term ‘rhetorical’.

example, is the subject of a story metalepsis, such a crossing is a *figural story metalepsis*. In contrast to most scholars, I do not include the direction of movement into my classification, as I believe that this aspect does not give us any additional relevant information concerning the textual effect of a metalepsis.

Sonja Klimek was one of the first scholars to include the agent of the metalepsis in her overview. She also discerns between descending and ascending metalepses and, like Fludernik, between “literal” metalepses, which are realized ‘literally’, and “metaphorical” metalepses, existing only on the linguistic level (Klimek 2012: 70). In addition, Klimek takes up two other complex metaleptic variants in her research: the ‘möbiusband’ story and the ‘illogical heterarchy’. In a möbiusband story, the intradiegetic level becomes the extradiegetic level of the alleged extradiegesis and vice (69). The term illogical heterarchy<sup>1</sup> refers to a structure in which there is no single highest level. For certain types of narrative, this means that the hierarchy of levels can no longer be determined (cf. McHale 1987: 112–130). I do not integrate Klimek’s two complex metaleptic variants into my model. If texts are metaleptic to the extent that it is no longer possible to identify different subtypes, I plea to call such texts ‘highly metaleptic texts’. Ultimately, it is more important to identify the various tendencies in the use of metalepsis and, above all, to describe the effects produced by metaleptic structures than it is to pin down and label all the different kinds of metalepsis.

### 2.3. Structural paradox and horizontal transitions

Genette’s discussion in *Figures III* implicitly says that metalepsis covers only ascending transgressions in which authors mingle in their story. In *Métalepse. De la figure à la fiction* (2004) he introduces the term *antimétalepse* for the opposite movement (Genette 2004: 27). This term, however, has not won general acceptance; it is more common to speak of metaleptic movement as either ascending or descending. As pointed out above, I do not agree that this gives us any extra relevant information concerning the effect a metalepsis evokes in the text. The most important information about textual effects is captured by the terms ‘extradiegetic/diegetic’ (commented on in the second part of this paper) and ‘story/discourse’. Discussing the direction of metalepsis brings us now to the contentious question of whether horizontal movements should be included among metalepses.

A few researchers, among them Alexander Bareis, have argued that it is not always easy to distinguish between metalepsis and other, similar phenomena. There are, for

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas Hofstadter borrowed this term from computer science (1979: 134, 651–653), and Brian McHale adopted it in *Postmodern Fiction* (1987: 120).

example, intertextual references or illusion-breaking elements (cf. Bareis 2008: 210–211). To counter this argument, I stress that metalepsis is a text-internal border transition that creates a structural paradox in the text. By ‘structural paradox’, I refer to the fact that the mimetic quality of a story is disrupted by the metalepsis. It is normally assumed that a novel seeks to present a factual representation of reality. The reader agrees with this assumption and considers the related facts as ‘truthful’. The nineteenth-century English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge described this agreement between reader and text as *the willing suspension of disbelief*. Metalepsis causes a conflict in the mimetic assumption, because it creates an illogical break in the construction of the text. The violation of the border between representation and the world in which this representation is created is not compatible with the mimetic quantity of the novel because it conflicts with the logical laws of extratextual reality. No matter how hard the reader tries to accept the content of the novel as a mimetic factual representation of reality, the structure of the text makes this impossible. The intrusion of a metalepsis thus influences the structure of a text to the extent that the report cannot be a factual representation of reality. Metalepsis disrupts the mimetic character of a text and can thus be characterised as *para-dox*, beyond the *doxa* of the mimesis. In this paper, the structural paradox created by a metalepsis refers to the contrast between the assumption of the mimetic nature of narrative and the structural paradox caused by metalepsis.<sup>1</sup> It is important to stress that this structural paradox concerns only the form of metalepsis and not its effect. In its form, a metalepsis is paradoxical, but this does not mean that it always has an illusion-breaking effect.

Stressing the text-internal appearance of metalepsis has repercussions on the discussion of whether or not to include horizontal transgressions among metalepses or not. Frank Wagner (2002) provides an outline of all possible metaleptic crossings. He distinguishes between ascending (from a higher to a lower diegetic level) and descending metalepses (from a lower to a higher diegetic level) (Wagner 2002: 235–253). Furthermore, he includes violations of boundaries between stories at the same diegetic level, calling them ‘auto-intertextual’ violations (245 ff.). Such devices were not regarded as being metaleptic by Genette in *Figure III*. In *Métalepse. De la figure à la fiction*, however, he includes transgressions between diegetic worlds at the same level as metalepses. There are plenty of researchers who have followed Wagner’s proposal and also consider horizontal crossings as metalepses. Gerald Prince, for example, suggests the term *perilepsis* for such border crossings (2005: 628), and Grabe et al. (2006) have described them as horizontal metalepses (Lang 2006: 34–44). Klaus

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<sup>1</sup> This hypothesis needs a few small nuances. There are also texts that do not seek to be a factual representation of reality. Metalepses in such texts do not cause a structural paradox, because they do not contravene any ‘rules’. Nevertheless, they also lay bare the structure of the text and stress its artificiality so that they should still be seen as structural paradoxes.

Meyer-Minnemann (2002: 146–149) and Sabine Schlickers (2005) also acknowledge horizontal crossings as metalepses. Sophie Rabau refers to a horizontal metalepsis of the enunciation (2005: 59–72) and to discourse metalepsis as ‘heterometalepsis’. Karin Kukkonen notes that the hierarchical relation between the fictional and the real world or, better, between the represented world and the world which represents, is of great importance for a proper understanding of the notion of metalepsis, implicitly saying that horizontal movements along a given hierarchical level cannot be defined as metalepses. Nevertheless, she argues in favour of the existence of horizontal metalepses and in effect ignores this hierarchical relation (Kukkonen 2011: 8).

As outlined by Bareis (2008), the problem with horizontal movements is that they overlap to a great extent with intertextual references. If, for example, Oskar Matzerath, Günter Grass’ protagonist in *Die Blechtrommel* (1959), reappears in *Die Rättin* (1986) and this movement is called a horizontal metalepsis, I would be willing to follow this way of thinking. I find it already more difficult to interpret the emergence of the character Hoftaller in Grass’ *Ein weites Feld* (1995) as a horizontal metalepsis, because Hoftaller is – or only refers to? – the spy Tallhover, who originally appeared in Joachim Schädlich’s novel of the same name (1986). To understand Oskar Shell in Jonathan Safran Foer’s *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005), who clearly incorporates characteristic features of his older “brother” Oskar Matzerath as getting there because of a horizontal metaleptic movement out of Günter Grass’ *Die Blechtrommel*, is too big a step for me<sup>1</sup> because the distinction from intertextuality completely disappears. Marie-Laure Ryan suggests dubbing the introduction of already existing literary material into new texts ‘transfictionality’, and thus not a metaleptic form, defining transfictionality as “the migration of elements such as characters, plot structures or settings from one fictional text to another” (Ryan 2013: par. 23). She considers already existing literary figures who get mixed up in other diegetic worlds as counterparts of the original figures. I agree with Ryan on these points, because defining these movements as transfictional and defining Hoftaller, for example, as a counterpart of Tallhover is much more concise than heaping together all the terms. All in all, it is more satisfactory to distinguish metaleptic movements from other similar textual phenomena. Moreover, the horizontal crossing of, for example, Oskar Matzerath from *Die Blechtrommel* into *Die Rättin* does not meet the condition of a structural paradox because there is no text-internal crossing. His reappearance in no way affects the structure of the novel *Die Rättin* and therefore does not lay bare the fictional quality in a paradoxical way. His

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<sup>1</sup> This point is in reference to an observation made by one of the participants in the panel ‘Metalepsis out of bounds’ which I directed during the third ENN conference: Emerging Vectors of Narratology. Towards Consolidation or Diversification? (Paris, 2013).

'resurrection' should thus be considered a 'regular' fictional story element instead of a paradoxical narrative element.

Underlining the restriction of structural paradox in the definition of metalepsis sheds new light on the discussion about horizontal transitions: assuming that a metalepsis creates a structural paradox in the text in which it appears also means not acknowledging horizontal border crossings as being metaleptical. Instead, I concur with Ryan who distinguishes between metalepsis and transfictionality. Furthermore, this added restriction also makes it possible to discern between regular fictional story elements – which do not create a structural paradox in the text – and metaleptic crossings.

### 3. Metaleptic effects

#### 3.1. Self-referential texts?

In Genette's basic definition of metalepsis it is mentioned that metalepsis "produces an effect of strangeness that is either comical [...] or fantastic" ([1972] 1980: 234). Genette takes an example from Jorge Luis Borges to describe what he regards as "the most troubling thing about metalepsis" (236). In an essay on *Don Quixote*, Borges quotes several passages from texts displaying characters who become the readers or spectators of their own story. Concerning such reflections, Borges raises the possibility that if characters in a fictional story can turn into readers, then we, the readers, could be fictitious just as well (Borges [1925] 1992: 59). Borges here originally referred to a *mise en abyme* structure. Genette, however, projects this possible outcome onto metaleptic texts and concludes that

the most troubling thing about metalepsis indeed lies in this unacceptable and insistent hypothesis, that the extradiegetic is perhaps always diegetic, and that the narrator and his narratees – you and I – perhaps belong to some narrative. (Genette [1972] 1980: 236)

This hypothesis of course lets our imagination run wild and it explains, in part, why metalepsis in the (post)modern era is such a cherished intervention. But this does not mean that every metalepsis has a such outcome. The effect depends largely on the texts in which the metalepsis appear. It is thus very hard to establish a systematization of the textual effects of metalepses. Indeed, most typologies do not take these effects into consideration. That the range of possible outcomes goes beyond 'strange', 'comical', 'fantastic' or 'confusing' is, however, obvious.



To establish an unambiguous effect for each text and for every reader is thus, as indicated above, impossible. But as John Pier notes, there are some trends in the effect depending on the particular form of metalepsis. According to Pier, story metalepses, both narratorial and figural, are more likely to confirm the immersion of the reader in the story or even to strengthen it. Discourse metalepses, and especially the figural variants, confuse this immersion for a moment, but do not make it impossible (Pier 2005: 253). In my opinion, however, this difference in effect can be traced back to a more basic distinction: the difference between metalepses which are situated on the highest discourse level and those that are situated on a lower level. Because the place where a metalepsis appears in the text may influence the effect produced by the metalepsis, it seems advisable to me to systematize this dichotomy. The first step is to break metalepsis down into diegetic and extradiegetic forms. Diegetic metalepses occur within the text, i.e. between the extradiegetic, diegetic and/or hypodiegetic levels. As explained above, diegetic metalepses can be divided into story and discourse metalepses. For each metalepsis, it must be determined whether it is a narratorial metalepsis, a figural metalepsis or a metalepsis which involves the narratee of the story. An extradiegetic metalepsis is by definition a discourse metalepsis and is located primarily at the highest discourse level of the text. It refers (mostly) – implicitly or explicitly – to the creation of the text the reader is holding in his hand.<sup>1</sup> As such, the reader is reminded of the reality outside the text and finds himself confronted with its artificial quality. Extradiegetic metalepses are realized by the narrator, although there are a few exceptions.<sup>2</sup> Whereas diegetic metalepses only lay bare the structure of the told story and as such stress its fictionality, extradiegetic metalepses not only reveal the told story as fictitious but they make sure the entire text refers to itself as a text, thus questioning its status as a medium to display (a) reality. Consequently, the reader is obliged to take up a position towards the text: is he willing to accept the paradox and still suspend his disbelief? Or will he approach the text now as the artificial product it is and reflect on the medium? The reader is called on to decide on how the events will develop. I believe it can be said that diegetic metalepses tend to enhance reader immersion whereas extradiegetic metalepses mostly break the reader's illusion.

Let me now clarify the distinction diegetic-extradiegetic with concrete samples. When, for instance, we read how Dermot Trellis, an invented narrator-character by the unnamed I-narrator of Flann O'Brien's metaleptic novel *At Swim-Two-Birds*,

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<sup>1</sup> As the examples later on in the paper will illustrate, such allusions to the creation of the novel can contain a reader-apostrophe, a reference to the material conditions of the text, a hint to the writing process, etc.

<sup>2</sup> One such exception is that some extradiegetic metalepses are created by one of the figures and are not realized on the extradiegetic level. Such exceptions will be discussed in the second part of this paper.

impregnates Sheila Lamont, one of his own characters, we can easily call this metalepsis a *story metalepsis*. The agent of the movement differs depending on how we interpret Dermot Trellis: do we consider him as one of the characters in the story the unnamed extradiegetic I-narrator is telling us (*figural*), or do we approach him as the diegetic author (*narratorial*) of the events he relates? In Jonathan Carroll's *The Land of Laughs* (1982) we encounter a *figural story metalepsis* when it becomes clear that the little village in which France Gallen, a famous writer, lives is actually inhabited by creatures he brought into being in his books. In Miguel de Unamuno's *Mist (Niebla)*, the leading character, Augusto Pérez, travels towards an author whose essays he has read. During their conversation, Pérez realises he is nothing but a creature of this author's imagination. The meeting between them can be described as a *figural story metalepsis*. In John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969) the extradiegetic-heterodiegetic narrator (whose name is John Fowles) suddenly finds himself in a railroad carriage sitting next to his character Charles. The narrator thus moves into his story, a transgression which I describe as a *narratorial story metalepsis*. All these metalepses involve a transgression which actually takes place, a *story metalepsis*.

However, there are plenty of transgressions which do not contain a 'literal' crossing of internal borders. Thus when the leading characters in Günter Grass' *The Box. Tales from the Darkroom (Die Box. Dunkelkammergeschichten, 2008)* observe "It's possible even we, sitting here and talking are just figments of his imagination" (Grass [2008] 2010: 107), they only refer to their fictional status, a transgression I call *figural discourse metalepsis*. In Jostein Gaarder's *Sophie's World (Sofies verden, 1991)* Sophie and Albert become aware of the fact that they only live their life in a novel. This awareness again points to a *figural discourse metalepsis* which is followed by a *figural story metalepsis* when Sophie and Alberto flee their world and end up in the world of their author. The aforementioned examples from *The Box* and *Sophie's World* stage characters who are aware of their fictional status. It is also possible that a heterodiegetic narrator himself refers to the fictional status of his characters, without them experiencing this. Dermot Trellis in *At Swim-Two-Birds*, for example, refers to his characters as fictional creatures and thus evokes a *narratorial discourse metalepsis*. In *The Box* Grass applies a similar technique. The novel starts like a fairy tale with a heterodiegetic narrator reporting: "Once upon a time, there was a father, who, having grown old in years, called together his sons and daughters – four, five, six, eight in all. For a long time they resisted, but in the end they granted his wish" (Grass [2008] 2010: 1). Though *The Box* pretends to be told from the perspective of Grass' children, the reader, from the first page on, is warned about the status of this account:

Now they are seated around a table and all begin to talk at once, all products of their father's whimsy, using words he has put in their mouths, yet obstinate, too, determined not to spare his feelings despite their love for him. (1)

We encounter the same principle when the narrator of a storyline in Grass' doomsday novel *The Rat* (1986), who presents himself, at the beginning of his story, as a heterodiegetic, utters: "Slowly, because that's how I want it, they get into the habit of calling one another by their functions" (Grass [1986] 1987: 23). In both examples the narrator lays bare the fictional account of the story he is telling by a *narratorial discourse metalepsis* without informing his characters about this (at this point of the story).

At first sight, the following metalepsis from *Mist* is built up according to the same rules: the narrator interrupts, out of the blue, a conversation between Augusto Pérez and Victor Gotí who, ironically, are talking about the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*. The narrator addresses himself to his reader with the following words:

While Augusto and Victor were carrying on this "nivolistic" conversation, I, the author of this nivola, which you, my dear reader, are holding in your hand and reading -, I was smiling enigmatically at the sight of my "nivolistic" characters advocating my case and justifying my methods of procedure and I said to myself, "Think how far these poor fellows are from suspecting that they are only trying to justify what I am doing with them! In the same fashion, whenever a man is seeking for reasons wherewith to justify himself, he is, strictly speaking, only seeking to justify God. And I am the God of these two Poor 'nivolistic' devils. (de Unamuno [1914] 2000: 252)

In this intrusion, the extradiegetic heterodiegetic narrator reveals himself as the (fictionalized!) author of the *nivola* the reader is holding in his hands. I describe this address to the reader as an *extradiegetic narratorial discourse metalepsis*. Also, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (Sterne 1759–1767) is burgeoning with similar reader-apostrophes. In fact, *Tristram Shandy* even goes one step further: the narrator not only addresses his narratee, he also tries to involve him in the plot by, for instance, asking to bring his father to bed. Terry Pratchett in *Mort. A Novel of Discworld* (1987) uses another way to mingle the telling and the told: "'You shouldn't - - - them, then', muttered one of his henchmen, effortlessly pronouncing a row of dashes" (Pratchett 2013: 142).<sup>1</sup> The level of presentation and the way in which this happens are literally projected into the told story.

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<sup>1</sup> Example borrowed from Sonja Klimek's *Paradoxes Erzählen. Die Metalepse in der phantastischen Literatur* (2010: 142).

In these three examples (*Mist*, *Tristram Shandy* and *Mort. A Novel of Discworld*) a similar procedure lies at the basis of the metalepses: the narrator makes his readers knowledgeable about the fictional quality of the account he relates. At first sight, the last three examples tie in with the other *diegetic narratorial discourse metalepses* from *At Swim-Two-Birds*, *The Box* and *The Rat*. Yet, if we analyse these examples closely, a distinction comes to the surface. The first group of examples all have a paradoxical quality, as explained in the beginning of this paper: they show that what is being told is constructed. Because the metalepses occur inside the diegesis or involve this level, only the internal structure of the story is uncovered so that the status of the work in its entirety is not influenced by these paradoxical transgressions. The *extradiegetic narratorial discourse* examples in the second group (*Mist*, *Tristram Shandy* and *Mort. A Novel of Discworld*) all appeal to some extent to the creation of the text and as such remind the reader of the extratextual reality. They lay bare the construction of the entire text, both story and discourse, and not only of the story told in the text. As a result, these texts become self-referential, referring in the text to the text, whereas the metalepses in the first group only cause the construction of the told story to be shown, lending the texts a paradoxical character but not making them self-referential. The distinctive quality of an extradiegetic metalepsis thus lies in its self-referentiality. As argued above, extradiegetic metalepses tend to evoke a different reading experience. In particular, the novels *Mist* and *Tristram Shandy* drive the reader to rethink the text-author relation and the text-reader relation. *Mist* even goes so far as to question the very ontological status of the reader himself. It is up to the reader how he will approach the text. His attitude towards the text obviously influences how the text will develop: does he recognize the questions and themes brought up, or will he consider them as *Spielerei* and willingly sustain in his 'belief'.

An extradiegetic metalepsis is very often conceived as a digression of the narrator (thus being a *narratorial discourse metalepsis*), which puts the story on hold and lets the discourse go on for a while on its own, as the reader apostrophe in *Mist* illustrates. However, this is no condition for the appearance of extradiegetic metalepses: in Schoenfeld's "Built Up Logically", there is a simultaneity between story and discourse:

"Is there a typewriter here?" I asked. "On the desk," Sally said. [...] I nodded, inserted a sheet of paper in the typewriter, and went on with the story: [...] By a coincidence arranged by me as the legitimate author of the story, the pistol exploded on landing, sending a bullet into the brain of Frank who was still asleep across the street on the front stoop of a brownstone house. Frank slumped forward and rolled into the gutter, dead, a grim monument and warning to all characters with rebellious

spirits. I grinned and added the last two words to the story: THE END. (Schoenfeld 1950: 40)

In this example, the metalepsis does not interrupt the story. Story and discourse coincide, so that the *extradiegetic narratorial discourse metalepsis* becomes a part of the story as it goes on.

Furthermore, the kind of narrator also plays a decisive role. If an extradiegetic homodiegetic narrator refers for example to his power over the diegetic characters, this reference automatically becomes an extradiegetic metalepsis, whereas an extradiegetic heterodiegetic narrator, alluding to the will the characters are submitted to, does not automatically create an extradiegetic metalepsis. In novels with a homodiegetic narrator, extradiegetic metalepses are more common than in works in which a heterodiegetic narrator relates the story. Although extradiegetic metalepses are mostly narratorial transgressions, we occasionally encounter a figural variant, as in Henry N. Beard and Douglas Kennedy's *Bored of the Rings*: when Bromosel hears "you cash in your chips around page eighty-eight," he "looked up to the top of the page and winced" (1993: 57).<sup>1</sup> Further on in the novel, the reader is again reminded of the fictional quality by similar thoughts of Bromosel: "'No', agreed Bromosel, looking across the grey surface of the page to the thick half of the book still in the reader's right hand" (69). Bromosel, a character in the novel, is the one who provides this parody of *Lord of the Rings* with a self-referential character by mentioning the material conditions of the text.

It goes without saying that texts very often present both diegetic and extradiegetic metalepses. In the above-mentioned novel *Mist*, for instance, the reader is first addressed by the (extradiegetic) narrator, preparing him for what is to come, and only afterwards do we learn how Augusto decides he wants to meet the author of the interesting essays he is reading and how, during this conversation, he realizes that he himself is also a product of this author's imagination (diegetic). In the very illogical short story "Built Up Logically," diegetic and extradiegetic metalepses are also mixed up. Nevertheless, there is an opposing tendency in the use of each kind of metalepsis: whereas diegetic metalepses appear mostly in fantasy novels, stressing the imaginative quality of the stories and, paradoxically, increasing reader immersion in the text, extradiegetic metalepses tend to occur in 'realistic' texts, thematizing (though sometimes only implicitly) the relation between text and reader and between text and reality, and questioning the medium's capacity of a text to capture reality.

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<sup>1</sup> Example also borrowed from Sonja Klimek's *Paradoxes Erzählen. Die Metalepse in der phantastischen Literatur* (2010: 65).

Extradiegetic metalepses sometimes even cast doubt upon the ontological status of the reader.<sup>1</sup>

### 3.2. Unmarked metalepses

Within the group of extradiegetic metalepses there is in my opinion a special form which can be illustrated with an example from Jean Paul's *Blumen-, Frucht- und Dornenstücke oder Ehestand, Tod und Hochzeit des Armenadvokaten F. St. Siebenkäs* (1796–1797). When the narrator describes how Siebenkäs and his wife go to bed, he comments on this event as follows: “Now I wish the entire royal family a good night and I hope they will awake safe and sound in the eight chapter” (Jean Paul 1796–1797: 43, translation mine). This example does not substantively influence the development of the story but only comments on the events in the story. In my opinion, the above-mentioned examples from *Illusions perdues* and *Joseph Andrews* also fit this category. Bernd Häsner considers only such transgressions as being properly metaleptic, because he reserves the term metalepsis exclusively for illogical or impossible relations which manifest themselves as an illusionistic simultaneity and contiguity of discourse and story (cf. Häsner 2001: 30). Although I do not agree with Häsner in considering only such relations to be metaleptic, I do think this group of metalepses should form a separate subclass. While some scholars recognize the existence of this particular group of transgressions, they do not take into consideration their effects. Nelles, for example, describes such transgressions as unmarked metalepses, Pier characterizes them as minimal metalepses and Fludernik, as mentioned above, shifts between defining them as discourse metalepses and type 1 ontological metalepses. According to Genette, such transgressions are not metalepses but narrative syllepses.<sup>2</sup> Strange enough, however, he defines the widely cited example from Balzac's *Illusion perdue* not as a syllepsis but as metalepsis. Also Grabe et al. (2006) and Liviu Lutas (2011) advocate defining this phenomenon as a syllepsis, based, however, on a different argument. Lutas claims that the temporal dimension is crucial for a syllepsis (2011: 55), referring to Genette's remark that syllepsis affects the succession and duration of related events ([1972] 1980: 155).

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<sup>1</sup> Although I am convinced of this hypothesis, it is necessary to make a few nuances. Some texts do not contain extradiegetic metalepses but nevertheless thematize not merely fantastic elements. Cortázar's “Continuidad de los parques” contains, strictly speaking, no extradiegetic metalepses. The reader who is found murdered at the end of the story (that is at least what the text implies) is an intradiegetic character: the suggestion the text makes is that this intradiegetic reader is killed by a hypodiegetic character. This short story thus does not present any paradoxical link with the extradiegetic reality of the reader. Nevertheless, it is interpreted as thematizing the dangerous, in this case deadly, immersion any reader can fall into. This text (and others), thus, does not directly remind the reader of his extradiegetic reality but the allusion is too obvious to miss.

<sup>2</sup> “[...] we could give the name *syllipsis* (the fact of taking together) – *temporal* or other – to those anachronic groupings governed by one or another kinship (spatial, temporal, other)” (Genette [1972] 1980: 85 n. 119).

Grabe et al. (2006) describe syllepsis as the simultaneity of non-simultaneous events. According to their investigation, syllepsis does not cross any borders but fades them out. I, in contrast, agree with Fludernik, who argues that the transitions in the examples mentioned above are realized because in such digressions the extradiegetic narrator projects himself into his story. It is precisely this projection that incorporates the border transition. By entering his story, the narrator emphasizes his controlling influence and acknowledges that he is not reporting a story but inventing it. Such digressions of the narrator do not change the course of the story but simply mark simultaneity between narrative time and narrated time: the narrator takes his reader by the hand and accompanies him as the story develops. As Fludernik observed, such techniques originate from the oral storytelling tradition and were used until the fifteenth century to structure longer texts or to facilitate the transition between different scenes (2003: 389). Unmarked metalepses thus have a long history but remain rather 'innocent': they create a pause in the story and let the discourse continue on its own for a while, but in no way do they influence the development of the events.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In this paper I have presented an alternative classification for metalepsis. I consider metalepsis to be a text-internal transgression between hierarchically arranged universes. Because metalepsis is a text-internal transition, it creates a structural paradox in the text. Whereas most typologies only distinguish between discourse and story variants, I think it is important to discern primarily another, broader difference: a distinction between metalepses on the diegetic plane and those on the extradiegetic plane, that is, a distinction between metalepses that only influence the told story and metalepses that affect the entire text, i.e. story and the highest discourse level. The different effects these metalepses produce are often attributed to the story-discourse dichotomy. However, I believe that they should be explained from this broader perspective. Diegetic metalepses appear more frequently in fantasy novels and tend to immerse the reader in the fantastic story world. Texts displaying numerous extradiegetic transitions, on the other hand, become self-referential and are often food for thought about the status of the text in relation to its author and its reader audience and about the medium 'text'. Moreover, because they appeal in some way to the extratextual reality of the reader, they compel him to think about his own position with regard to the text and thus make sure he becomes a parameter influencing the further development of the text.

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*The Spectacle of Interruption: Toward an Interruption Theory of Narrative according to Hölderlin's Theory of Tragedy*

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The tacitly understood assumption that the truth *about* and *in* narrative as a whole is the Hegelian or Idealist aspect of narratology, of which numerous semiotic, structuralist, system-theoretical stances take heed. They all conceive of the narrative utterance as a sort of organic whole. This organic approach to narrative derives, among other sources of inspiration, in a straight line from Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* ([1928] 1958) that drew heavily from Goethe's study of nature and Goethe's interpretation of Aristotle's *Poetics*, which stressed the organic unity of the tragic story and its rendering in a successful tragedy (cf. Goethe [1826] 1960). The organicism of this tradition was upheld and altered by structuralism,<sup>1</sup> whose legacy serves to this day as a basis for many current approaches in narratology. This legacy continues to make itself felt in recent narratological studies, of which a volume edited by Greta Olson entitled *Current Trends in Narratology* (2011) is a good illustration. The volume divides present-day developments of the discipline into three areas of interest:

- 1) cognitive narratology;
- 2) transgeneric and intermedial approaches that take into consideration above all drama; and finally
- 3) contextualist narratology which deals with specific cultural, historical, thematic and ideological contexts of narrative and its study.<sup>2</sup>

Although the authors of this volume adhere to various methodological positions, they strive unanimously to surpass structuralism. Narratologists concerned with the representation of mind in narrative (and the representation of mind in narrative), or those who study the traces of narrative in drama or other media implicitly postulate, in line with the German morphological tradition, that the whole truth be told *in* and *about* (a) narrative. Their attempts to go beyond structuralism only reinforce the holistic pathos characteristic of structuralism. The task set by contextualist narratologists to overcome oppression, exclusion or exclusivism results in the restitution wholeness, the return of the subaltern. Technically speaking, newer approaches in narratology seek to supplement or enrich classical narratology with

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<sup>1</sup> French narratology was also deeply influenced by Todorov's translation of the Russian formalists in *Théorie de la littérature* (1965). Doležel (1990: chap. 6) maintains that Propp's morphological approach was succeeded by the Prague Linguistic Circle's semiotic paradigm.

<sup>2</sup> For an historical overview of narratology, see Meister (2013).

features of contextuality and diachronicity so as to capture narrative in its wholeness, both the narrator and the reader/listener in their full biological, cognitive, historical and medial makeup.

The thesis of this paper is that the holistic character of narrative as a structure becomes apparent and is, so to speak, attached to its temporality and contextuality by a special kind of interruption: *the breaking up of the whole*. The most interesting and prototypical theory of such interruption is the notion of caesura, whose most perfect theoretical description is found in Friedrich Hölderlin's notes to his 1804 translations of Sophocles' *Oedipus* and *Antigone* (Hölderlin [1804] 2001 and 1988). According to Hölderlin, caesura joins the whole man with time as the transcendental possibility of representation while also revealing to him the meaning and shape of the time he lives in. The contextual, temporal and holistic character of his cognition, dependent on the temporal medium of narrative, comes to the fore because of the caesura, provided it is experienced by the reader. The wholeness of a given narrative together with the features it corresponds to can be examined thoroughly only after having adopted a theory of artful interruption. The reflexive qualities of caesura which, for Hölderlin, seems to be a special device that lays bare the nature of temporal representation itself, are the reason why the very general notion of an interruption theory of narrative is set forth in this article. The caesura is characterized by its dual nature. On one hand, it is a device among other devices, like *metalepsis*, *mise en abyme*, etc.; on the other hand, it plays the most central role in Hölderlin's philosophy of art, becoming the keystone and the touchstone of this theoretical edifice. The reader must experience caesura if he is to be able to experience the temporality of time, the dimensions of space and the medial representation of representation.

The present attempt to specify a position for such an interruption theory within the framework of current narratology will begin with an explanation of Hölderlin's definition of caesura. During the second step, I will expand on the relevance of Hölderlin's theory for present-day narrative studies. His theory shares some of the same assumptions as present-day narratology in its opposition to reductionist approaches. This development can be seen particularly in the expansion of narratological research into the field of drama studies. In the following step, the paper will take up two competing paradigms of narrativity within the framework of the early nineteenth-century theory of drama: one that concentrates on endings will be opposed to one, represented by Hölderlin, that treats interruption as a central component. The latter paradigm, whose renewal is the task of the present paper, was to a great degree responsible for the rise of modern narratology in Eastern and Central Europe before World War II, although since then this has remained

unrecognized. As a last step, I propose to compare the theory of caesura with that of metalepsis, for each serves to throw light on the other.

## 1. Hölderlin's definition of caesura

Much as the classical narratologists Tzvetan Todorov or Algirdas Greimas, Hölderlin assumes that the beginning and the end of a narrative is equilibrium: narrative aims toward a state of equilibrium<sup>1</sup> after passing through a momentary disequilibrium that sets the story going (cf. Todorov [1968] 1973: 82). Sophoclean tragedy is, according to Hölderlin, a model for all narrative forms for the reason that, as a genre, it presents nothing in particular except its own form of development in time, a development toward equilibrium. According to Hölderlin, the tragic form was designed to abolish every particular piece of content (or to present the content as abolished; Hölderlin [1804] 2001: 67; 1988: 257)<sup>2</sup> so that the pure form of temporality will be highlighted. This occurs as follows:

the transport in tragedy is of itself empty and the most unbounded.<sup>3</sup>

For this reason in the rhythmical succession of scenes in which the transport is made manifest, it becomes necessary to have what in the study of verse is known as caesura: the pure word, the counter-rhythmical interruption, is needed, so as to confront the pull of the succession of representations at its summum and in such a fashion that instead of change of the representation there appears representation itself.

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<sup>1</sup> It is assumed that this was already Aristotle's position (cf. Adams 2002: 23).

<sup>2</sup> "Hence the constant to and fro of the dialogue, hence the chorus as its antithesis. Hence the all too chaste, all too mechanical interplay (ending in facts) of the different parts, in the dialogue, and between chorus and dialogue and the large passages or dramas made up of chorus and dialogue. It is all speech against speech, and the speeches cancelling each other out." In the original: "Darum der immer widerstreitende Dialog, darum der Chor als Gegensatz [sic!] gegen diesen. Darum das allzukeusche, allzummechanische und faktisch endigende Ineinandergreifen zwischen den verschiedenen Theilen, im Dialog, und zwischen dem Chor und Dialog und den großen Parthien oder Dramaten, welche aus Chor und Dialog bestehen. Alles ist Rede gegen Rede, die sich gegenseitig aufhebt" (Hölderlin 1988: 257).

<sup>3</sup> The term "transport" should be understood as, on the one hand, an equivalent to Max Black's vehicle of metaphor (as opposed to the tenor of metaphor) as well as, on the other hand, something related to the German word "Getragenheit" that contains "tragen" ("to carry," meaning festivity, dignity and pathos). In French and English of the period, "transport" meant something like great agitation. Numerous examples are found for example in Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir* or in Jane Austin's *Pride and Prejudice* (see for example vol. III, chaps 7 and 8).

In that way, a division is made both in the calculated sequence<sup>1</sup> and in the rhythm, and the two halves are so related that they appear of equal weight. (Hölderlin [1804] 2001: 63)<sup>2</sup>

In a narratological reading of the quoted passage from Hölderlin's commentary on Sophocles, caesura is a moment of division that places narrative representation as such on display. It may be a lexeme, like some "empty words" in Hölderlin's hymns, an image, or a scene in a drama such as the example provided by Hölderlin: the entries of the priest Tiresias in *Oedipus* and in *Antigone*. Tiresias "enters the process of fate as an overseer of the natural order which, in tragedy, removes man from his own zone of life, from the midpoint of his own inner life, and carries him into the eccentric zone of the dead." (Hölderlin [1804] 2001: 64).<sup>3</sup>

Also, the tragic festival in Athens itself has been more often than not described as a caesura: a leisurely moment, an interruption that restores a cosmic and social balance so that things in the cosmos could go smoothly. Hölderlin put it in his typically cryptic way: "tragedy consists [...] in the form that reason takes in the terrible interlude of a tragic age, which, having presented itself then, in its wild genesis, in antitheses, later, in a humane age, will count as an established opinion, born of a divine fate." (Hölderlin [1804] 2001: 11).<sup>4</sup> Tragedy that contains an interruption revealing the genre's compositional pattern locates, in addition, the action at a time when chaos breaks into the world so that a new order is born out of a cosmic catastrophe. Sometimes the public interrupts such an interruptive fest in order to stress its purging effect, the cathartic character that the authorities seek to suppress for the benefit of the tragedy's restorative and conservative functions. Thus the

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<sup>1</sup> In Schelling's lectures on art from the years 1802 and 1803, one reads that the purity and rationality of Greek art is to be found above all in tragedy, "die man fast wie eine geometrische oder arithmetische Aufgabe ansehen kann, die völlig rein und ohne Bruch aufgeht. Zum Wesen des Epos gehört es, daß kein bestimmter Anfang noch Ende. Das Gegentheil bei der Tragödie. In ihr wird eben ein solches reines Aufgehen, ein absolutes Geschlossenseyn gefordert, ohne dass irgend etwas noch unbefridigt zurückbleibe" (Schelling [1802/1803] 1985: 536).

<sup>2</sup> "Der tragische *Transport* ist nemlich eigentlich leer, und der ungebundenste. / Dadurch wird in der rhythmischen Aufeinanderfolge der Vorstellungen, worinn der *Transport* sich darstellt, das, was man im Sylbenmaasse Cäsur heißt, der reine Wort, die gegenrhythmische Unterbrechung nothwendig, um nemlich dem reißenden Wechsel der Vorstellungen, auf seinem Summum, so zu begegnen, dass alsdann nicht mehr der Wechsel der Vorstellung, sondern die Vorstellung selber erscheint. / Dadurch wird die Aufeinanderfolge des Kalkuls, und der Rhythmus getheilt, und bezieht sich, in seinen zweien Hälften so aufeinander, dass sie, als gleichwiegend, erscheinen" (Hölderlin 1988: 250).

<sup>3</sup> "Er tritt in den Gang des Schicksaals, als Aufseher über die Naturmacht, die tragisch, den Menschen seiner Lebenssphäre, dem Mittelpuncte seines innern Lebens in eine andere Welt entrückt und in die exzentrische Späre der Todten reißt" (Hölderlin 1988: 251).

<sup>4</sup> "vorzüglich [...] besteht die tragische Darstellung [...] in der Vernunftsform, die sich in der furchtbaren Muse einer tragischen Zeit bildet, und so wie sie in Gegensätzen sich darstellte, ihn ihrer wilden Entstehung, nachher, in humaner Zeit, als feste aus göttlichem Schicksaal geborene Meinung gilt" (Hölderlin 1988: 419).

revolutionaries in Berlin in 1849 interrupted the performance of Hölderlin's *Antigone*, exactly at the moment when, according to Hölderlin, caesura occurs in the drama, i.e. during Tiresias's speech, just as the revolutionaries in Warsaw in 1968 did during the performance of Adam Mickiewicz's tragedy *Forefathers' Eve*. In both cases, the revolutionaries wanted to extract from the tragic plays what they were really about: freedom and balance in the shape of fairness and justice (Flashar 1991: 75; Ostrowska 59–66).

According to some authors, every narrative should, for structural reasons, be perceived as an interruption of some kind: "traditional narrative is a quest after that which will end questing; [...] it is an interruption of what will be resumed," writes J. Hillis Miller (1981: 272).

## 2. The Topicality of Hölderlin's Theory

Turning to Hölderlin means returning to sources of modern narratology that abound in the German theory of drama during the Goethe period (*Goethezeit*). The problems and goals of present-day narratology echo the questions raised by the aesthetics of literature at the turn of the nineteenth century. This can be seen in current attempts, for instance, to extend narratological research methods to drama. In fact, narratology's progress toward drama should be even more resolute, since this represents a clear route to revealing its now forgotten conceptual foundations, which were originally elaborated drawing on the example of ancient Greek tragedy.

As for the common ground shared by the classical German theory of drama and modern narratology, it suffices to put a number of principles characteristic of current developments in narratology alongside programmatic statements by famous German philosophical voices from the turn of the nineteenth century. David Herman, in a series of recent studies, considers that classical narratology, which strictly separated the living man from the purely textual and conventional presentation of the human in text, can be enriched by taking account of the full range of faculties of the living human being:

narrative analysts can move from classical theories of narrative perspective toward a unified account of construal or conceptualization processes and their reflexes in narrative. Such construal operations, which underlie the organization of narrative discourse, are shaped not just by factors bearing on perspective or viewpoint, but also by temporal, spatial, affective, and other factors associated with embodied human experience. (Herman 2009: 103; see also Herman 2007: 245)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the full list of substantial readings, see Herman (2013a).

In Herman's arguments against textualist reductionism and in favor of "embodied human experience," there resonates an echo of old complaints against Kant and Enlightenment intellectualism, first raised by Herder and his teacher Hamann, whose approach was rendered by Goethe in the following way:

The principle to which all Hamann's expressions may be referred is this: "All that man undertakes, whether by deed, by word, or otherwise, must proceed from all his powers united; everything isolated is worthless." A noble maxim, but hard to follow. (Goethe [1833] 2013: 446-447)<sup>1</sup>

The common opinion of the time, shared also by Hölderlin when he wrote *Hyperion* and by the authors of the so-called *Earliest System Program of German Idealism*, was that forms of the beautiful serve to ward off or prevent the feared isolation of human faculties. Today's theories, drawing from the newest research, are driven by the same pathos that inspired the philosophers and poets at the turn of the nineteenth century. In present day narratology, the artful interplay of forces tending toward a fragile equilibrium restores Schiller's well-known ideal of *ganzer Mensch*, the whole man. The following formulation by Schiller, expressing the uniting power of the beautiful form, must have influenced the Russian formalists, whether they were conscious of it or not, and thus modern narratology:

In a really beautiful work of art, the content ought to be inoperative, the form should do everything; for by the form the whole man is acted on; the content acts on nothing but isolated forces. Thus, however vast and sublime it may be, the content always exercises a restrictive action on the mind, and true aesthetic liberty can only be expected from the form. (Schiller [1795] 1990: 70)<sup>2</sup>

Hölderlin ascribed the uniting force to the rhythm of poetry, which is more formal than anything else in poetry, and whose development in time is ruled by what he calls "the calculable law":

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<sup>1</sup> "Das Prinzip, auf welches die sämtlichen Äußerungen Hamanns sich zurückführen lassen, ist dieses: »Alles, was der Mensch zu leisten unternimmt, es werde nun durch Tat oder Wort oder sonst hervorgebracht, muß aus sämtlichen vereinigten Kräften entspringen; alles Vereinzelte ist verwerflich.« Eine herrliche Maxime! aber schwer zu befolgen" (Goethe [1811-1833] 1948: 513).

<sup>2</sup> In the English translation of the 22<sup>nd</sup> letter, I replaced "substance" with "content": "In einem wahrhaft schönen Kunstwerk soll der Inhalt nichts, die Form aber alles tun; denn durch die Form allein wird auf das Ganze des Menschen, durch den Inhalt hingegen nur auf einzelne Kräfte gewirkt. Der Inhalt, wie erhaben und weltumfassend er auch sei, wirkt also jederzeit einschränkend auf den Geist, und nur von der Form ist wahre ästhetische Freiheit zu erwarten" (Schiller [1795-1801] 1962: 369).

The rule is one of various sequences in which imagination and feeling and reasoning develop according to poetic logic. For whereas philosophy only ever treats one of the soul's capacities, so that the presentation of this one capacity makes up a whole and the mere hanging together of the parts of this one capacity is called logic, poetry treats the various capacities of the human being so that the presentation of these various capacities make up a whole, and the hanging together of the – more autonomous – parts of these different capacities may be called rhythm (in a higher sense) or the calculable law. (Hölderlin [1804] 2001: 113)<sup>1</sup>

The main part of this calculable law, the one owing to which calculus balances out and embraces the whole man, is caesura, a counter-rhythmical interruption that may operate on all levels of literary work of art. As already indicated above, caesura may occur in a lexeme, an image or a scene in a drama, as in the entries of the priest Tiresias in *Oedipus* and in *Antigone*. Paradoxical as it may sound, interruption works against the isolation of the faculties of man and his alienation from temporal and spatial specificity. For Hölderlin, the whole man, with all his powers, should feel and understand the temporal nature of his world and his understanding: that is what the narrative form of tragedy, sealed with caesura, dictates. Thanks to the tragic form of development in time, history regains its Greek meaning of “experience” (Koselleck 2003: 20).<sup>2</sup> The same should be said about the *histoire* that is mediated by the performative *discours* in narrative: it becomes a vital part of experience, in which the whole historical and sensual man takes part within the context of the time and space in which he lives and which, thanks to narrative, he feels.

The recent expansion of narratology into the field of drama (cf. Hühn and Sommer 2012) can be seen as something of an oedipal pathos when it is realized that the conquest is actually an unconscious homecoming. In Hölderlin's time, the problems of *histoire* were elaborated within the framework of the theory of drama, for the theory of prosaic *discours* was elaborated in the scope of the rhetorical elocutio whose relationship with fictive discourse has always been problematic. When Manfred Pfister ([1977] 1988), Ansgar Nünning and Roy Sommer (2002, 2008), Monika Fludernik (2008) and Brian Richardson (2007) ponder whether the tools of

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<sup>1</sup> “Sie ist eine der verschiedenen Successionen, in denen sich Vorstellung und Empfindung und Raisonement, nach poetischer Logik, entwickelt. So wie nemlich immer die Philosophie nur ein Vermögen der Seele behandelt, so dass die Darstellung dieses Einen Vermögens ein Ganzes macht, und das bloße Zusammenhängen *der Glieder* dieses Einen Vermögens Logik genannt wird; so behandelt die Poesie die verschiedenen Vermögen des Menschen, so daß die Darstellung dieser verschiedenen Vermögen ein Ganzes macht, und das Zusammenhängen *der selbstständigeren Teile* der verschiedenen Vermögen der Rhythmus, im höhern Sinne, oder das kalkulable Gesetz genannt werden kann“ (Hölderlin 1988: 411).

<sup>2</sup> In this context Fludernik's (1996) notion of “experientiality” should be mentioned. See also Caraciollo (2013, 2014) and Lakoff and Johnson (1999).



narratology can be applied to dramatic works in the face of their apparent lack of an extradiegetic narrative level, they tend to overlook not only the historical origin of most of their tools but also the simple truth that, although perhaps most plays are devoid of a primary narrator who relates the story, narrative discourse as such is to a degree a drama.

The dramatic aspects of narrative were explicitly stated by the Russian scholars who laid the foundations for modern narratology. Boris Ėjchenbaum ([1919] 1989), for example, stressed the theatricality of the *skaz* narrator who concentrates on his gestures and his play rather than on the plot. Viktor Šklovskij ([1925] 1966: 114) noted with amusement that he begins to imitate the devices of Cervantes's narrator instead of describing them. Jurij Tynjanov ([1929] 1957: 418, 428) describes how Gogol uses "the device of the mask" in his descriptions of people and demonstrates how Dostoevskij uses Gogol's "verbal" and "material" masks in order to cover characters that are opposite to those of Gogol. Viktor Vinogradov (1936: 131) spoke about the faces and *antics* that make up the author's image throughout the narrative (cf. Do Hay Fong 2012). Mikhail Bakhtin ([1963] 2010: 12–21) began his (re)construction of the carnivalesque that stands for the specificity of the novel as a genre with the distinguishing of its ritual-scenic components.

The recognition of the dramatic in narrative can also be found in Greimas's structural semantics where he adopts Lucien Tesnière's model of the sentence as a spectacle *homo locuens* plays for himself (cf. Ricœur 1984: 72) as well as in Paul Ricœur's description of emplotment (*mise en intrigue*) as a reflexive judgment in the course of which the subject stands back in order to observe his own plotting (Ricœur 1984: 92–94). Thus the subject of *mise en intrigue* becomes a mask, and his activity a spectacle for him and for his readers. In narrative, the author (or his stand-in), present and absent at the same time as though he were both dead and alive, impersonates a narrator who speaks out or writes down characters' discourse, playing the parts of the protagonists who, in turn, may become narrating actors themselves. As early as the 1970s, Kazimierz Bartoszyński (1971), a representative of the Polish School of Literary Communication, called narrative a "spektakl sytuacji komunikacyjnej," that is "a (dramatic/theatric) performance of the communicative situation" that actualizes the "roles of emitters and receivers" inscribed in narrative. The teller, however, is not the only quasi-theatrical phenomenon inscribed within the narrative text understood as a script for the participant in the spectacle of literary communication. Bartoszyński's colleagues, Michał Głowiński (1968) and Edward Balcerzan (1971), stress that every empirical reader assumes "this or that role" such as it is pre-programmed by an author. Some fifty years earlier, in 1924, Jurij Tynjanov offered a vivid description of a reader before a *skaz*: he enters the narrative, begins to repeat

the intonation and to gesticulate, to smile. He does not read the *skaz*, he plays it (Schmid 2010: 131). In view of these and analogous factors, Polish scholars have generalized the theatrical to cover narrative. Narrative, like theater, must partake of both roles, sender and receiver, in order for literary communication to take place, regardless of the type of narrative.

Bartoszyński claims the performance inscribed in narrative becomes perceptible and communicable (contagious for the reader) against the backdrop of stereotypes with which every narrative has to measure itself in order to become intelligible and, in some cases, aesthetically appealing. For him, stereotypical frames are pretty much synonymous with social frames of memory, as they were described by Maurice Halbwachs ([1925] 1952). The theatric performance of narration is a negotiation with collective memory,<sup>1</sup> and in Hölderlin it is precisely the theatrical character of narrating and the mediating role of memory (and temporality) that the interruption triggered by caesura exhibits and stages. This kind of interruption reveals how forms of time and forms of memory are interdependent with narrating performances. This Polish tradition turns out to be especially relevant for the conceptualization of caesura in relation to other similar devices such as *mise en abyme* and metalepsis. Before I expand on the subject, a short review of the suppressed tradition of theory of narrative based on interruption is in order.

### 3. Endings vs. interruptions

Paul Ricoeur once stated that in the western tradition the paradigms of composition are at once the paradigms of *terminating* the narrative work (1984: 35). In accordance with the prevailing tradition of literary studies since Aristotle (1449b; cf. Aristotle 1922: 22–23), who claims that the praxis imitated by the plot must be uniform and *finished* (completed, perfect, τέλειος), present-day narratology works rather on endings than on interruptions, providing even more evidence that the theory of narrative stems from the theory of drama. For the sake of a happy or an unhappy ending, the greatest generic division of all time was made, between the comic and the tragic.

Modern narratology does not really distinguish between good and bad endings, but rather between endings that fall on a stable position in the development of the story (D.A. Miller 1989; Smith 1968; Reisling [1996] 2002; Kermode 1967) or on endings that fall on an unstable position (the Russian formalists; Vygotskij [1925] 1986: 201;

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<sup>1</sup> Every narration is in a way a theatrical performance and every reception of such a performance is a transformation of a theatric action into a narration. To remember something is to be able to narrate it.

Kucich 1978<sup>1</sup>). Those scholars who are as generous and erudite as Ricoeur take into account both types of endings (1984: 38–39); those who abide by deconstructionist methods, like J. Hillis Miller (1978), consider an ending both impossible and possible. Among the advocates of stability as a goal of every narrative, who presently outnumber their opponents, Smith claims that a stable state is attainable for a narrative, whereas D.A. Miller, Reisling and Kermode question the possibility of a narrative achieving a stable state, contending that there is no proper ending to a story. Miller attributes the impossibility of a narrative ending to the internal structure of narrative; Reisling inclines toward cultural and historical circumstances to be perceived as the agents of decomposition; Kermode, echoing Kenneth Burke and Northrop Frye, refers to transcendent considerations and preaches the permanence of the Apocalypse.<sup>2</sup> Thus it is not surprising that when, in the present interest in endings that do away with interruption, a narratologist like Brian Richardson takes on drama, he focuses precisely on theorizing “Endings in Drama and Performance” (Richardson 2011).

It has not always been like this, however. At the turn of the nineteenth century, two competing paradigms of narrativity were negotiated within the framework of the theory of drama: the finalistic one we all adhere to because we do not know any better; and the one that treats interruption as a central component. The finalistic approaches were set forth both by the early German Romantics (above all by Friedrich Schlegel) and by the German Idealists, Schelling and Hegel. Both the Romantics and the Idealists concentrated on conflict and its tragic or comic solution as the essential components and conditions of narrative development. The focus of this line of inquiry was on the conflict, contest and the catastrophe. Schiller and Hölderlin argued in another way: Hölderlin, who thought he understood Schiller better than Schiller understood himself, stipulated interruption not only as a condition of the tragic but also as a condition of all narrative progress of representation.<sup>3</sup> It is good to refresh our memory of the interruptive theory of narrative and recall that the origins of modern narratology in the writings of the Russian formalists go back to the interruptive paradigm of narrative studies. Viktor Šklovskij analyzed the disruptive devices in *Tristram Shandy* and Ājzenštejn’s montage techniques to show how interruption lays bare the devices that make up the continuity of narration. Similarly, Puškin formed the plot of his novel in verse

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<sup>1</sup> Vygotskij states in an authoritative way that “the theoreticians” define the point as an “ending in an unstable position” ([1925] 1986: 52). He does not provide the statement with a footnote.

<sup>2</sup> See also Richter (1974) Torgovnick (1981), DuPlessis ([1984] 2002), Rabinowitz (2002), Reising ([1996] 2002).

<sup>3</sup> In his famous introduction to *Die Braut von Messina oder die feindlichen Brüder* titled “Über den Gebrauch des Chors in der Tragödie” (“On the Use of Chorus in Tragedy”), Schiller claims that the chorus should interrupt the action of tragedy so that the viewer can distance himself emotionally from the events on the stage and feel his own freedom (Schiller [1803] 1962b: 821).

*Yevgeniy Onegin* in such a way that he plugged interrupting digressions into the narrative material of the novel (Šklovskij [1925] 1966: 135–140).<sup>1</sup> The plotting of this novel boils down, in other words, to a series of interruptions.

Roughly contemporaneous with Šklovskij, Walter Benjamin eloquently demonstrated that if a literary work somehow lacks interruption, it is the task of the critic to rip open its beautiful surface in order to show its truth-content. Even the most basic critical forms, commentary or quotation, break up the continuity of a commented text (Benjamin [1925] 1990: 123–127; [1928] 1990: 207–209, 357–358; [1931a] 1990: 354–367). Throughout his career, from the early essay on Goethe's *Wahlverwandtschaften* right up to *Central Park* and the theses on the notion of history, written with the premonition of his death, Benjamin kept producing new reformulations of Hölderlin's caesura. Once it was *das Ausdruckslose* at the root of Goethe's prose; another time it was an image in the sequence of Calderon's drama, an image that "stands out, in the image of the apotheosis, as different in kind, and gives mourning at one and the same time the cue for its entry and its exit" (Benjamin [1928] 2003: 235). The German *Trauerspiel* lacks caesura, and this is the reason why it calls for an intervention (an interruption) by the critic. Still another time, in the late historiosophy, caesura became *das dialektische Bild*: a moment – *Jetztzeit* – knocked out of the continuum so that past and present may form a constellation in which the messianic future becomes comprehensible (Benjamin [1940] 1990: 691–705). Combined with Berthold Brecht's theory of epic theater, according to which the tearing apart of the ideologically laden theatrical illusion has a revolutionary effect on the audience, caesura has become and remains up to the present day the agent of the truly political within art.<sup>2</sup>

(Even Benjamin's description of the ghostly body of a film actor, summoned and summed up by montage cutting, owes its emergence to Hölderlin's description of Sophocles' caesura: the entry of Tiresias who oversees future events and the shadows of past life.)

Writers have always been a few steps ahead of theoreticians. That interruption is an inalienable part of narration is attested by the metanovel *par excellence*, *Tristram Shandy*. In order for the story to begin in Sterne's novel and for the hero to be conceived, his poor mother interrupts the *coitus interruptus* with Tristram's father because she fears that the clock will stop.

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<sup>1</sup> On how the interruption functions in *Don Quixote*, see Šklovskij ([1925] 1966: 104–105). See also Šklovskij (1973: 135–140).

<sup>2</sup> "Für das epische Theater steht daher die Unterbrechung der Handlung im Vordergrund" (Benjamin [1931b] 1990: 521). Hans-Thies Lehman (2003: 16–17) also claimed in the newer times that interruption brought politics to the fore. We saw that it is actually Schiller's invention.

“Pray, my dear,” quoth my mother, “have you not forgot to wind up the clock?” – “Good G–!” cried my father, making an exclamation, but taking care to moderate his voice at the same time, – “Did ever woman, since the creation of the world, interrupt a man with such a silly question?” (Sterne 1980: 2)

Through the loss of concentration on the part of the father, the most autodiegetic narrator ever slips into life. As Šklovskij wrote, foreshadowing the birth of modern narratology, the accentuation of form by means of its being incessantly destroyed makes up the significance of Sterne’s novel (Šklovskij [1925] 1966: 135).

Unlike in Benjamin, one of whose earliest essays was devoted to an interpretation of two poems by Hölderlin (Benjamin [1915] 1990: 105–126) and who belonged to the generation who venerated and rediscovered Hölderlin, tragic caesura surfaces most unexpectedly and in an unmediated fashion at the dawn of the modern novel, for which discourse is far more important than story, and, at the same time, at the outset of modern narrative enquiry into perception and mind:<sup>1</sup> caesura surfaces abruptly in the introduction to *The Ambassadors* by Henry James. Caesura in the stream-of-consciousness novel is described in such a way that it almost seems that James copied parts of it from Hölderlin, even though he was not familiar with Hölderlin’s writings.

The situation involved is gathered up betimes, that is in the second chapter of Book Fifth, for the reader’s benefit, into as few words as possible – planted or “sunk,” stiffly and saliently, in the center of the current, almost perhaps to the obstruction of traffic. [...] The whole case, in fine, is in Lambert Strether’s irrepressible outbreak to little Bilham on the Sunday afternoon in Gloriani’s garden, the candour with which he yields, for his young friend’s enlightenment, to the charming admonition of that crisis. The idea of the tale resides indeed in the very fact that an hour of such unprecedented ease should have been felt by him AS a crisis, and he is at pains to express it for us as neatly as we could desire. (James [1903] 2011: xxvii)

Meaning is revealed at a time that seems to have fallen out of time and obstructs its inescapable traffic. Hölderlin, like James, never misses a chance to stress the coincidence of leisure and crisis in tragedy that presents nothing but its own shockingly empty temporal form, a form that surpasses any particular content. “Live all you can; it’s a mistake not to,” cries Lambert Strether in *The Ambassadors’* caesura. “It doesn’t so much matter what you do in particular so long as you have your life” (James [1903] 2011: xxviii).

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<sup>1</sup> “The mind as such, and perception in particular, have of course been stock features of all narrative enquiry since the days of Henry James” (Fludernik and Olson 2011: 8).

#### 4. Caesura vs. metalepsis

We should, for precision's sake, set Hölderlin's notion of caesura off from such kindred devices as narrative metalepsis and *mise en abyme* (cf. Genette [1972] 1980: 233; Dällenbach 1977; Cohn [2005] 2012; Pietrzak 2007; Pier 2014: par. 32–34).<sup>1</sup> The task is especially difficult because, as Sonja Klimek (2010: 52–54) has clearly demonstrated, the devices of *mise en abyme* and metalepsis intersect and because numerous occurrences of *mise en abyme* lead to paradoxes concerning the distribution and division of narrative levels just as, conversely, there are instances of metalepsis that reflect a degree of similarity between the encompassing and the encompassed levels. Here, I would like to follow the classical definition proposed by Dällenbach – *toute enclave entretenant une relation de similitude avec l'œuvre qui la contient* (1977: 18, original emphasis) – and place *mise en abyme* in the category of similarity; metalepsis (defined by Genette as “any intrusion by the extradiegetic narrator or narrate into the diegetic universe [...], or the inverse”; [1972] 1980: 234) will be considered within the framework of narrative levels rather than similarity.

Although *mise en abyme* may also, like caesura, be disruptive, it merely aims at the repetition or reflection of the elements of the embedded story in the embedding one. The experience of *mise en abyme* consists, then, in perceiving a similarity between narrative levels or instances whereas, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, caesura splits the emitting instances while interrupting the train of narrative and relates the instances to the very situation of communication. As such, *mise en abyme* does not replace but rather multiplies caesura, as in the example from James where, in an interruptive moment of leisure, the protagonist hints at the meaning of such a leisure – in life, but also, we assume, in narrative.

Caesura, on the other hand, is closely related to narrative metalepsis, since they both descend in a straight line from Fichte's theory of knowledge, even though caesura seems to be a more profound and consequent application of transcendentalism to literature than its prominent sister device metalepsis. The term metalepsis itself comes from rhetoric, notably from Fontanier and Dumarsais (Genette [1972] 1980: 234–237; 2004: 7–20; cf. Pier 2014, § 3.1), while caesura comes from metrics. Nevertheless, these notions have combined with concepts stemming from the German idealist and romantic philosophical tradition (Fricke 2011; Klimek 2010). If metalepsis is understood as an intrusion of the world of the creator into the created

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<sup>1</sup> Dällenbach (1977) and Fricke (2003) contain many references to the German authors of the Goethe Epoch who used the device frequently.

world, or vice versa,<sup>1</sup> then metalepsis is akin to Friedrich Schlegel's concept of (romantic) irony.<sup>2</sup> The romantics, when developing the theory of the possibility of permanent incursion of the teller into the told, took the name of Fichte's ultimate source of all knowledge (*Ich*) for the grammatical personal pronoun referring to the subject of an utterance, and so transferred the almighty and absolutely free "I" to the literary field.<sup>3</sup> Theirs was an anthropomimetic and language-oriented interpretation of Fichte's theory of knowledge that is practically indiscernible from metalepsis as an intrusion of "I" into the utterance or simply the collision of the level of the narrative act – at which some "I" operates whose activity creates the presented word – with the intradiegetic level. In contrast to the egological romantics, Hölderlin focused on Fichte's description of the imagination that mediates between the determined-determining "I" and the "not-I" in a series of sublime interruptions of the flow of time. Imagination discerns not only between the first and the third persons but also between the levels of the transcendental I or Ego. The highest one, pure reason, enters the small moments of the sublime that are torn in the flux and sees the temporality of representation which it brought into being:

This floating of imagination between irreconcilable links [the determined I and not-I within the absolute I, pure reason], this its self-contradiction is [...] that which extends the condition of the Ego to a time-moment. (For pure reason everything is at once; only for imagination is there a time.) Imagination cannot stand this floating long, that is, not longer than a moment, (except in the feeling of the sublime, where astonishment, a halt of the interchange in time, arises.) Reason steps in, (and thus there arises a reflection,) determines imagination to take B up in the determined A, the subject; but as soon as this is accomplished, the determined A must again be limited by an infinite B, etc. etc., until it has arrived at a complete determination of the (here theoretical) reason, which needs no other limiting B outside of reason in imagination, that is, until it has arrived at the representation of the representing. (Fichte [1794/1795] 1889: 181–182)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Pier (2014) for an overview of the various theoretical developments surrounding this concept. Unfortunately, these concepts are not always consistent with one another so that meticulous classifications, albeit precise in themselves, tend to confuse matters rather than clarify them when they are being used simultaneously. Accordingly, I have felt compelled to use only one notion of metalepsis, the one whose juxtaposition with caesura promised to be intellectually fruitful. Some of the classifications of metalepsis attribute to it features that I would rather attribute caesura – for the sake of the precision of both notions.

<sup>2</sup> An unsurpassed presentation of romantic irony remains Behler (1981).

<sup>3</sup> The confusion of the first-person pronoun with the transcendental notion of the self seems to have been present already in Fichte. See Siemek (1984).

<sup>4</sup> "Dieses Schweben der Einbildungskraft zwischen unvereinbarem, dieser Widerstreit derselben mit sich selbst ist es, welcher, wie sich in der Zukunft zeigen wird, den Zustand des Ich in demselben zu einem *Zeit-Momente* ausdehnt. (Für die blosse, reine Vernunft ist alles zugleich; nur für die Einbildungskraft giebt es eine Zeit.) Lange, d. i. länger, als einen Moment (ausser im Gefühl des Erhabenen, wo ein *Staunen*, ein Anhalten des Wechsels in der Zeit entsteht), hält die Einbildungskraft

The “representation of the representing” forms a common ground between metalepsis and caesura, on the backdrop of which the differences between the two figures rooted in Fichte become more evident. In contradistinction to Fichte who, as the last sentence suggests, aimed at a purely intellectual representation of the representing in the theory of knowledge, Hölderlin assumed that the truly absolute cannot be merely abstract. In line with the tenants of German Idealism, Hölderlin, one of the architects of this movement, perceived the absolute as the unity of phenomena and theory, the sensuous and the intelligible. As we have already seen, caesura was introduced by Hölderlin as a central device of his system by virtue of its ability to bring the unity of phenomena and theory to light: a *poetisches Kalkül* intended to bond all faculties of man and, accordingly, all the dimensions in which he lives. This unity also meant that the “fate” of the phenomenalized absolute is time, as Hegel put it at the end of *Phänomenologie des Geistes* ([1806] 1979: 583–584), so that the representation of representation needs to account for this absolute temporality. The revelation of the absolute should thus be accomplished, according to Hölderlin, by imagination in the sublime moment of caesura which operates at all levels of narrative (as its *mise en abyme*-like instances prove) and shows the temporality of representation as such.

The most striking similarity between metalepsis and caesura is the fact that metalepsis also has, as Debra Malina put it, a “disruptive effect on the fabric of narrative” (2002: 1). Similarly, Werner Wolf described metalepsis as a “collapse of the narrative system” (1993: 356–358). Nevertheless, the differences are numerous, starting with the fact that metalepsis is always associated with humor, logical paradoxes and the fantastic (Genette [1983] 1988: 88; cf. Genette [1972] 1980: 234–237; Pier 2014: § 2, par. 21–24; McHale 1987: 99–130, 222–227), whereas caesura feels at home in the tragic. Metalepsis in its proper sense conveys a contamination between “the world of the telling and the world of the told” (Pier 2014: par. 1), whereas caesura means rather the intrusion of the silence that separates the narrator from what makes his narrating possible, namely the theatrical component described by the Polish narratologists as an element present in every narrative performance. This dramatic component which is revealed by caesura sometimes takes on the form of the difference between the narrator and the silent “implied author” who is the bearer

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dies nicht aus; die Vernunft tritt ins Mittel (wodurch eine Reflexion entsteht), und bestimmt dieselbe, B in das bestimmte A (das Subject) aufzunehmen; aber nun muss das als bestimmt gesetzte A abermals durch ein unendliches B begrenzt werden, mit welchem die Einbildungskraft gerade so verfährt, wie oben; und so geht es fort, bis zur vollständigen Bestimmung der (hier theoretischen) Vernunft durch sich selbst, wo es weiter keines begrenzenden B ausser der Vernunft in der Einbildungskraft bedarf, d. i. *bis zur Vorstellung des Vorstellenden* (Fichte [1794/1795] 1962–2012: 360–361). It is Diteter Henrich, whom I follow when juxtaposing the disruptive work of the caesura with this particular fragment from Fichte (1997: 136; 2003: 230).



of the possible forms of communication and whose mask the defined and limited narrator is; it may also be the difference between the frame of collective memory in the form of the uncanny all-encompassing memory of the implied author and what is actually told, i.e. chosen and actualized, the difference which endows the narrator and his discourse with a discernible shape and an ability to affect the receiver. Caesura lays bare the difference between the given narration and the temporary (in both meanings) measure of all things against which this narration appears as reliable or not, innovative or archaic, funny or boring, tragic or banal. It is a secondary issue whether we place this measure in the text, like the structuralists did (Okopień-Sławińska [1967] 1998, 1975; Schönert 2014: par. 7; Schmid 2013: par. 14), or within the cognition of a living person that processes the text (Herman 2013b). Caesura opens the gap between the possible and the actual in narrative without openly disclosing the intervention of the telling subject into the told, but rather the conditions of the possibility of dramatic performance that lie at the root of narrative. Commenting on Diderot's intuitive description of narrative communication from *Ceci n'est pas un conte* – "*Lorsqu'on fait un conte, c'est à quelqu'en qui l'écoute ; et pour peu que le conte dure, il est rare que le conteur ne soit pas interrompu quelquefois par son auditeur*" – Michał Głowiński writes that it is part of the reader's condition as the receiver of the literary work to interrupt the process of narration in order to ask questions on conventions and stereotypes, according to which the particular occurrence of communication functions (Głowiński 1992: 144, original emphasis). The extradiegetic narrator whose epiphany is metalepsis (and sometimes also *mise en abyme*) is but a part of a dramatic situation that caesura is supposed to reveal. He turns out to be one of many "human but not personal" (Balcerzan 1971: 82)<sup>1</sup> roles to be assumed by the implied or empirical author – the roles of emitters and receivers whose repertoire is narrative fiction.

Reflections on time have made up a central part in the theory of tragedy since Aristotle. They continued in the early modern poetics of neo-classicism with the doctrine of the three unities. However, Hölderlin elevates the philosophy of tragic time to another level when he says that the empty "transport" of tragedy conveys nothing but the conditions of possibility of appearance and disappearance:

For at the furthest frontier of suffering nothing else stands but the conditions of time and of space.

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<sup>1</sup> The (then) structuralist Edward Balcerzan borrowed the expression "human but impersonal" from Jung's *Psychologie und Dichtung* (1950).

At that frontier Man forgets himself because he is wholly in the moment; and the God [sic!] forgets himself because he is nothing but time; and both are unfaithful [to one another]. (Hölderlin [1804] 2001: 69)<sup>1</sup>

The “moment” this quotation identifies as caesura makes time perceivable, even though this moment is not “a part” of time. With regard to the spacio-temporal character of tragic caesura, *one may say that whereas metalepsis lays bare the conditions of fictionality, because what distinguishes fiction from nonfiction is that in every fiction there is “at least the potential for narrative metalepsis”* (Nelles 1997: 152), caesura exposes to the critical reader or viewer the conditions of appearing and disappearing of all phenomena that are to make a part of narrative, fictional or not, after narrative became at the turn of the nineteenth century the medium of all experience and reflection. One may, *cum grano salis*, apply here the distinction voiced by Niklas Luhmann: metalepsis reveals mediality of a *form*, whereas caesura makes visible the difference between the *medium* of narrative and particular forms (cf. Luhmann 2000: 30–32). Caesura’s difference from metalepsis explains why caesura’s representative in the world of man is the blind specialist in the underworld: Tiresias makes absence appear on the stage where he presents himself in his clairvoyant blindness.

The goal of tragedy, according to Hölderlin, is to stage the conditions of time and space and to make them palpable as a way of understanding human existence that is historical, i.e. dependent on Mnemosyne founded by the poets’ tale. Artistic forms that are characteristic for a given epoch or that, so to speak, grow out of their time exist “not just in order to learn to understand the spirit of the times but once that spirit is grasped and learned to hold it steadily and to feel it” (Hölderlin [1804] 2001: 118).<sup>2</sup> Caesura in a narrative helps us to feel its flow, whereas the task of the critic would be to find or to provoke an interruption in a text. The critical dispersion of narrative with the help of caesura is a translation of the old forms of enclosing the world into a new perception that consists of shocks and break-offs, one which regards continuous narrative passionately but as something alienated from it, even irreparably lost and fascinating only because of this loss. Without adopting caesura in its midst, narratology runs the danger of becoming a dead science that deals with dead forms.

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<sup>1</sup> “In der äußersten Gränze des Leidens bestehet nemlich nichts mehr, als die Bedingungen der Zeit oder des Raums. / In dieser vergißt sich der Mensch, weil er ganz im Moment ist; der Gott, wie er nichts als Zeit ist; und beides ist untreu“ (Hölderlin 1988: 258).

<sup>2</sup> “nicht bloß da sind, um den Geist der Zeit verstehen zu lernen, sondern ihn festzuhalten und zu fühlen, wenn er einmal begriffen und gelernt ist“ (Hölderlin 1988: 421).

Making the eccentric theory of caesura a part of the academic organon of narratology means executing the will of Hölderlin, who began his notes on *Oedipus* with: "It will be a good thing, giving poets even in our country a secure social existence, if poetry, even in our country and notwithstanding the differences of the times and the political systems, is raised to the *mechane* of the Ancients" (Hölderlin [1804] 2001: 63).

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The montage novel has been much studied by literary scholars. This genre encompasses novels written in the 1920s and 30s (*Manhattan Transfer*, 1925, by John Dos Passos; *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, 1929, by Alfred Döblin; *The Naked Year*, 1920, by Boris Pil'nyak) and the 1950s (*Tauben im Graß*, 1951, by Wolfgang Koeppen; *La Colmena*, 1951, by Camilo José Cela). While these novels are well-known to readers and literary critics, one can easily notice that the genre of the montage novel is often not distinguished from the various contexts in which it is placed. This also relates to the context of so-called cinematic literature. The montage novel is usually placed in this context as part of another broad field: *modernist literature* that employs the technique of montage. To distinguish the montage novel from cinematic literature (and the cinematic novel), I will first examine the extent of cinematic influence on modernist literary montage during the 1920s and 30s. I will then consider literary montage in the montage novel and how it differs from modernist literary montage, distinguishing this genre from other modernist novels.

One may wonder how to evaluate the influence of the cinema on literature that uses montage devices during the 1920s and 30s, a period marked by rapid developments in the cinema art. To answer this question, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by the term montage.

The first thing to be pointed out is the dual nature of montage. On the one hand, montage designates a constructive narrative principle in cinema. In a popular Russian cinema dictionary, it is characterized as "one of the central notions of cinema art" (Weisfeld and Chanyshv 1990: 42), broken down into two basic meanings: 1) the technical process of creating the film out of various parts by resplicing separate shots; 2) the montage form of the film, a principle for creating a unique string of images.

On the other hand, the term montage is also used in a broader sense in relation to other kinds of art. First of all, the broader understanding of the term is connected with Sergej Ėjzenštejn's works. In this connection, the above-quoted dictionary gives a third meaning of the term, this time with reference to Ėjzenštejn: any image, not only cinematic, is created through montage by way of connecting expressive elements.



Later, the term montage began to be applied to different kinds of arts, changing its original meaning. For Ėjzenštejn, this involves juxtaposing two fragments and combining them into a new representation whose sense is equal neither to the sense of each fragment nor to their sum (Ėjzenštejn 1956: 253). Montage thus starts to encompass “all cultural spheres that are more or less related to the idea of recombination and selection of elements. The category of montage appears everywhere where the discreteness of the parts included in the whole is concerned. [...] There is a special interest in combining contrasting ways of expression (collage), different points of view or hyperfragmentation of the text (cubist montage), joining elements from heterogeneous cultures, citations, various subtexts or sources and contaminations of motifs or genres” (Raushenbakh and Iampolsky 1988: 3–4, translation mine).

Thus, as an artistic category, montage starts to be associated with the eclectic parts of the aesthetic whole and its fragmentation rather than with the new artistic whole created through the use of montage. As noted by Valentin Khalizev, writing about montage as a literary category: literary montage that became widespread at the beginning of the twentieth century presupposes not unity but atomism (Khalizev 2004: 290). While montage in the cinema is the basic means of connecting fragments, montage in literature serves to show their dissociation.

A growing aesthetic trend in literary montage, embodied in particular in the genre of the montage novel, was associated by some contemporaries of the authors and in later research with the development of cinema and its influence on writers. Indeed, the authors of montage novels had an intense interest in the cinema. Many wrote scripts and took an interest in the development of the cinema. For example, there are numerous motifs in montage novels of visiting a cinema hall. The Russian scholar Marina Sal'tsina (2001) describes convincingly and in detail how cinema influenced John Dos Passos' work. Moreover, the cinematic nature of narrative in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* has been stressed in many studies, for example, Ekkehard Kaemmerling's article “Die filmische Schreibweise” (1975). This article analyzes the novel using Ėjzenštejn's terms: parallel montage, synchronous montage, etc., viewing Döblin's book as a script. The Russian scholar Alexej Zverev (1982), who has studied Dos Passos' works extensively, also relies on Ėjzenštejn's theory when characterizing polyphonic montage in Dos Passos' novels.

However, studies such as these are not as numerous as those devoted to literary montage. Moreover, the blossoming of montage literature cannot be explained only by the development of the cinema because, for example, the periods when montage

novels were written are the 1920s and 30s and then the 1950s, showing no strict correlation between the genre and developments in the cinema.

Helmuth Kiesel, writing on Alfred Döblin's poetics, notes that giving inspiration to the writer is the only way cinema can influence the montage form of the novel (Kiesel 1993: 292). This observation applies to other montage novels, as well. Kiesel further points out that the montage form of Döblin's novel is not cinematic in nature, but philosophical; nor is the novel a book written in a cinematic style or a script.

As André Bazin contended, the novel is ahead of cinema when it comes to defining modernity. If "the cinema influences the novel [...] we would then be talking about the influence of a nonexistent cinema, an ideal cinema, a cinema that the novelist would produce if he were a filmmaker; of an imaginary art that we are still awaiting" (Bazin 1972: 63). Such Russian film theorists as Sergej Ėjzenštejn or Mikhail Romm find examples of literature whose montage principles are close to contemporary cinematic montage in nineteenth-century prose works. When Ėjzenštejn notices that Dos Passos is difficult to screen due to the cinematic character of his style, this is an example of what is meant by literature getting ahead of cinema. It could be said that the cinematic character of style is an elaborate literary montage whose aesthetic effect cannot be adequately conveyed in a screen version with the help of cinematic montage devices.

To sum up, the influence of cinema on the literature during the 1920s and 30s, as far as the montage technique is concerned, is often overestimated. This is only the influence that encouraged the renewal of certain novelistic devices. It must be pointed out, however, that not only the renewal but also the use of devices that are typical for cinema become especially extensive in the age of the cinema. Thus, "the noise of time," the characteristic attributed by Alexej Zverev (1982) to montage in *Manhattan Transfer*, can be compared to "life at the moment," the principle of reproducing life in *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) by Dziga Vertov. When montage fragments collide in a montage novel, one can see what is meant by "the Kuleshov effect"<sup>1</sup> in cinema theory.

On the whole, an explanation for the rise of the montage technique at the beginning of the twentieth century lies beyond the field of literature and can be provided only with reference to the cultural context. This is what Zverev, for example, writes about

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<sup>1</sup> The Kuleshov effect is the montage effect discovered and described by the Russian film director Lev Kuleshov in the 1920s. He juxtaposed the same shot of an actor with the shots that were markedly different from one another, and each time the viewers perceived the actor's expression in a different way. The Kuleshov effect showed that montage fragments depend on each other and constitute a new meaning.

in his articles "The Twentieth Century as a Literary Epoch" and "Montage" (Zverev 2002a, 2002b). Lost faith in the values of the previous century, the crisis of the world outlook and a growing feeling of the absurdity of being are expressed in the fragmentary montage technique. Cinema served to inspire the writer, but when writers used the montage technique in literature, it would function differently than in the cinema. The main narrative principle in cinema, montage, becomes one of the ways to make the story fragmentary and even incoherent, profoundly altering the narrative fabric of literature at the beginning of the twentieth century.

At the same time, montage in literature can be a narrative means that resembles cinematic montage. This is the main reason for differentiating, in particular, between cinematic novels and montage novels. The montage novel deploys both specifically literary montage and cinematic-like montage, while the cinematic novel deals only with the second type.

Scholars find it difficult to define the cinematic novel as a genre. This is why one of the investigators of the problem, Steven Kellman (1987), says that "cinematic novel" has become such a broad notion that it has practically lost its meaning. The term is used as though it were unnecessary to explain what is meant by cinema and by novel, as can be seen from the many observations bearing on this "hybrid." The notion is based on the analogy between cinema and literature and the idea of cinematic influence on literature. The meaning changes according to what is meant under this influence. As Kellman further observes, one could define the genre by taking as a starting point Sergej Ėjzenštejn's, Lev Kuleshov's and other Russian theorists' views according to which the core of the cinema art is montage. In this case, the cinematic novel is a novel whose parts and chapters are organized in a "non-linear" way. However, Kellman points out that literary forms cannot be identified with cinematic ones in terms of both technique and style. Thus, the main problem of the definition is that no matter what analogies might be drawn between cinema and literature, the mechanism of transplanting cinematic devices to literary ground remains unclear. This also relates to the analogy between montage in cinema and in the novel.

It would be fruitful to view the cinematic novel in the context of cinematic literature which has already become an object of special research. Thus, the Russian scholar Irina Martyanova (2002), using several cinematic classifications, develops her own system of attributes of cinematic prose such as montage and its types (consecutive, parallel, vertical), the dynamics of the text, visual and spatial characteristics, extensive use of dialogue, etc.

It is interesting to look at the contradictions in the ways cinematic novels have been characterized. On the one hand, peculiarities that make them belong to cinematic literature are successfully described, such as a frequent change of point of view and perspective. On the other hand, there are writers whose style has been described by literary theorists as “cinematic” but who criticize “cinematic” literature and analogies between literature and the cinema (Virginia Woolf, Marcel Proust). It is clear that there is a need to set apart literature that uses montage as a specifically literary technique and literature that employs a “cinematic” device. Thus, the works by Woolf or Proust would belong to the first type, while these authors could criticize the second type.

As already noted, the montage novel is different not only from cinematic literature but also from modernist novels due to the montage techniques it employs. To use the terms “narrativity” and “non-narrativity,” cinematic-like montage is a means of creating narrativity in the text. It can be found in the montage novel, but this is not its essential characteristic. Literary montage, by contrast, can be a means of creating both narrativity and non-narrativity. In the second case, the spirit of the beginning of the twentieth century is expressed, with its emphasis on the irrationality of life and lost faith in traditional values, which distinguishes modernist literature, including the montage novel, from literature of the pre-World War I era. The first case is represented by the montage novel, where literary montage can create narrative effects that distinguish it from other modernist novels employing the montage technique. This kind of montage shows the author’s hidden will to structure the material and to express his/her own point of view through structure (through regularities in the arrangement of episodes, for example, as in John Dos Passos’ *Manhattan Transfer* or in Boris Pil’nyak’s *The Naked Year*). Thus, the montage novel puzzles the reader with its fragmentary structure, but at the same time the author conveys his/her understanding of the logic of events and characters, presenting a certain system of values which shows that the montage novel is connected with the traditions of the classic nineteenth-century novel (Tamarchenko 1991).

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“How and why did documentary narration acquire its miserable reputation whilst still remaining one of the most commonly used devices in nonfiction filmmaking?” (Bruzzi 2000: 47)

“[T]he essay film [is] a practice that renegotiates assumptions about documentary objectivity, narrative epistemology, and authorial expressivity within the determining context of the unstable heterogeneity of time and place.” (Corrigan 2011: 6)

“[T]he imaginative use of voice-over and voice-on narration [...] enables [film] to problematize the relation of discourse to story, of narrator to narrated, of imagination to reality.” (Chatman 1999: 337)

The history of narration and documentary film, increasingly known as nonfiction film, is not an altogether happy one. But that is gradually changing, with ongoing and particularly interesting narrative experimentation happening in a subset of nonfiction prose and film: the essay. With its roots in Montaigne’s writing, the ‘personal essay’, as it is often called, provides a particularly fertile ground for discussing both the concerns and actions of nonfiction and their relation to narrative play and narratology. Together, these three areas – essay, film, narration – constitute the basic concerns of this discussion. Unified by conceptual forces and cultural desires, this constellation of issues pulls further related terms and concerns within its overall orbit: persona, voice, and point-of view or focalization among them. Together, the terms provide multiple entries into “*essaying*,” in the Montaignean sense, the nonfiction film essay and the particular role it plays in narrative thought and practice.

I want to initiate the discussion by providing historical context for documentary as well as film essay practice, because these practices already operate within a varied set of assumptions surrounding the ‘nature’ of nonfiction narrative. I also want to provide background on the prose essay and suggest that, while it seems to be a form that ostensibly lacks a story *per se*, the essay nevertheless has what can be considered a narrative progression within it. Finally, I intend to bring together these two areas, narration and non-fiction film, in the form of the contemporary film essay. To do so, I

will take a look at the films of two individuals, Agnès Varda and Ross McElwee, as a way of demonstrating how the issues of narration and essay come together in interesting forms in the medium of film.

## 1. Narrative and nonfiction

I start with one basic given: oral narration is central to much documentary. Because such narration may occur in the form of voiceover or voice-off, non-fiction film often relies upon extensively scripted narration. In many documentaries spoken narration may even serve as the driving force of the film, with the visual materials there primarily to illustrate what is orally narrated. Indeed, Bruzzi's description of narration's "miserable reputation" in nonfiction film may very well result from it's being "one of the most commonly used devices." If popular expectation of cinematic experience is one of being enveloped in visual stories, then the speaking presence of a narrator may well be seen as intrusive.<sup>1</sup>

The history behind these overall attitudes will be addressed below. But recognizing the presence of an extra-diegetic narrator as a central component of much nonfiction film – traditional and essay – makes it easier to move forward and take up narration's role. At the same time, while most documentary film triggers a sense of a "teller," it may not look like the "story-teller" of Kellogg and Scholes's classic definition of literary narrative. Such differences among genre are inescapable, as attested by attempts in narratology to deal with cinematic and written fiction. But the narrator of the essay film does appear to more directly overlap with the concept of character-oriented narration in ways that open up to narratological discussion. The goals here are not to solve these cross-media issues, but rather to see how they might be addressed, in this case by looking at a genre not overly theorized yet, the film essay.

To start, it is worth noting that the teller of literary narrative has two near-relatives in the prose essay, that of character and persona. In fact, persona can become, as regularly happens within literary narrative, a character in its own right. Seen in this

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<sup>1</sup> This narrative voice, in Genette's terms, would correspond to that of "broadcasting language," "the quasi-interior monologue and the account after the event" ([1972] 1980: 218). The very language of filmic activity – preproduction, production, postproduction – furthers this sense of "after the event" narration in much traditional documentary film. However 'present' and immediate the audience may wish the events that unfold in the diegesis to be, and however much classic fictional cinema will encourage that expectation, film almost never fails to utilize post-filmic reworking of recorded events. In like fashion, however, much ideology surrounding documentary film may try to declare that the camera is or should simply be an opening into the viewed world and that the narrator and the camera lens are one. The situation in much documentary film suggests a division of time, if not duties, between visual and oral narration

light, the narrative provided in the essay may in no small part be seen as the story of narrating. Said another way, the narrator of the essay exists in the text as a character whom the viewer watches and hears deliberating on the subjects at hand, among which are statements on the activity and implications of creating the text itself. In the essay, and particularly in the film essay, the act of making the essay *is* the 'story' of the narrative, as will be argued below. But for now, it is enough to posit that the narrator is a central component of much nonfiction film – traditional and essay – so as to move on to take up Bruzzi's concern with narration's miserable reputation within nonfiction film in general, and finally and most particularly, the question of narration within the nonfiction essay film.

## 2. Narration and documentary film: context I

There are innumerable answers for the reputation of narration in nonfiction film. But most responses, including Bruzzi's own, note two key trends within the history of film in general, as well as in nonfiction film – popularly known as documentary – which have given rise to this paradoxical hatred/ongoing usage of narration. The first trend, which goes all the way back to the conflict between silent films and the early days of sound cinema, rests in a belief that the visual image is itself the most authentic or genuine form of filmic representation and filmic art. It is 'camera-narration' that establishes the true nature of film as an art form.

Within fictional films, this argument for a pure visual narration, unmarred by the presence of dialogue, finds its high water mark in films such as *La Passion Jeanne d'Arc*. While the film is itself an historical recreation that draws extensively on the proceedings of Joan's trial, it harbors no goals of being seen as documentary *per se*. Nor does it intend to signal its own heavy reliance upon written sources: trial documents, historical accounts, or any other form of representation. The visuals are the thing wherein they'll capture the essence of a martyr – a feat they very successfully achieve.

### **[JEANNE D'ARC CLIP]**

*Passion* is, among other things, a primer on visual narration. Even with intertitles and any assumed extradiegetic musical accompaniment, the film demonstrates how to narrate a story visually. But at the moment it was appearing, arguments for a purely visual narrative were falling before the onslaught of the talkies. Sound would win out within the world of popular, primarily fictional films, with emphasis on voice-on sync-sound and dialogue in service to a representational mimesis. When they occurred, subsequent silent films would arise now and then to comment on the prevailing trend.



The second major trend lending itself to the problematic history of voiceover or voice-off oral narration can be found in documentary's early affiliation with so-called voice-of-god narration. Such narration was rooted in the socially driven goals of John Grierson's early desire to align 'documentary' films (which he is credited with naming) with an informed citizenry. This sense of the didactic possibilities of film too readily matched with a sense of the lecture as the most viable form of pedagogy. Firmly established between World War I and II, such attitudes reached full fruition in the nationalistic goals of World War II documentaries, with their desire to garner support for a war effort from amongst a wide populace not necessarily well-informed about the logistical and ideological goals of their respective nations. The *Why We Fight Series* offers numerous examples:

### **[WHY WE FIGHT CLIP]**

There are many things to dislike about this narration, both in its specific statements and its overall formal structuring. Morally, the racism is repugnant. Civically, the use of blatant emotionalism to override complex thought is disturbing. Cinematically, the reduction of visual narration to mere graphic illustration of the voiceover is disheartening. Taken as whole, the clip readily demonstrates why narration in documentary film acquired a "miserable reputation" that it is still trying to shake.

There have been, of course, a variety of challenges to that tradition. In the United States, one notable trend hints at early beliefs in the visual image as the purest form of narrative or, in the case of journalistic goals, the purest form of truth. Robert Drew's regularly misnamed *cinéma vérité*, now more aptly called "direct cinema," demonstrates this revisiting of image over word. Drew's conceptual framework, developed with the Maysles, D.A. Pennebaker, and others, sees vocal narration as what you provide when visual narration (or the filmmaker's mishandling of it) is inadequate to the task at hand: visually capturing reality. The narrator of the nonfiction film is thus a clumsy substitute by a director and a cinematographer who have inserted an extradiegetic oral narrator between the audience and the 'reality' that should unfold visually before it.

Given such an argument, direct cinema does not challenge a goal often popularly ascribed to nonfiction narrative: the representation of the real. Rather, what direct cinema challenges is the way in which that real is to be represented, that is, via a preferred visual narration rather than an extradiegetic narrator, a mode that is invested in a "non-human narrative agency" or "impersonal" cinematic narrator (Chatman 1990: 138). Direct cinema is thus not wholly antithetical to an ideology of

direct and truthful representation of reality via the visual medium. To see purely is to know truly.

*Cinéma vérité* of the European stripe had a different sense of the medium. Influenced by language and narrative theory, as well as by healthy skepticism of the use of media for nationalistic purposes, such cinema traced its sense of truth to ideas more akin to those of Dziga Vertov's *kino-pravda*,<sup>1</sup> in which the medium is never a simple translation of the material into the conceptual, but always a construction of it, in some ways superior to the human eye. Central to the rise in France of this form of *cinéma vérité* is the work of Godard, who directly aligned himself with such thinking and filmic production via the formation of the Dziga Vertov Group.

Importantly for the purposes of this discussion, Godard has also declared that he finds his ultimate influence in Montaigne, thus positioning his work as the cinematic realization of the goals of the ostensible 'father' of the prose essay.<sup>2</sup> That claim is more readily apparent in Godard's later, less directly fictional work. Yet Godard chooses to see his entire body of cinematic production as an enactment of Montaignean goals. To see how that might be, and to establish the importance of Montaigne to narration in the film essay, it is important to establish the context provided by the history of the prose essay as a form.

### 3. Narration and nonfiction prose essays: context II

Over time, the term essay has become its own form of "loose, baggy monster" employed to describe a variety of nonfiction prose whose range is difficult to fully encapsulate. For the purposes of this article, essay here refers to the strain that follows directly from Montaigne and, while often possessing an ostensible focusing topic (often captured in its title: "Of Repentance," "Of Books"), nonetheless provides a free-form, associative 'essaying' of the topic which regularly serves merely as a point with which to start and, less regularly, to conclude. Today, it is often characterized as the 'personal essay'. While not unproblematic, this description at least captures the Montaignean focus on the essay's goal of evoking, through style

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<sup>1</sup> As with *cinéma vérité*, Vertov is referring to a 'truth' that is obtained through cinematic representation, that is, a mediated truth.

<sup>2</sup> "One of the things that he [Godard] always told me, he was really interested in, [was] in being Montaigne. He wanted to do essay films" (Gorin [1972] 2005: 02:48). Rascaroli likewise notes Godard's essayistic orientation: "Jean-Luc Godard, for instance, who is widely considered to be an essayistic director, in *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (FR, 1997-98) suggested that the cinema is a 'form that thinks and thought that forms'; elsewhere, he defined himself as an essayist, and specified: 'As a critic, I thought of myself as a film-maker. Today I still think of myself as a critic [...] Instead of writing criticism, I make a film, but the critical dimension is subsumed' ["Interview" in Narboni and Milne (1972): 170-196]" qtd in Rascaroli (2008: 25).

and voice, an active consciousness and personality to be experienced by the reader as an evolving I, a particularly fluid, decentered persona that has caught the eye of post-modernist theorists.<sup>1</sup>

This decentering is the paradoxical heart of the nonfiction personal essay, paradoxical because its persona is often established as collapsing author and individual into one figure: “one may commend the work apart from the workman; not so here; he who touches the one touches the other” (Montaigne, “Of Repentance”). Yet the “workman” of Montaigne is regularly offered as fluid, a narrating subject in process of discovering itself: “What I chiefly portray is my cogitations, a shapeless subject that does not lend itself to expression in actions. It is all I can do to couch my thoughts in this airy medium of words” (Montaigne, “Of Practice”). It is a sentiment that Woolf echoes in her own reflection on the paradoxical role of the essay persona as “Never to be yourself – and yet always” (Woolf, *Essays* 221). Attitudes toward this multi-faceted, fluid subject have varied over time. Some authors choose to establish a full-blown narrator such as Hazlitt’s Elia, with its own directly fictive representation of elements of Lamb’s life. Others, and this matches contemporary audiences, expect the I of the personal essay to halve Woolf’s claim and ‘always be’ the author’s self. This vibration between writing self and written self is captured in an ongoing set of tensions, with the narrated/narrating self being alternately revealed and represented, authentic and artistic, innate and invented, embodied and expressed, depending as often on the desires of the audience as on the form itself.

If that is the figuration of the persona in the essay, then its narrative actions are equally loose and fluid. The goal, as established by Montaigne, is to embody a mind actively engaging its work:

I go out of my way, but rather by license than carelessness. My ideas follow one another, but sometimes it is from a distance, and look at each other, but with a sidelong glance. [...] It is the inattentive reader who loses my subject, not I. Some word about it will always be found in a corner, which will not fail to be sufficient, though it takes little room. I seek out change indiscriminately and tumultuously. My style and my mind alike go roaming. (“Of Vanity,” 925)

Central to the essay’s action, then, is an associative framework filled with digressions, expansions, references, and generally an intentional (‘licensed rather than careless’) lack of linear progression. Addressing this formal style as an

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<sup>1</sup> See Klaus for a recent sense of the essay’s dual enactment of persona as “evocation of consciousness and evocation of personality” (2010: 3).

epistemological activity, Adorno notes that “[i]n the essay, concepts do not build a continuum of operations, thought does not advance in a single direction, rather the aspects of the argument interweave as in a carpet. The fruitfulness of the thoughts depends on the density of this texture. Actually, the thinker does not think, but rather transforms himself into an arena of intellectual experience, without simplifying it” (Adorno [1958] 1984: 160-161).

Adorno’s image of an arena adds weight to the sense of essay as narration, because it implies the ‘transformation’ of the essay as a static conveyance of thoughts into the active behavior of an essayist marshalling ideas and experiences that are unfolding before rather than being pursued (let alone caught) by the reader. The resulting sense of drama and temporality are in keeping with Montaigne’s sense of the form, and also with a sense of his persona. That overall sense enlivens the elements of Kellogg and Scholes’s classic definition of literary narrative: here there is the vital “presence of a story and a story-teller.” Such fusion is often lacking in nonfiction films whose voice-of-god narration is the essence of extradiegetic voiceover. But the essay’s persona is part and parcel of the story. That is, the story of the essay is the immediately present persona working through the ideas and issues at hand. It is the ‘drama’ or tension of the thinking, embodied in the figure of the persona, that makes for the drama and tension of the narrating. Like Scheherazade, the essayistic narrator does not resolve the essay situation, but merely ends the current discussion.

This action, central to the essay, can be more immediately recognized in the film essay because it is more deeply integrated and immediate in that form. As the film essay pursues its own desire to use oral narration and yet avoid voice-of-god omniscience, it is precisely a refusal of narrative fixity and authority, as well as an ostensible division between teller and tale, that the essay film put forward – to the extent that many essay films literally place the figure of the narrator/filmmaker in the frame – not to increase authority but to make the narrator an element of the cinematic. The ensuing fluidity of persona, coupled with a denial of certainty in the essayistic voice, creates the foundation upon which the film essay is constructed.<sup>1</sup>

This particular alignment of the cinematic with the essayistic is especially fruitful, since it provides an opportunity to double – at a minimum – Montaigne’s prose-

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<sup>1</sup> This ongoing presence can be suggested even in borderline essay films such as those of Errol Morris. Morris may eschew audible narration in his works, but his highly stylized visuals are their own form of narrative presence. That visual narrative is paired with another key feature of essay films: a concern with reflexivity. A former PhD student in philosophy, Morris is deeply invested in the specific question of how reality – through the telling and retelling of stories – is constructed. It is not difficult to argue, in fact, that the topic of his films is the nature of narrative and that his signature visual style is a heterodiegetic focalization that comments on the diegesis and the larger topic as a whole.

based multivocality through visual narration. This possibility is a function of what Verstraten describes as the creation of a “fictive narrator” that is actually made up of “a visual and an auditive narrator” (2009: 10). By playing with these and other permutations available in the medium, the film essay becomes not simply a multiplication of representational realities, but an excess of narratives, voicings, and focalizations, all of which serve to jam the machinery of documentary’s traditional narrative certainty and proclamation. The result is a shifting of the nonfiction film essay’s relation to ‘the real’, converting it from predominantly mimetic representation to enactment of narrativity as performance in a complex and highly playful embodiment of the nature of narrative itself.

#### 4. Narration and the film essay

With that framework in mind, most characterizations of the essay film trace its heritage back to that of Montaigne’s prose essay, his declared stance of “*Que sais-je?*,” and the form’s overall rejection of anything representing a voice-of-god declaration of authority.<sup>1</sup> Instead of omniscient, voice-of-god conviction, within the Montaignean prose essay we find the ostensible voice of a lone author, and voices of multiple other authors via paraphrase and citation, and myriad examples and allusions, and a plethora of digressions and side-steps away from the principal topic – all in service to a fluid persona. For its part, the film essay is often an intentional response to the auditory narrative voice in nonfiction film that refuses to go away. Essay films often use oral narration to directly evidence a particular desire to turn traditional (or at least popularly conceived) spoken narrative on its head, to use the tradition in ways that question the assumed authority of narrative voice via reflexivity. In short, the film essay provides a prime example of metafilmic activity in the cinematic process, more specifically in service to a de-authorizing of voice-of-god narration. Ross McElwee’s *Sherman’s March* demonstrates such questioning of traditional documentary’s narrative performance with a simple play on the voice-of-god certainty that we witnessed earlier in Capra’s propagandistic World War II documentary. It does so through its opening, where the film clearly echoes the didacticism of classic ‘World at War’ propaganda.

#### **[SHERMAN’S MARCH CLIP 1: MAP]**

On its face, this opening is precisely what so many expect from – and so many dislike

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<sup>1</sup> The connection is regularly made in theorizing about the essay film. The two extended studies of the essay film by Corrigan (2011) and Rascaroli (2009) that have recently appeared do so directly. Renov (2004) does so as well in *The Subject of Documentary*. And there is Godard, of course.

about – traditional narration in nonfiction film. It is a singular voice, distant in its voiceover, declarative in its objective rendering of reality. Hardly what one would expect from a film essay devoted to decentering narrative voice. But the scene is not yet over, as the voiceover on the still of Sherman becomes voice-off in the ensuing seconds:

### **[SHERMAN'S MARCH CLIP 2: MAP]**

This commentary on the voiceover, this voiced annunciation of the voiceover's construction, re-voices the narrative. It is not often, after all, that we get to hear the voice of god editing himself. The mimicry of the scene signals McElwee's awareness of the narrative didacticism so often and readily ascribed to documentary. Voice-of-god narration, and the equivalently didactic formula of graphic illustration, is followed by the narrator's – now off-script as well as voice-off – comments and the subsequent dialogue between McElwee and his narrator/former teacher, Richard Leacock. What starts as of a dutiful following of the rules becomes a parodic breaking of omniscient, voice-of-god narration –and even of the 'omniscient camera narration' of direct cinema.<sup>1</sup>

While McElwee provides us with a clear – and clearly oppositional –response to traditional voice-of-god narration, such opposition to documentary certainty is not new to the film essay. It exists as early as Bazin's ostensible naming of the genre in his review of Chris Marker's ground-breaking *Letter from Siberia*. McElwee echoes Marker in questioning the act of narration – but here not through a self-questioning, voice-of-god narration as in Marker, but through what now appears almost as voice-off narration, a sense of the narration as immediate performance. Such narration already moves beyond that established years earlier by Marker, and McElwee will quickly the complicate the process of narration further.

### **[SHERMAN'S MARCH CLIP 3: BW OPENING]**

Here we have not simply a voiceover questioning its own narrative, but apparently an introduction of the narrator himself. Viewers have no direct proof of this, of course. But they are likely to infer, via the normal grammar of film, that the figure we see sweeping the floor in an abandoned apartment is the figure who narrates his presence for us. After all, it does not take much acquaintance with visual narration to unite a figure who narrates losing his girlfriend and uncertainty over his future, with

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<sup>1</sup> There is additional historical irony at work here as well, since Richard Leacock was a major figure in the direct cinema movement.

a figure cinematically framed in deep space who is aimlessly sweeping the floors of a desolate, unfinished, and abandoned apartment. I = he, as it were, in a Proustian collapse of first- and third-person narration into a single narrative figure who narrates both orally and visually, even as the 'information tracks' remain somewhat separate.

This brief sequence begins to suggest the capacities of film to address and extend the activity of the Montaignean homodiegetic narrator. Filmmakers have not missed those possibilities, and the ensuing interest in Montaigne among film essay theorists is deep-seated and not limited to the idea of undermining voice-of-god narrative certainty. There is an equivalent interest in Montaigne's declaration that he takes "himself" as the material for his essays, in his desire to use the medium of writing to understand himself in the act of understanding others and other issues. At the same time, while the author is implied in the matter of the essay, it is through a persona that the essay enacts thinking lest it become memoir. As the Corrigan epigraph emphasizes, it is the act of presenting the narrator thinking within the medium of representation that defines the essay.<sup>1</sup>

While the appearance of that dynamic is often historically tied to Marker, there are multiple precursors to be found, in regard to both cinematic questioning of one's own narration (e.g., *Nuit et brouillard*) and linkages between essayistic composition and cinematic production (e.g., Astruc's concept of *caméra-stylo*). As for the latter, although damaged by its linkage to heavily romanticized concepts of auteurism, the camera as pen finds new echoes in the practice of today's film essayists. For example, it is closely echoed in Agnès Varda's concept of "*cinécriture*." As Brioude notes, "Le concept de *cinécriture*, inventé par Agnès Varda elle-même, signifie ce qui est écrit avec la caméra, son 'phrasé' spécifique pour le distinguer de l'écriture littéraire qui requiert la plume" (Brioude 2007). It is not so much a distinguishing from, however, as a comparison to. In Cruikshank's words, "Varda describes her filmmaking – both documentary and feature – as *cinécriture*: "En écriture c'est le style. Au cinéma, c'est le

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<sup>1</sup> I am not unaware of the difficulties surrounding the concept of the implied author. But given the complex and fluid nature of the figure at the heart of the Montaignean essay, some such idea or term is needed. Analysis of the film essay is not invested in characterizing the human "Ross McElwee," for example; nor is it much interested in autobiography or memoir. At the same time, because the persona of the film essay is a construct of the essay itself, there is a gap left between the human "Ross McElwee" and the persona of the text that needs to be recognized and filled in theorizing the form. For better or worse, in this article I am going to use "implied author," all the while assuming that the nature of the prose essay is such that all three of these entities will be seen as interpenetrating (if not the same) by the normal viewer – a group that may well include narratologists when they are not busy being narratologists.

*cinécriture*" (Varda in Cruikshank 2007: 120).<sup>1</sup>

However *écriture* and *cinécriture* are parsed, Varda's documentary film practice is fairly easily aligned with the written essay, both in realization and conceptualization. She herself describes her *Les Glaneurs* as a "*petit documentaire d'art et essai*" (Varda in Cruikshank 2007: 129), and it might well serve as a model of the form, even more than McElwee's heavily autodiegetic *March*, whose full title is indicative of the dual plot lines running through it: 1) creating a documentary of *Sherman's March* while 2) *Meditat[ing on]the possibility of romantic love [...] during an age of nuclear weapons proliferation*. To a degree, the film drifts toward autobiography, although it mainly draws on events from life to further the narrative. For its part, Varda's film is more closely centered on and through the tradition of a focused topic ("On Gleaning" would be the classic way of titling the piece), which is then followed out through the again traditional elements of example, digression, expert citation and so on. Enunciating that focus, *Les Glaneurs* devotes both visual and vocal narration to revealing the narrator in the process of working through the question of gleaning, as the following scene makes clear:

#### **[GLANEURS CLIP 1: VARDA GLEANING TRUCKS]**

Together, the voiceover and the visuals narrate the performance of topic and relation of self to topic that is occurring on-screen. Varda metaphorically suggests (visual narration) and directly states (voiceover) that the subject of her essay, gleaning, is more than a means of moving into other, more personal topics. Echoing the Montaignean form, then, *Les Glaneurs* does display a marked proclivity for pursuing self through direct reference, and counter-reference, and self-reference. At the same time, it directly narrates connections between the activity of gleaning and the process of filming, intermixing oral and visual narration, providing the active and actively performed intertwining of self and subject central to the essay. As announced in the French title, the film pushes the boundaries of narrative and narrating as the subject of the camera and subject of the essay co-occur in many places.

At the same time, *Les Glaneurs* also maintains some distance between narrator and narrated. Although Varda is a constant presence in the film, both aurally and

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<sup>1</sup> Varda describes herself and her work as "a woman working with her intuition and trying to be intelligent. It's like a stream of feelings, intuition, and joy of discovering things. Finding beauty where it's maybe not. Seeing." Such a description provides that sense of immediacy so readily associated with the camera. But that is merely the beginning, and Varda's essays are not simply narratives that unfold mimetically. "[O]n the other hand," Varda notes, she is also "trying to be structural, organized; trying to be clever. And doing what I believe is *cinécriture*, what I always call cine-writing"; the result is "a handmade work of filmmaking [...] [a]nd I call that cine-writing" (1994: 14).



visually, the two forms are not equally distributed and their function may remain relatively separate. For one thing, Varda is heard primarily in voiceover and at times in actual voice-off, thus maintaining standard documentary narrative form as far as the voiced (i.e., not on-camera) narration goes. When she is fully in frame (rather than fragmented into a body part, such as her hand), Varda remains largely 'voiceless'. To some extent, this separation is underscored by the way in which her presence is often noted as a form of metalepsis or intrusion into the diegesis. When fully visible, she is present more as a subject for perusal – "Agnès Varda" – than as the active narrator. As Pethő notes, these appearances may operate less as outside intrusions into a fictive diegesis and more as a negotiation between Varda's 'worlds': "the reality of herself, the personal world of the author-narrator and the reality captured by cinema vérité style cinematography" (Pethő 2010: 69).

Ostensibly similar metaleptic intrusions may differ, then, in the way they affect the narrative and the way they are experienced. Often, Varda (or more accurately, part of Varda – hands, hair) may be seen at the same time that she is heard in a way that suggests the immediate time of the film's narration. In such instances, when she speaks she is 'of the moment', and her voiced narration presence matches more readily with her physical visibility. As Varda discusses her hands, for example, there is little sense of a gap between the space and time of the visual narrative and the space and time of the spoken narration. Because of the autodiegetic components of the film, even when focused on 'abstract' topics such as gleaning, the voiceover narration paired with the visual presence is less readily experienced as metaleptic (i.e., the narration may be experienced as voice-off within the diegesis even when it is actually post-production voiceover).

But when Varda is visually within the frame, a sense of separation can be felt by the viewer, as Varda is visually converted from speaker to subject, especially when there is what is clearly *voiceover* narration. The ensuing sense of observation or even mild voyeurism suggests a gap between Varda as narrator and Varda as subject that is likewise suggestive of a temporal gap – and of the temporal shiftings of written essay in turn, a gap that may more readily fall into the metaleptic for many viewers, although it may not be clearly intended as such by Varda. As was mentioned above, the prose essay works to suggest the immediacy of thinking, while at the same time giving free rein to memory and reenactment as it plays with the 'location' of its narrator in space and time. Varda's presentation of herself echoes that play with time and narration, regularly easing the metalepsis to produce instead a satisfying complexity of self-analytic persona well within the bounds of the traditional essay form.

Of course the essay, as characterized by Adorno, is a radical form unwilling to stay within the bounds of its own tradition. Not surprisingly, then, it is not hard to find further plays with narrative and narrator. In McElwee, for example, the roles of implied author/filmmaker, narrator, and on-screen performer can appear to be completely contained within the immediate frame of the autodiegesis, as the following clip shows:

#### **[SHERMAN'S MARCH CLIP 4: SELF-INTERVIEW]**

Within this scene, there appears to be almost no complication in narrative positioning. The immediacy of action suggests an almost complete erasure of 'external' focalization, since the camera is visually referenced as being under McElwee's control, thus suggesting a reduction of that device to mere mimetic recorder. The immediacy of the narrator's eye-to-eye exchange with the viewer tends to override viewers' awareness of the presence of camera or any externality whatsoever. But while the scene is subject to the agency and control of the implied author, not to mention the filmmaker, the entire narrating process appears to be contained within the frame, to a greater degree than is found in Varda's ostensible voice-off narration of her fragmented appearances or her narration of her observed self.

It would be surprising, of course, if McElwee did not choose to undercut this narrative situation as well, and he does so in a very direct way in a later film, *Time Indefinite*. Reprising the scene just discussed, McElwee intensifies his essayistic play with narration in a way that reflects not on self alone but also on the process of self-reflective narrating.

#### **[TIME INDEFINITE CLIP: SELF-INTERVIEW2]**

McElwee complicates this similar scene's seeming mimesis and relatively straightforward focalization through his direct voiceover commentary on his on-screen narration. While that extradiegetic complication ostensibly critiques his intradiegetic narration, it achieves much more. His shifting of a fully-contained focalization through an extradiegetic narrative echoes a movement readers have been observing for a long time in fiction, of course, through direct address of the 'dear reader'. What is intriguing here is that the break is not complete, a function of what Chatman describes as "cinema's access to not one but two information tracks – sight and sound" (1999: 315). In this case, the sound track is itself doubled, containing at the same moment not only McElwee's diegetic statements but those of his voiceover narrative as well. The viewer is placed in the midst of an immediate performance,

doubling rather than metaleptically breaking, as it were, the process of essaying the self that forms the heart of the genre. The narrative action is both reflectivity and reflexivity in active union, internal and metatextual, with McElwee's persona moving in and out of its various roles, none of which fully disappear or are completely broken – a feat extremely difficult, if not impossible to achieve in written narration.

Such narrative play can be and is complicated in other ways by McElwee. Not content with his pursuit of off-screen narration as a means of questioning the facticity of documentary practice, McElwee is willing to put the role of narrator itself up for control. In the opening of the following sequence from *Bright Leaves*, we are presented with an ostensibly untroubled, mimetic offering of a standard street scene via the camera's slow, downward pan and tilt. Given the absence of any auditory narration, we are apparently free to read this as direct or pure representation. But as we will see, the unfolding of the scene begins to trouble the narration in ways that seem tailor-made for discussing the issue of focalization.

#### **[BRIGHT LEAVES CLIP 1: STREET SCENE]**

Even the most direct or pure representation has several qualifications that occur in the interaction between scene and viewer. There is the visual narration/focalization provided by the camera apparatus. But that 'naïve' narration is qualified by the now fully established awareness of McElwee as the implied/assumed camera operator – a presence that, given the direct somatic reaction of the viewer to camera movement, is likely to be more strongly sensed than the production activities associated with 'written' or print media. The viewer is likely then, given all that has occurred, to see this not simply as a capturing of the scene but a capturing of the scene *by* Ross McElwee. He is, by now, established as agent within (behind?) all aspects of this filmic production, the ultimate focalizer who drifts toward a diegetic embodiment of the implied author. Even with this apparently simple mimetic representation, then, we already we have complex focalization at work.

It might be argued, of course, that the absence of voiceover or voice-off narration, combined with a fully sutured viewer, erases this sense of complexity, leaving behind not a somatic connection to McElwee but the sense of simple, mimetic camera narration. But that possibility is broken by the intrusion of McElwee's auditory narration, as he declares in voice-off: "I'm in Winston-Salem, North Carolina." With that, the camera narration quickly expands into the intradiegetic, homodiegetic, focalizing narration of McElwee.

Paradoxically, such a narrative stance also suggests simplification or at least

identification, a return to a singular, declarative mood. In direct perceptual terms, we can now consciously merge the literal, somatic focalization of the camera with the narrating focalization of McElwee. Such positions of assurance are always suspect in the essay, of course, and certainly within that of McElwee's film essays, with their continual vibration or tension between the resting moment of a fixed narrative stance and McElwee's relentless undercutting of that position. Immediately, then, McElwee qualifies his own voice-off resolution of the scene that he and camera narrate. This is not a pure representation via camera, nor is the voice-off a declarative mood. Instead, the scene is re-narrated in a way that shifts the relation between narrator and narrating into yet another mood.

This *would* be Winston-Salem *if* McElwee's initial statement were true or if the camera did not lie. But cameras do lie, or at least they are not the pure mimesis assumed by popular ideology and furthered by classic Hollywood style. "This is not really Winston-Salem." It is not even a two-dimensional, camera-based representation of Winston-Salem. As McElwee's now-perhaps *voice-over* further states, this is a simulation of the city, a "permanent film set" used by students at the North Carolina School for the Arts, and McElwee is here not to film the cityscape but to interview Vlada Petrić, "the noted film theorist and historian."

Why this shifting of McElwee's relationship to his own statements? Why this deliberate reworking and undercutting of his own visual and vocal narration? Simply answered, to undercut his own visual and vocal narration. That is, to rapidly pass back and forth over the gaps between implied author, unreliable narrator, and intradiegetic narrator so as to bring forward narrating itself, be it visual or oral, and to signal both its presence and its very fluidity. This vignette thus serves to repeat and instantiate the Heraclitean stance that has been a part of essay behavior since the time of Montaigne. In these few short narrating moves, McElwee shifts positions and effectively undercuts the comfortably declarative mood of voiceover and voice-off narrating in the process.

If this scene offers a prime example of shifting the relation between narrator and narrative statement, its continuation offers a prime example of how to enact the fluidity of the essay through playing with multiple layers of focalization and/or embedding. Having announced his purpose in coming to this set – to meet with Vlada Petrić – McElwee cuts directly to Petrić himself, effectively handing over the vocal narration to Petrić while maintaining control over the visual narration via the camera. In essence, there are now two focalizations present, that of McElwee/camera and that of the figure in the frame, Petrić. Importantly, the cut to Petrić is immediately paired with him speaking directly to the camera, thus controlling the

audio narration in a direct look at the viewer. Technically we are looking through McElwee's eyes (as 'they' look through the camera lens). But Petrić is determined to control the scene himself.

### **[BRIGHT LEAVES CLIP 2: VLADA PETRIĆ]**

Not only does Petrić appear visually at this point, but his dialogue also is the first clearly within the diegesis of the scene. Petrić speaks in dialogue and in the same temporal moment as his appearance. With this shift, we enter the world of cinema as we normally experience it. We are viewing the unfolding of narrative before us, with characters and story fully inhabiting this time and this action. Interestingly, however, the narrating is itself ambiguous in reference and in time. "You can use it or you can discard it," Petrić declares. "If it's not good you can discard it." Here is a bit of temporal qualification. The viewer must guess as to what 'it' refers, inferring that the reference is to something stated at a previous time, the time between the shooting of the street scene (at least in the story – that scene could have been shot later) and the shooting of the Petrić entrance scene.

Of course, the reference is to this footage itself, to the event now unfolding. But the comment is also one about whether or not to use that footage. The discussion is one of how the narrative is to be constructed, or how eventually the story is to be narrated. This is important, because what it raises once again is the reflexive issue of this narrative as constructed, with all that implies. Finally, there is also visual ambiguity added to this mix. What is this wheelchair doing in the shot? Why is Petrić duct-taping wooden slats to the arms? Why are we being visually 'told' of Petrić's interest in this prop? Eventually the visual narration answers that question. It is the classic tracking/dolly shot for films on a budget: McElwee is placed into the chair (we are told this via the position of the camera in relation to Petrić, by fragmented shots of McElwee's pants legs, and by Petrić telling McElwee to get into the chair). Finally, Petrić begins to enact his lecture on film and kinesthesia by pushing McElwee and camera around the set.

What ensues is a hilarious tossing back and forth of narrative emphasis, with McElwee, camera, and Petrić vying for control of the situation and its storyline. The alternation in the dialogue between McElwee and Petrić tends to suggest a sharing of focalization (in addition to that provided through the camera). Yet the topic itself, the 1950 Michael Curtiz film *Bright Leaf*, is suggestive of a further duel over storyline, since the question addresses McElwee's basic pursuit in this film essay: that the story *Bright Leaf* is the story of his family. To discuss that topic, then, is to discuss how the plot line is to proceed. This metatextual activity is part of the overall struggle for

control, especially since McElwee has, to all surface intents and purposes, had the oral narration effectively yanked from him. In addition, although McElwee never relinquishes camera narration, that control actually serves to instantiate his subordinate position. He is seated on a lower plane than Petrić, he is being wheeled backwards around the film set, and he does not even occupy a visible presence in the shot – all that is given over to the looming Petrić, who continually dismisses McElwee’s feeble attempts to reintroduce his status as narrator and prime focalizer in the narrative.

Having used the scene to play with focalization and to engage the question of narrative control, McElwee finally reinstates both. Interestingly, he does not do so visually – rising from the chair, cutting to another scene, or so on – but aurally, shifting the narration out of the frame *per se* and into his own thoughts as heard in near voice off. This choice is interesting on two key grounds. First, it signals viewers’ departure from their familiar, comfortable role of inhabiting a present space as it unfolds before them. Where does this narrating come from, after all? Second, this shift echoes that earlier voice-off narration prior to Petrić’s entrance and the audience’s immersion into the cinematic now (“I am in Winston-Salem”), a scene already used to signal narrative uncertainty. When McElwee wrests control of the narrative focalization from Petrić, the tension is seemingly resolved. But the film’s and its persona’s lack of true voice-or-god dominance is only reinforced by the need for such extradiegetic narration.

This tug-of-war with focalization as a means of playing with essayistic narration is furthered in McElwee’s related play with narrative time, a playing that extends beyond the ambiguity of reference noted above. “I am in Winston-Salem,” McElwee declares. But of course he is not, and not only because he is on a film set. The narrating McElwee is in the sound booth, providing a subsequent narration added after the initial filming. This time gap is not as readily apparent as with the shift in focalization via the cut to Vlada Petrić. But it is underscored by the audience’s movement out of the immediacy of the cinematic moment. While we may ostensibly be occupying the narrative thoughts of McElwee, there remains an awareness that these thoughts originate not in the diegetic moment but in a later moment now brought into this one, a temporal shift that is part of Mary Ann Doane’s (1980) sense of the “uncanny” nature of voice-off and voiceover, an uncanniness not only of disembodiment but of temporality.

The overall play within this scene thus serves to reinforce the nature of the essayistic narrator itself as the activity of “essaying” in the Montaignean sense: a fluid attempt to narrate a sense of self in relation to the materials that make up the essaying.

McElwee signals that goal in the opening scene of *Sherman's March*, and he thoroughly enacts it this scene from *Bright Leaves*, weaving in and out of the topic through complex play with the narrating voice – a regular, even dominant, component of his films. McElwee can do so while maintaining an effective story line because the essay film lends itself to such embedding, echoing, and expanding upon what has been a primary process of the prose essay since Montaigne. Such expansion is not problematized but enhanced by the medium of film, with its multiple venues for providing narration, both visual and auditory.

There is one further component of the prose essay that has been alluded to at various points above: the metatextual. McElwee's parody on traditional oral narrative and Varda's interest in aligning her filming with gleaning hints at such metatextual commentary, without dramatically breaking storyline. McElwee parodies voiceover narration to contrast it to the voiced narration of his film. Varda mimics the act of gleaning by filming her hand closing around a truck, using voiced and visual narration to connect theme or topic in the diegetic and her own activity as filmmaker. Such reflecting on the narrator's behavior in relation to the ostensible topic at hand can be found throughout the prose essay. But there is a further form of reflecting that entails direct discussion of the medium itself, a form not of reflective so much as reflexive analysis that has a long history in both genres.

An often cited example from Montaigne would be the following, from his essay "On Repentance": "my book and I go hand in hand together. Elsewhere men may commend or censure the work, without reference to the workman; here they cannot: who touches the one, touches the other." Montaigne subsequently will link the theme of repenting to the issue of earlier self-representations. But this and lengthier elaborations extend beyond thematics to enter into a concern with the medium itself. Montaigne has made such commentary central to the essay form, and McElwee is also quite ready to introduce similar moments into his films. Here is an example from *Bright Leaves*:

### **[BRIGHT LEAVES CLIP 3: MOTEL MIRROR SCENE]**

Here there is a stronger metaleptic intrusion into the diegesis than that offered at other times. McElwee narrates his thoughts on his relation to the cinematic medium itself, and in doing so appears to more fully leave the diegesis. But the essay form encourages and subsumes such digressions, enveloping them within the overall act of essaying, rather than establishing them as full ruptures with the narrative progression. It is a dynamic enacted in Varda's *Les Glaneurs*, as well, as the following early scene makes clear:

## [GLANEURS CLIP 2: VARDA ON CAMERAS]

In discussing the making of *Les Glaneurs*, Varda has commented on her filmmaking in a way that establishes why these digressions, while more metaleptic than those reinforcing narrative themes, are still subsumed within the boundaries of a particular essay. In an interview on the film, she refers to the dual possibility of both appearing in frame as performer while remaining outside as camera/author. “I have two hands. One has a camera – the other one is acting, in a way. [...] I like very much the idea of the hands. The hands are the tool of the gleaners, you know. Hands are the tool of the painter, the artist” (Varda 2001).

It is a striking image, because it suggests the unification of several levels of narration within the figure of the narrator. Hands glean, paint, film and, through film artistry – with its capacity for immediacy of appearance and voiceover – the film essayist appears to have found a way to solve Virginia Woolf’s paradox lying at the heart of the prose essay: “Never to be yourself and yet always.” In Varda’s cinematic image, self and narration seem to unite. Of course that is a trick of film’s sense of the immediate, as provided by the multiple tracks allowed by visual and auditory narration. Yet for Varda, especially given her orientation toward performance arts, Woolf’s paradox in writing is not a problem in film; it is an opportunity, an opportunity to enact multiple selves through multiple narrative positions or levels within a highly malleable medium. In a postmodern world, never to be oneself is to be oneself, and the act of narration is always an ongoing dynamic, a desirable fluidity rather than a vacillation between poles.<sup>1</sup>

The possibility of myriad narrative modes and embeddings is a benefit of cinematic narration’s complexity, and both McElwee and Varda celebrate it, often visually enacting their belief with plays on multiple visual selves via mirrors. We have seen this sort of cinematic embedding in McElwee’s motel scene, and Varda uses it extensively in *Les Glaneurs* as well. But perhaps the most specific acknowledgment of this embedding can be found in the close to Varda’s *Beaches*.

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to her discussion of *cinécriture*, Varda visually and orally narrates her sense of the dynamic interpenetration of the world of media/self in a variety of ways. Most common are those sequences of obvious performance, where the visual narration is clearly designed to both enact and comment on the topic of ‘Varda’. Such scenes may range from simple historical reenactment to those of performance art, where the visual narration is obviously a constructed set, designed as a metaphor as much as a documentary claim. Among the latter, Pethő notes an installation (presented in *Beaches*), in which Varda creates a room from old film stock from *Les Créatures* (1966) “and literally transforms it into something ‘constructive’, she builds a house out of it, a house of cinema in which she feels she has her real place” (Pethő 2010: 85).



## [BEACHES CLIP: VARDA AND BROOMS]

The sequence has a variety of metaphors at work, both directly within the diegesis and as part of the visual narration. The 80 brooms are a metaphor for Varda's 80 years. At the same time, the dolly shot out, with its revealing of additional brooms as it moves away from Varda, adds a spatio/temporal progression to the metaphor, that of passage through the years. Finally, there is the mirroring of the scene within itself, mimetically in the photo of brooms that Varda holds and then metaphorically in the literal mirroring of Varda herself now holding a mirror in place of the original still of brooms, and so on. In this multi-level narration, all visual, Varda provides one last image of the essay, in which the diegesis is not simply reflecting but also encompassing the extradiegetic world through a play with focalization and narrative levels theoretically capable of infinite expansion.

This is the ultimate essayistic position, of course, with its suggestion of infinite regression or expansion – infinite embedding – even without the presence of spoken narration. Adding that information track would only add, if possible, to the infinite play that is possible. As such, the scene makes two key points to nicely encapsulate this overall discussion. First, the play of visual narration in the film essay is immensely complex, operating in ways that continually problematize the idea of – and desire for – documentary as simple mimetic representation. Second, voiced narration, once an annoying simplification and destruction of the visual power of cinema, is now happily its opposite – a complication of narrative levels and possibilities worthy of equally complex study and critical play. The next set of variations, and they will appear, should only add to the conversation.

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## 1. Experience of music as "experientiality"

1. Music can tell. Numerous studies have demonstrated this, especially those of Eero Tarasti and Márta Grabócz, to mention only the great pioneers in this field. However, they agree that *music cannot* tell stories.<sup>1</sup> For this reason, music has often been considered as non-narrative.<sup>2</sup> Yet music fills almost all the other conditions of narrativity.<sup>3</sup> And above all, one that is not immediately obvious *a priori*: it is the subject of this paper.

I set out with two premises:

(1) It is precisely because music is not narrative in a linguistic sense that it can provide new insights to general narratology. Music can do this with its special features.

(2) Music is narrative because it is the "experientiality of consciousness." I use here a concept developed by Monika Fludernik in *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* (1996). (On the concept of experientiality, see also Caracciolo 2013, 2014: 230–236; Alber and Fludernik 2011; Marty 2011.) "Natural" in this context does not refer to "nature" but to "the life of every day," to "real-life experience":

My use of the concept of the 'natural' relates to a framework of human embodiedness. It is from this angle that some cognitive parameters can be regarded as '*natural*' in the sense of 'naturally occurring' or 'constitutive of prototypical human experience'. The term '*natural*' is not applied to texts or textual techniques, but exclusively to the *cognitive frames* by means of which texts are interpreted. [...]. Readers actively construct meanings and impose frames on their interpretations of

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<sup>1</sup> Generally, "the minimum requirement for talking about narrative is that there is transformation of an object or a state into another and that this occurs within a certain period of time," and "it is in the terms of an abstract plot that we should consider the meaning that a work attempts to give us": the issue is not "to demonstrate that music is able to tell specific stories, but rather to set out in what the musical structures can be associated with narratives" (Tarasti 2007: 209). Or: "We call musical narrativity the mode of organization of the signifiers within a musical form" (Grabócz 2007: 241) (All translations from the French are my own.) See also Almén (2008: chap. 2).

<sup>2</sup> For example: "the narrativity of music is a purely analytical construct situated, cognitively, on a very different level than the narrativity of language, film, or even pictures because it can exercise its power without being consciously recognized" (Ryan 2012: 35). Also Alber and Fludernik (2011): "paintings and music can only occasionally be narrativized." Hence these "aesthetic products lack crucial elements of experientiality in what they are able to represent (most types of music are perhaps not able to represent anything at all)" (30).

<sup>3</sup> Particularly Revaz (2009: 75–82, 100). Revaz proposes to distinguish a set of common properties: "a representation of actions, a chronological order, a transformation (reversal) between the initial state and the final state, a causal chain, an unusual or unpredictable development of the action."

texts just as people have to interpret real-life experience in terms of available schemata. [...]. Unlike the traditional models of narratology, narrativity (i.e. the quality of *narrativehood* in Gerald Prince's terminology) is here constituted by what I call experientiality, namely by the quasi-mimetic evocation of 'real-life experience'. (Fludernik 1996: 12)

This understanding of narratology is part of the so-called postclassical narratology whose main development, compared to "classical" (structuralist) narratology, is the attention brought to the reader in his cognitive relationship with the text.

2. I define the concept of "experientiality" in three points (cf. Fludernik 1996: 12–13, 26–30).

(1) The reader understands a text *according to a pre-existing interpretative framework, that of real life*. A text is narrative in this way not because of a story, but because it refers to the experience of real life ("real-life existence"), fitted into a particular space and a particular time:

I here argue that *narrativity is a function of narrative texts and centres on experientiality of an anthropomorphic nature*" and "[a]ctants in my model are not defined, primarily, by their involvement in a plot but, simply, by their fictional *existence* (their status as *existents*). (26)

(2) Thus, a fictional character is understood by the reader from his own experience of real life, so that *this character is understood as a consciousness*: like the reader, this consciousness acts, speaks, thinks, perceives, and is moved, in interaction with the world around him.

(3) It is "the emotional involvement with the experience and its evaluation [which] provides cognitive anchor points for the formation of narrativity" (13); "[a]ll experience is therefore stored as emotionally charged remembrance." (29)

This experience most often, though not necessarily, takes the shape of a *plot*: Human experience typically embraces goal-oriented behaviour and activity, with its reaction to obstacles encountered on the way. [...] This unexpected occurrence indeed dynamically triggers the reaction of the protagonist, and it is this three-part schema of 'situation-event (incidence)-reaction to event' which constitutes the core of all human action experience. (29)

On this basis, Fludernik defines narrativity as the experience of a consciousness which is understood by the reader according to his own experiences: "narrative is the one and only form of discourse that can portray consciousness, particularly *another's* consciousness, from the inside" (27). This is an anthropomorphic narrativity: we recognize what other lives, fictional characters or not, by what *we* live and feel, what constitutes our own human nature.

I wish now to make two comments on these points:

(1) One is that the limits of such a definition must be marked: narrativity can be identified and analyzed according to “objectively structural features” (Revaz 2009: 74), such as, for example, topics in music.<sup>1</sup>

(2) The other is that this definition must further be clarified: cognitive narratology is often confined to what is narrated, to what is represented, while the essential thing for reader also is in experiencing, or experientiality. Narrative is the movement of “real-life experience” through consciousness.

3. The hypothesis I adopt here is that the experience of music is a *lived experience* through consciousness: experientiality. I examine this hypothesis according to three perspectives that approach musical reality from different angles. Developed more fully in what is to follow. These perspectives will also contribute to narratological theory more generally.

(1) The *process of actualizing* the text by the reader (in the broadest sense of these words “text” and “reader”). This is a process of experientiality for several reasons: at the diachronic level, with “narrative tension”; and at a synchronic level, with the “feeling of unfolding.”

(2) The original narratological status, both musical performer and musical performance, insofar as music can only be *heard*, can exist only when it is played, *performed* by one or more persons; hence, the inevitable presence in the musical experience of *places*, objects, bodies, consciousnesses.

(3) The musical emotion in which a very different form of narrator takes part. I appeal here to the concept of “persona,” but in a way that has nothing to do with the “author” or “implied interpreter.” This leads me to introduce the concepts of “affective attunement,” “empathy” and “emotional contagion,” particularly through the phenomenon of mirror neurons.

We will see that these points of view are inextricably interlinked and that each is dependent on the other.

## 2. The actualization process of the music by the listener

4. We must be able to *actualize* what happens to us in order to turn it into an experience. This actualization process is clearly described by Raphaël Baroni in his work on “narrative tension” (2007, 2010), a principle that Baroni has also applied to music (2011). According to him, it is narrative tension that gives rhythm to the plot, contrasting strong and weak beats, *tension* and *resolution*. It is narrative tension that

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Fludernik (2003: 244): “Narrativity, according to my model, is not a quality adhering to a text, but rather an attribute imposed on the text by the reader who interprets the text as *narrative*, thus *narrativizing* the text” (qtd in Revaz 2009: 74).

allows the reader (or the listener) to be interested, surprised, intrigued by the plot and that he actualizes cognitively and affectively.

This is the central point: *the strong interaction between reader and text through plot* ("reader" and "text" being considered here in the broad sense). However, this interaction includes yet another aspect: *intentions*.

Regarding intention, I refer now to the following:

(1) A chapter in Jean-Marie Schaeffer's *Petite écologie des études littéraires* devoted to intentionality (2011: 83–103), where it is argued that "the principle of intentionality is part of the process of understanding" (90). Schaeffer continues, stating that intentionality

is simply the constitutive rule of understanding and meaning. Reading (that is to say, understanding what you are reading) is to give a meaning to a chain of graphic characters, and to give a meaning to a chain of signs it is to establish it in an expression of an intentional content, that only mental states and actions can achieve. (90)

(2) Alessandro Pignocchi's *L'œuvre d'art et ses intentions* (2012), based on recent work in cognitive science, which demonstrates that we always look for intentionality in a work of art: "even if we wanted to disregard any attribution of intentionality, we could not" (Schaeffer 2012: 10). At issue are not real intentions, but intentions we assign more or less consciously to the author. It is from the clues identified in the work that we try to reconstruct the author's intentions. Pignocchi refers to the "relevance principle" developed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, which explains that "every utterance includes in itself the guarantee of its own relevance (cf. Reboul and Moeschler 1998, chap. 3: "L'héritage de Grice et la pragmatique cognitive"). This view of intentionality also incorporates another factor: the mirror neuron mechanism. The phenomenon of mirror neurons was discovered in the 1990s, in particular by Giacomo Rizzolatti and his team (see Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia [2006] 2011, and, for an overview, Rizzolatti and Destro 2008). The basic principle is easy to grasp: when we watch someone perform an act, mirror neurons, which are located in the prefrontal cortex motor, discharge as though we ourselves were performing this act. The same for the sounds we hear or for the dance we watch (cf. Hyman 2012; Kohler et al. 2002; Becker 2010: 40–45). Our motor system – *action* – and our sensory functions – *perception* – inform each other mutually. In other words, seeing and hearing are *acting*.

From the beginning, the term used has been "mirror neuron system." However, Rizzolatti declared during a lecture given in November 2010 that it would be more accurate to speak of mirror neurons in terms of *basic mechanism* of the nervous system: present in different parts of the brain, while maintaining a direct connection between sensory information and motor activation, its specific function changes according to the area in which it is located. (qtd in Sofia 2011: 238–239)

Hence the title of Rizzolatti's lecture: "The mirror mechanism: a neural mechanism for understanding others."

I will return later to some of the numerous implications of this discovery. Here I mention only one of these implications, highlighted by Marco Iacoboni and his team (2005): the mirror neuron mechanism enables one to construe the intentions of others in a given context. As they explain,

there are sets of neurons in human inferior frontal cortex that specifically code the "why" of the action and respond differently to different intentions [...] [t]o ascribe an intention is to infer a forthcoming new goal, and this is an operation that the motor system does automatically. (Iacoboni et al. 2005: 0005)<sup>1</sup>

Above all, *it is from the motor acts repertoire at our disposal that we understand what we see, what we hear, that we understand the actions and the intentions of others.* This concerns both language and music, as demonstrated by a study of Istvan Molnar-Szakacs and Katie Overy in their article "Music and mirror neurons: from motion to 'e'motion" (2006). It is also argued that music has always been associated with *action*. It is thanks to the mechanisms described above that we are able to access the experience of others. It is also by these means that we are able to experience a musical work, based on our own experience of the world, our own repertoire of motor actions, our own "experientiality": "[t]his dynamic tension between the experiences that recipients attribute to characters and their own experience is, in my view, constitutive of experientiality" (Caracciolo 2014: 236; see also 231). It is in this way that the mirror neuron mechanism feeds the interactional process of actualizing the text (broadly defined) by the reader.

5. This actualization, which involves interaction between the reader and the text, also requires *intensity*. Indeed, intensity is "the heart of the plot" (Baroni and Corbellari 2011: § 7) and is associated with "the sensed imminence of a settlement to come" (Baroni 2007: 31): *intensity as tension before resolution*.

Intensity also derives from what Daniel Stern calls "forms of vitality," a phenomenon which is important in art, particularly in music, and in human relationships generally. Forms of vitality are neither emotions (Stern [2010] 2010: 40–42) nor sensations nor cognitive states. They are "more form than content," "energy," "a felt experience of force (motion)" with "a particular temporal profile," "one direction." To define this concept, Stern provides a list of words such as "explode," "inflate," "stretch," "accelerate," "powerful," "still," "strained" "ephemeral," etc. (17). These words, he claims,

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<sup>1</sup> This study has been used in part by Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia ([2006] 2011: 138–141). See also Fogassi et al.: "Because the monkey knows the outcome of the motor act it executes, it recognizes the goal of the motor act done by another individual when this act triggers the same set of neurons that are active during the execution of that act" (2005: 665). This study has been used in part by Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia ([2006] 2011: 121–124). See also Mukamel et al. (2010) and Oztop, Kawato and Arbib (2012).

reflect a felt experience of strength (in motion) with a temporal profile (and energy) directed towards something. They are connected to no content. They are more form than content. [...] For me, the dynamic forms of vitality are the most fundamental of all the experiences that one can feel through an interaction with other persons in motion. (17–18)

For Michel Imberty, these forms are “felt,” they “provide a thickness for the moment, for the present action or the emotion in progress” (2005: 195).

But above all, forms of vitality transform the content into dynamic experience (cf. Stern [2010] 2010: 34–38). Moreover, they give a dynamic contour to the nodes that punctuate narrative tension, and they increase the number of these nodes of tension by playing upon every possible parameter, sometimes even on micro-moments. In music, “activation and excitation variations” may emerge with a change of intensity, rhythm or tempo, an accent, a tie, etc. (104–107).<sup>1</sup> In this perspective, Imberty suggests analysis of works by Debussy, Webern and, above all, of Schoenberg's *Erwartung* (210–232). The music of Hugues Dufourt, for example, can also be addressed in this way, as shown by Jan Pasler, even though she does not refer explicitly to forms of vitality: rather, she adopts terms like “range of tempi,” “spectrum of speeds, of turbulences,” “teetering spaces,” “overhanging structures,” “interwoven axes and loops” (2011: 199). The same goes for the theoretical texts written by Dufourt (e.g., 2006, 2009, 2010).

To recap, the following points about forms of vitality should be noted:

(1) Their “metamodal” nature, since they do not belong to any “specific sensorial modality, but to all (vision, hearing, touch, etc.)” (Stern 2010: 38, 103).

(2) Their twofold narrative potential, since they dynamize the narrative at the same time as they engender points of micro-tensions, which themselves have a temporal profile.

(3) Their capacity for opening up musical experience in all of its dimensions, thanks to their energy and to their bodily and physical reality. They also convey contents such as emotions and their directionality as well as the feeling of space they create (Stern 2010: 12–13). Further on, we will discuss the argument that forms of vitality are a key factor in experientiality.

6. Not everything, however, is narrative. Mirror neurons and forms of vitality do not bear exclusively on narrative, and they may even impede or threaten narrative. According to Jean-François Bordron (2012a), diachronic narrativity is crossed by a “synchrony of sensation” which is also “temporal.” Levels of temporality can interact without being described as successions. Hence the notions of “unfolding” and “forming” to indicate a “disposition toward something,” but with no resolution in

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<sup>1</sup> See the chapter in Stern's book entitled “Le problème du codage de l'expérience des formes de vitalité dans la musique, la danse, le théâtre et le cinéma” (2010: 104–125: dance, 107–113; drama, 114–119; film, 119–125).



the narrative sense (for further developments, see also Bordron 2012b). Indeed, narrativity does not control everything, and a mere inflection of voice (a form of vitality) can change everything in terms of effect, even suspending the narrative for a short time. In music, *sound* and *timbre*, by their very nature, illustrate this thickness, this “synchrony of sensation” which cannot be completely domesticated, even by a narrative logic.

This “synchrony of sensation” is what Daniel Charles calls “the noise of form,” present in all music, which “resound[s], in an uninterrupted murmur, the noise of the world, the very rustling of what is” (2001: 110). Hence a form of narrativity is present in sound itself, like a level of temporality nested in the unfolding of sound... One particularity of music is that for this network of forces and forms to exist, someone has to *perform* it. And I say “who *performs* it” before saying “who *interprets* it.”

### 3. The original narratological status of the musical narrator

7. In music, the performer is at once receiver and narrator:

(1) Receiver, because he offers his vision of a work, his *interpretation* of it. The study of that interpretation may be the subject of a hermeneutics of musical reception, comparable to answering questions relating to a particular self-understanding (cf. Hauer 2007).

(2) Narrator, because *it is he who speaks*, who speaks *in the name* of the work, who *speaks from inside* the work. And as narrator, in particular, he is the performer who gives form to the work, who gives form to its specific events. The performer is even a necessary condition: in music, without *performing*, or narrating, *there is no real work*. It is thus the performer who fulfils all the functions usually assigned in general narratology to the narrator. In this regard, I refer in particular to two articles in *the living handbook of narratology*:

(1) “Narrator,” by Uri Margolin (2012: esp. par. 1–9): “the narrator can be envisioned as a fictional agent who is part of the story world and whose task it is to report from within it on events in this world which are real or actual for him” (9).

(2) “Mediacy and Narrative Mediation,” by Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik (2011: esp. par. 17–18): “narratives always present a story which is mediated by a narrator’s discourse” (par. 18). In Genette’s model, “the narrating act shapes and transforms the story through the narrative discourse”; see his distinction between “story” (the events narrated), “narrative” (the discourse that tells it) and “narrating” (the actual or fictional act which produces this speech) (par. 17). Moreover, “one of the functions of narrative is to convert one time into another time” (Christian Metz, qtd in Genette 2007: 21).

Is this not what the interpreter is doing, since he transforms into time a work which is somehow “off-time” or *before time – a substance which is not yet formed!* In this meaning, musical narrativity takes place at a pre-linguistic level.

In music, there is something special: this narrator is a *real* narrator, in flesh-and-blood. There thus arises another, strictly narratological, question: the status of performance. Indeed, the performer in music is a narrator who necessarily gives shape to the work by a performance. It is the same whether the performance is heard on a recording or live: in either case, we know, we *feel* that someone – a real person – is playing or singing. In music, the performer is a narrator, since he makes present – literally creates – the *text* of the work, from the inside (and the *created* text has the same status as the text of a novel, for example). He is *at the same time* a performer, since he provides a personal *reading* of the text, and because this reading is received by an audience (music as performing art). In short, the interpreter is the narrator *and* he plays – performs – the role of that narrator.

I repeat here the distinction made by Ute Berns (2012) between “performativity I” (“Corporeal Presentation of Action”, par. 15–18), which applies to music, and “performativity II” (“Non-corporeal Presentation of Action”, par. 19–32).

“Performativity” means the way an action is presented or mentioned (par. 2). For each of these two modes of performativity, she introduces a further distinction between “story” (i) and “discourse” (ii):

(1) Performativity I.i refers to the level of *histoire* (the story that is presented) in the performance, i.e. in the fully embodied enactment of a narrative. The spectator of the performance perceives the unfolding of a story in a scenic transmission, bodily presented by one or more actors.

(2) In the case of Performativity I.ii, the spectator of a performance perceives an act of narration taking place. Here the performance consists in the presentation of a story by the narrator or presenter, e.g. in the figure of the rhapsodist *vis-à-vis* an audience. The story is mediated in a plurimedial manner by a single narrator / presenter. His or her voice, body or actions rather than those of individually embodied persons or characters form the core of the performance which allows for different degrees of impersonation. (par. 7; cf. par. 3)

In music, the two levels are equally relevant, and it is thus hardly possible to distinguish between them: (ii) probably takes greater importance in a public performance and (i) in a recorded performance.

8. However, the central question lies elsewhere: in the relationship between performance and musical text (i.e. the score). The notion commonly used in narratology to refer to this relationship is “mediacy” (cf. Alber and Fludernik 2011). This concept is used to specify the level where the discourse takes place, either with the performance (through a narrator who narrates) or in the *text* (the text that

“narrates” itself). Mediacy in this sense refers to what I call *the* center of gravity of *discourse*.

For drama and film, the question of mediacy raises a problem when it comes to performance:

Performance poses quite difficult problems for mediacy. In fact, one could enquire whether the notion of mediacy might here be an exclusively reception-oriented one. Is the story mediated to the audience through the experience of the performance? This question indicates that current research on mediacy has some distinct limits or horizons and that numerous matters are waiting to be resolved by further research. The role of mediacy in drama and film remains open to study: does it make sense to posit a dramatic or cinematic narrator? Can one argue that they are mediated by the performance? Or should we assume that plays and films are mediated by an implied author or filmmaker? (Alber and Fludernik 2011: par. 33, 35)

According to Alber and Fludernik, two options (or centers of gravity) are available for resolving these issues (par. 31–32):

- (a) the performance is the *discourse*, and the text a set of instructions for the performance;
- (b) the performance is a distinct manifestation of the text, and then *the text is the discourse* sketching an ideal performance: the text is no more a set of instructions, but the mediation of the implicit author.

For drama, the question is not resolved, and both options can constitute objects of distinct analysis. But in music, things are different. Indeed, if a play can be *read*, music exists only if it is *performed*. Even people who are able to read a score can hear the music internally only if they have previously heard some music. Someone who has never heard the sound of a violin or a trumpet will not be able to imagine the sound of such an instrument by reading a score. Theater is written in a language known by everyone, *verbal* language, which refers to the concrete reality of the world and all its stories, while music is written in a specifically musical language, unknown by non-musicians: music does not refer to another reality than itself. In other words, a drama can be summed up, translated into any language; this is impossible for a musical work. There is no specific theatrical object (in *written* theater), but the musical object is always specific and must be performed in its own language, since the musical text, the score, has no immediate concrete existence (although it can be analyzed as an object *per se*, such as an anthropological or semiotic product).

Thus in music, performance is a *necessary* condition, without self-sufficiency in relation to the text. Music becomes real only by being projected physically, audibly into space through the musician (see Brétéché 2012: 54–59). The two options mentioned earlier are not distinct but complementary. The first, *performance*, must lead to the other: the *text*.

Therefore, *the musical text, i.e. the score, is a set of instructions that performance must use to do justice to the implied author and his intentions*. This being the case, a performance may be more or less successful in relation to the text, and it may even fail.

This is a key point, for at least two reasons:

(a) from the narratological point of view, since music raises the problem of performance, and therefore of *mediacy*, in a particular way as compared with the other forms of art;

(b) from the point of view of experientiality.

9. Regarding the first point, since music is performance, the figure of the performer is *physically* present in all music, recorded music included. And in fact, what is *mediated*, even more than a performance or a musical text, is an *experience* of this artwork by one or more real people playing real instruments in a given space and at a given time.

The factor of physical reality, of *experience*, is heightened even more through the action of the forms of vitality which, as Daniel Stern has demonstrated, are a fundamental aspect of interpretation in the performing arts (2010: 131).

At least two aspects of forms of vitality in music can be distinguished:

(a) those that are indicated in the score (accents, dynamics, etc.);

(b) those that are not indicated anywhere and that are related to particular performances inasmuch as “the difference between a technically successful execution and an interpretation which transports us lies in the unique dynamic vitality that a great artist can bring to the work, and pass on a public” (Stern 2010: 131).

Thus,

Manfred Clynes, professional pianist and psychologist, described the domain he called ‘sentic’ [...]. He has especially distinguished the different ways for a finger hitting the key of a piano and studied the effect of the shape of touch and sound that it generates on the emotion of the pianist and the listener. He described there, in essence, something very close to the forms of vitality, but classified it under the category of emotions. (54)

The status of performer in music is therefore quite particular:

(a) from the strictly narratological point of view, as *playing*, giving shape and existence to the work;

(b) from the point of view of the performance, as the expression of a person in flesh-and-blood, as the expression of a *consciousness* – a consciousness perceived as such.

Just think about the importance given to interpretation in music.

It follows, then, that beyond the narrative character of the music there is a narrator who presents the music, who gives form to the music. This argument strengthens the narrative character of the music, especially because the narrator acts as a consciousness and expresses *an experience related* to real life.

So what is mediated through a performance is, above all, experience. This is all the more so in the concert hall, where performers are physically present with their movements and facial expressions, evoking a story, sufferings, a character, etc. There now remains a final issue to deal with: the role of emotion in this experience.

#### 4. Emotion in music as “experientiality”.

10. From the argument above, we know who is *speaking*: it is *he who plays*, the performer. We also know *for what and in the name of what* he speaks: a work of art, that is to say, a substance to which form – *a form* – must be given. But ultimately, what do we hear? The artwork itself? The real author? The implied author? The interpreter-narrator? In fact, *what we hear is all of this*.

I introduce here the concept of “persona.” It is, in fact, another form of narrator, which enables us to tackle the delicate category of emotion by avoiding some of its traps such as considering emotion as an autonomous entity, *expressed* by music and more or less felt by the listener.

It is on the basis of Tom Cochrane’s “Using the Persona to Express Complex Emotions in Music” (2010), Michael Spitzer’s “The Topic of Emotion” (2012) (referring in particular, on page 218, to Stephen Davies; see also Spitzer 2010) and Jenefer Robinson’s “Expression and Expressiveness in Art” (2007) (referring in particular, on pages 26, 27, 29, 38, to Jerrold Levinson), that I define the concept of persona. This concept means that music can be heard as the *expression of emotions* felt by someone in the music:

a listener follows music like the actions, gestures and intonations of a person, together with their associated emotions. This activity requires listening with imagination, by which the listener tracks, understands and internalizes the music’s emotional contour. There is here an aspect of immediacy, or affordance, especially in the way we move with the music, and identify with its motions. Music does this, as Robinson points out, in a ‘quick and dirty’ fashion, so that we ‘catch’ its affect or mood through emotional ‘contagion’. (Spitzer 2012: 218)

But what emotion are we talking about? What psychological mechanisms does emotion call on? Indeed, is the very term “emotion” appropriate?

11. I draw now on a few perspectives taken from two complementary proposals.

(1) What about this term “emotion”? In their introduction to *Handbook of Music and Emotion* (2010), Patrick Juslin and John Sloboda note that “emotion” refers to phenomena that it would be more appropriate to designate by the term “affect,”

emotion being only one affect among others (2010: 9, 11).<sup>1</sup> From there, I propose to distinguish, within this category of affect, between “emotion” and “mood,” and this in terms of intensity of feeling: high intensity for emotion, low intensity for mood.

(2) I also refer to the traditional distinction between what is *expressed* by music and what is *felt* by the listener. According to several studies, including a recent article by Emery Schubert (2013; cf. also Evans and Schubert 2008; Juslin and Lindström 2012; Juslin 2013a, 2013b), it appears that the listener generally recognizes what is expressed by music. However, recognizing or sharing a feeling is not necessarily being moved (see also the distinction between “expression” and “expressiveness”; Robinson 2007):

when listening to music I am often cognitively engaged without experiencing overt symptoms of emotions, yet no less committed to the expressive force of the music. [...]. Granted, sophisticated tests could easily find evidence of emotional response in me during such engaged listening, but those responses might as easily correlate with emotions resulting from any kind of satisfying engagement in cognitive activity, not with those emotions which are necessarily interpretable as being directly correlated with the expressed emotional states in the music. [Consequently,] we need not experience actual emotions ourselves, either as co-participants or as passionate witnesses, even when we recognize those emotions to have been expressed in the trajectories composed into a work. (Hatten 2010: 90, 95)

More precisely:

Whether a piece of music that expresses a particular emotion will induce the same emotion, a different emotion, or no emotion at all is not a simple issue, but rather depends strongly on the precise psychological mechanism involved. First, it should be noted that we may often perceive emotions in music without feeling emotion at all – at least not one evoked by the music. (Estimates suggest that music induces emotions in only about 55–65 per cent of the episodes – Juslin & Laukka, 2004; Juslin et al., 2008). Second, when an emotion is really evoked by music, whether the evoked emotion will be the same as or different from the perceived emotion will depend on the precise mechanism involved. (Juslin and Sloboda 2010: 632; on “The relationship between perception and induction,” see 632–633)

Hence there is a distinction, which joins up with that of the distinction between *mood* and *emotion*, between what is *perceived*, recognized, identified, and *emotion* in the full sense of the term, which is *induced* by what is felt. For this distinction between

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<sup>1</sup> See also Table 1.2: “Definitions of key terms as used in the *Handbook of Music and Emotion*” (10). The proposed definition for “affect” is: “This is used as an umbrella term that covers all evaluative – or ‘valenced’ (positive/negative) – states (e.g. emotion, mood, preference). The term denotes such phenomena in general.” And the definition for “emotion”: “This term is used to refer to a quite brief but intense affective reaction that usually involves a number of sub-components-subjective feeling, physiological arousal, expression, action tendency, and regulation that are more or less ‘synchronized’. Emotions focus on specific ‘objects’ and last minutes to a few hours (e.g. happiness, sadness).”

*expressed, felt* (or perceived) and *induced*, I refer in particular to Steven Livingstone and William Thompson's "The emergence of music from the Theory of Mind" (2009; see also Juslin and Sloboda 2010: 632).

Generally brief and intense, this induced emotion often manifests itself through physical phenomena such as shivers. According to David Huron and Elizabeth Margulis (2010), the cause of shivers is now widely known. They are triggered mainly by contrasts of dynamics, register, tempo, rhythm, tonality, entrance of new instruments or voices, return of a melodic theme, etc. These contrasts are generally related to two factors: surprise or the unexpected, and energy:

The most important acoustic correlate is a rapid large change of loudness, especially a large increase in loudness (*subito forte*). A less robust acoustic correlate appears to be the broadening of the frequency range (i.e. the addition of low bass and/or high treble). Musical correlates include the entry of one or more instruments or voices; the return of a melody, theme or motive; an abrupt change of tempo or rhythm; a new or unprepared harmony; abrupt modulation; or a sudden change of texture. [...]. Notice that two common elements can be found in this list of features. First, adjectives such as abrupt, rapid, sudden, new, and unprepared suggest that the precipitating musical events may be surprising or unexpected. A second common theme is high energy, such as increased loudness or the addition of sound sources. (Huron and Margulis 2010: 594; see also Burger et al. 2012)

A study published by Glenn Schellenberg et al., entitled "Changing the tune: listeners like music that expresses a contrasting emotion" (2012), shows that music with a strong emotional intensity is particularly appreciated by listeners and that this intensity is increased when *contrasted* emotions are expressed. This study also points out that the nature of the induced emotion is the same, whether this emotion is related to a gay or a sad feeling:

The analyses revealed four main findings: (1) listeners reported greater appreciation and a more intense emotional response when the music contrasted in emotional status to that of music heard previously, (2) liking and intensity ratings were correlated positively, (3) the contrast effect for liking disappeared when the intensity of listener's emotional responses was held constant, and (4) response patterns were similar whether the background emotion was happiness or sadness. (Schellenberg et al. 2012: 6)<sup>1</sup>

At issue is thus an emotion which is beyond felt emotions such as joy, sadness, etc. – a *generic* emotion. That is why it is an induced emotion, not an emotion that feels

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<sup>1</sup> See also a study demonstrating that "listeners were much more likely to make strong emotion ratings for monophonic textures than for any other multiplicity level, and multiplicity effects seemed to be greater for loneliness and pride ratings than for sadness and happiness ratings" and that "positively-valenced emotions are more easily perceived when more musical voices are present, whereas negatively-valenced emotions are perceived more strongly when fewer voices are present" (Broze and Brandon 2012: 166). See also Korsakova-Kreyn and Dowling (2012).

what the music expresses. The same emotion can also be experienced in front of a picture, a sunset or even a trivial event in everyday life:

an expression of emotion is a piece of behavior that (1) issues from somebody or other who is actually experiencing the emotion, and (2) manifests or reveals that emotion in such a way that other people can perceive the emotion in the behavior. Artistic expression has the same basic structure and function as expression in ordinary life. (Robinson 2007: 19)

**12.** Through its intensity, energy and depth, induced emotion is one of the drivers of the persona phenomenon. It is this emotion that involves the listener from an affective and cognitive point of view. The question is not only to recognize but to be an actor of what happens, and especially to be an actor from inside what one hears. Therefore, emotion is not some kind of musical ornamentation, either at the individual or the collective level. Rather, as Leonid Perlovsky contends (2012), musical emotions fulfill a fundamental role:

(a) “in the evolution of consciousness, cognition and culture” (191);

(b) in the reconciliation of “cognitive dissonances” created by the conceptual nature of language.<sup>1</sup> Thanks to this, it was, and still is possible to maintain in individuals and societies “a balance between differentiation and synthesis” (192). This also explains the central place of music: “The main hypothesis of this paper is that maintaining this balance is the very fundamental role that music plays and the reason for evolution of this otherwise unexplainable ability.” (191)

Above all, emotion in music is *engagement, participation, interaction* – in a word, *experience*. This is the meaning of the concept of persona. It is in this sense that persona crystallizes everything we’ve seen up to this point. We hear music speak to us. This music offers us some form of world that we understand or feel, more or less, because we may possibly make it our own, thanks to emotion. Persona is a place, a voice that the listener imagines.

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<sup>1</sup> “Language has contributed not only to the differentiation of conceptual ability, but also to the differentiation of the psychic functions of concepts, emotions, and behavior. This differentiation has destroyed the primordial synthesis of psyche. With the evolution of language the human psyche started losing its synthesis, wholeness. [...] Most of the knowledge existing in culture and expressed in language is not connected emotionally to human instinctual needs. This is tremendously advantageous for the development of conceptual culture, for science, and technology.” (Perlovsky 2012: 190–191)

And: “The proposed hypothesis suggests that language has reduced the direct connections between vocalization and ancient emotional centers. Neural imaging tests could reveal whether music is connected to ancient emotional centers; is this connection direct? Is it different for music and language? To what extent and how does music involve emotional centers in the cortex? Are the neural mechanisms involved in poetry similar to those involved in music?” (195)

Thus, “musical emotions have evolved for the synthesis of differentiated consciousness, for reconciling the contradictions that every step forward differentiation entails, for reconciling cognitive dissonances, for creating a unity of the differentiated self.” (193)



**13.** At least three inseparable phenomena feed into this process and, most importantly, make it possible. What interests me here is how to clarify the concept of persona by showing how the link can be established and, even more, *interaction between the listener and what he hears*.

(1) The first phenomenon is “affective attunement,” as studied by Daniel Stern, based on the model of relationship and *interaction* between a mother and her baby (for a very brief overview, see Stern 2010: 54–57), and subsequently taken up by Michel Imberty (2005: 199–206), a significant part of whose work is nourished by affective attunement.

The principle is as follows: affective attunement is “a coincidence of internal emotional states” (Stern 2010: 56) based on forms of vitality belonging to different and non-verbal modalities. For example, the baby shows joy at having accomplished something, and the mother shows she has understood by responding with a humming “yes,” taking up the same dynamic curve or form of vitality as used by the baby (Stern 2010: 55–56).

The implication of affective attunement for our conception of persona can be drawn from an article by Ulrik Volgsten (2012) who, based on the works of Daniel Stern, has developed a theory of the “psychogenesis of music.” According to this theory, interaction and communication between people is, first of all, musical, that is to say, *protomusical*. What makes this interaction possible is the emotional and affective power of sound: “human interaction and communication is at the outset musical – or protomusical – and that which makes interaction and communication work is the emotive or affective power of sound” (200). “[To] hear a melodic contour is fundamentally to feel it” (202), in other words, to experience it – as coming from someone who speaks to us.

(2) The second phenomenon, inseparable from the first, is “mirror neurons,” which we have looked at in connection with the reconstruction of others’ intentions. This process includes the emotions, as in the case of affective attunement, triggered by activation of the mirror neurons. I return again to Istvan Molnar-Szakacs and Katie Overy’s study (2006), whose title is revealing: “Music and mirror neurons: from motion to ‘e’motion.” Judith Becker (2010) quotes this study in a paper with an evocative title: “L’action-dans-le-monde. Émotion musicale, mouvement musical et neurones miroirs” (“Action-in-the-world. Musical emotion, musical movement and mirror neurons”).

(3) The process of persona can thus be formulated as follows: this *someone* who feels emotions and that we hear express himself in music is an *intentional* reconstruction brought about by the mirror neurons mechanism, and we empathize emotionally, or not, with this someone by the action of the forms of vitality. Hence the third phenomenon, which appears once the first two phenomena are consummate:

“emotional contagion” or “empathy.” I refer here to a paper published by Patrick Juslin and John Sloboda (2010), according to whom:

Emotional *contagion* refers to a process whereby an emotion is induced by a piece of music because the listener perceives the emotional expression of the music and then “mimics” this expression internally. Emotional contagion has mostly been studied regarding facial expression [...], but Neumann and Strack (2000) has also found evidence of contagion from emotional speech. Because music may often feature sound patterns similar to those that occur in emotional speech [...], it has been proposed that we get aroused by voice-like aspects of music via a process in which a neural “module” responds quickly and automatically to certain stimulus features, which leads us to mimic the perceived emotion internally [...]. While the notion of emotional contagion via music admittedly remains somewhat speculative, a recent fMRI study by Koelsch et al. (2006) found that music listening activated brain areas related to a circuitry serving the formation of pre-motor representations for vocal sound production (no singing was observed among the participants). Koelsch et al. concluded that this could reflect a mirror-function mechanism, similar to the so-called “mirror neurons” proposed as a possible explanation of emotional contagion via other non-verbal channels (Preston & de Waal, 2002). (622; see also, esp. 628–629; cf. Vuoskoski and Eerola 2012: 1112–13)

I refer also to three collaborative studies conducted by Stefan Koelsch which put forth in particular the hypothesis mentioned above concerning relationship between emotion caused by music and activation of the mirror neurons.<sup>1</sup> Also to be mentioned is a collective study conducted by Birgitta Burger et al. (2013) showing that the bodily movements triggered by music reveal constants in relation to the emotions expressed by this music: the results of this study “could provide support for Leman’s (2007) concept of ‘Empathy’: the participants (unconsciously) identified the underlying emotions in the music and used their body to express and reflect the affective content” (181).

Finally, the most important study in this area is probably that of Arnie Cox, “Embodying Music: Principles of the Mimetic Hypothesis,” published in 2011: This essay describes a hypothesis of how music becomes internalized into the bodies and minds of listeners. [...]. The mimetic hypothesis addresses the matter of embodiment by showing how musical imagery – recalling, planning, or otherwise thinking about music – is partly *motor* imagery. Motor imagery is imagery related to the exertions and movements of our skeletal-motor system, and in the case of music this involves the various exertions enacted in musical performance. The mimetic

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<sup>1</sup> Koelsch et al. (2006), and in the same study it is also demonstrated that “the effects of emotion processing have temporal dynamics” (239); Koelsch (2005), and more particularly “Time course of emotion” (415–417), where it is shown that “[t]he intensity of emotions usually changes over time (even if the emotion itself might be the same)” (415). See also Koelsch, Siebel and Thomas (2010).

hypothesis details how this might play out and suggests how it might underlie conceptualization and meaning.

The initial premise of the hypothesis is that part of how we comprehend music is by way of a kind of physical empathy that involves imagining making the sounds we are listening to. This is a special case of the general human proclivity to understand one another via imitation, which we can refer to as mimetic cognition or mimetic comprehension, where “mimetic” is used in the manner specified below; hence, the “mimetic hypothesis. (Cox 2011: 1)

**14.** According to the collective study by Patrick Juslin and John Sloboda (2010), *emotional contagion* is one of the seven psychological mechanisms that form the basis of emotion (622).<sup>1</sup> In my opinion, this is the most profound and potent mechanism, and also the one most closely linked to the music and therefore the most liable to be experienced by the listener, and thereby to lead to a *re-configuration* of his identity (cf. Ricoeur 1985). This is a non-conceptual phenomenon, something that does not represent in the linguistic sense. But it is rooted deeply in real life and is thus no less a phenomenon of experientiality, as defined by Monika Fludernik. Or, to adopt the term Judith Becker uses about musical emotion: an “action-in-the-world.”

We can understand this phenomenon of emotional contagion or empathy as an access path to the *sublime*. According to Hermann Danuser (2007), the sublime reveals “the presence of an alien moment, a moment of rebellion of the senses, of no understanding” (70). He goes on to quote Kant, who spoke of a “revolt against the senses.” The sublime cannot be explained by analysis (70–71). Danuser takes as an example a well-known passage from a work of Beethoven (71, 72–73) which can be analyzed down to the smallest details, but the “mystery of this passage remains intact.” He concludes that “it is precisely because the music is incomprehensible that it gains in greatness” (72).

But is what is true for music not true for any aesthetic experience, including literary experience? We often believe that we are able to better control the literary experience because words and phrases can be paraphrased. But what are we looking for in literature and in art generally? Is it not the experience of the sublime, of what is beyond sense? Ultimately, is it not *beauty*, in the meaning given by Paul Valéry: *beauty, this is what despair?...*

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<sup>1</sup> The other six mechanisms are: “*brain stem reflex*” (620–621), “*rhythmic entrainment*” (621), “*evaluative conditioning*” (622), “*visual imagery*” (622–623), “*episodic memory*” (623), “*musical expectancy*” (623).

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*What is autobiographical authenticity in music? The question of the “secret vocal part” in Alban Berg’s Lyric Suite revisited from a narratological perspective*

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To state that music is a medium and narrative is not a medium, but a transmedial cognitive frame, will hardly trigger controversies. But if transmediality is a key feature of narrative in the sense that narrative has the ability to occur in different media, narrative may be defined in two ways. The first is to construct a media-independent concept of narrative on a level of abstraction that makes it possible to apply this concept to different media. The other way is to define a prototype of narrative with a series of typical features, some, but not all of which, must be found in the medium in question. An example of the first approach is the definition of narrative in the article about “Music and narrative” in the *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Narrative Theory* as “a cognitive frame that can inform a plurality of signifying practices in order to meaningfully represent, and make sense of, temporal experience” (Wolf 2005: 324).

Fotis Jannidis criticizes highly abstract media-independent concepts of narrative such as this as “nothing more than a marginally useful hypostatized abstraction” (Jannidis 2003: 51). As an alternative, he proposes the following prototype: “a narrator tells an audience of listeners something that happened,” to which he attributes a series of typical features: “The histoire is a self-contained meaningful structure whose most important components are chronology, causality, teleology, and intentionality” (51). The most important feature of narrative, however, is representationality, because a “story is not a narrative, but the representation of a story is” (50). The logical consequence of this representational conceptualization of narrative is that it must not be defined media-independently but “should always be treated as something anchored in a medium” (50). For the purposes of the present discussion, the question is thus: What features of narrative are anchored in the medium of music? If, on the one hand, the prototype of narrative is that somebody tells a story, and on the other hand, that it is widely recognized that music cannot tell stories, the question of narrative in music necessarily starts from a position of distance from the prototype. I think the dilemma can only be solved when we don’t think of narrative in music as a formal structure but as a representation of meaning or, as Lawrence Kramer has put it: “narrative elements in music represent, not forces of structure, but forces of meaning” (Kramer 1991: 161). Kramer’s point of departure is the observation that music has been used to accompany stories since the Renaissance in a whole range of different genres from songs and programme music to symphonies which, although without specified programs, nevertheless compel audiences to find



stories in them (cf. 154). Stating that “[i]n relation to narrative, music is a supplement, in the deconstructive sense of the term” (144), he seeks to make Jacques Derrida’s philosophical concept of the supplement productive in the musicological context of the relationship of music and narrative. The term “supplement” is used ambiguously, for it is simultaneously an excess and a remedy. In Kramer’s words:

By taking on a supplement, a presumed whole puts its wholeness into question. The act of addition exposes an unacknowledged lack which the supplement is needed to counter. And in countering that lack the supplement exceeds its mandate and comes to replace the whole it was meant (not even) to repair. (Kramer 1991: 155)

As a result, the original relationship of narrative as primary and music as secondary, an accompaniment which adds something extra to the narrative, is reversed: “the music becomes the primary term and the story its mere accompaniment” (155).<sup>1</sup>

Susan McClary shares with Kramer the conviction that forces of meaning and not of structure are generated by narrative elements in music when she, like him, reads musical compositions as cultural texts (cf. McClary 1997: 21). However, she adds a historical dimension to her argument. She restricts narrative in instrumental music to the period from around 1700 to around 1900, a period of 200 years “in European history most focused on notions of the centered Self” during which instrumental music “traces narratives of subjective becoming or *Bildung*” (24). With the crisis of

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<sup>1</sup> This is an elegant argument but it certainly cannot be the last word about the relationship between music and narrative. Kramer seems to be thinking of nineteenth-century opera and musical theatre, especially of Wagner, when he states that we do not need to listen to the words but only to the music. Kramer mentions Wagner’s leitmotifs in this context (cf. 1991: 155), but he does not refer to their narrative function of transferring a good part of the narrative from the text to the music. This shows that his argument refers to a special case of intermediality and also to a historically limited epoch. Even considering this period, we may ask whether the way of reception suggested by Kramer, i.e. listening to the music and not to the words, is universal or whether it is one historically and socially determined listening mode among others. If we take for example Romeo Castellucci’s production of Christoph Willibald Gluck’s opera *Orfeo ed Euridice* in Vienna in 2014, it is hard to imagine that the audience would be able to listen only to the music. Castellucci paralleled the narration of the opera with that of the biography of a young woman in Minimal Conscious State (MCC): pictures of the woman listening to a live broadcast of the music on headphones in her hospital room are projected onto a big screen in the back of the stage. The audience gets to know the basic biographical information about the former ballet dancer and her family through short text inserts, while the camera moves through avenues alongside a grid and through narrow corridors until it arrives at her bed. A narratological analysis of this production would have to take several levels of intermediality into account.

the concept of *Bildung*<sup>1</sup> and the crisis of the centred self around 1900, avant-garde music of the twentieth century developed an anti-narrative stance: “The radical compositional devices associated with primitivism, expressionism, and chance emerged as attempts at breaking the hegemony of narrativizing musical processes, so engrained by 1900 that extreme solutions such as these seemed the only recourse” (22). McClary identifies Schönberg’s design of twelve-tone music in this context as an attempt to prevent unintended returns of tonality’s demand for narrative closure (cf. 32, n. 9). Schönberg’s pupil and devoted follower, Alban Berg, was surely familiar with his master’s anti-narrative stance.

However it may be, Berg’s string quartet entitled *Lyric Suite* is a piece of instrumental music which, despite the fact that it is a piece of twelve-tone music, cannot simply be located in the realm of anti-narrative music. Instead, it should be regarded as a paradigmatic example for anti-narrative music in crisis or, from another perspective, as narrative music in crisis. In defence of this thesis, I will examine first the supplementary relation of music and narrative in the case of the *Lyric Suite*, then elaborate on a number of cultural texts referred to by narrative elements in the piece and, finally, deliver a narratological critique of the notion of “music as autobiography” introduced by Constantin Floros (1992) in his monograph on Alban Berg, where the *Lyric Suite* plays a prominent role.

Since Floros and George Perle, independently of one another, have “discovered” a suppressed narrative of infidelity and impossible love, culminating in the despair expressed in Baudelaire’s poem *De profundis clamavi* (translated by Stefan George), the so-called secret vocal part in the last movement (*Largo desolato*) of the *Lyric Suite*, audiences are routinely provided with this narrative in the programme notes or in similar texts accompanying a performance of the piece. The simple private narrative of Berg’s extramarital affair with Franz Werfel’s sister, Hanna Fuchs-Robettin, is presented as the suppressed programme of the quartet and the key to understanding the music. This persistent foregrounding of the narrative might give us reason to doubt Kramer’s concept of music as the supplement of narrative (which he illustrates with Wagner) when he asks: “Why bother to follow all that stuff Wotan is saying to Erda when we can just listen to the doom-laden procession of the leitmotives?” (Kramer 1991: 155). Why then do we bother so much with the love story of Alban

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<sup>1</sup> The notion of *Bildung* refers to a process of education and self-cultivation aiming at the development of a special kind of bourgeois subjectivity in the nineteenth century. This process is modelled in German *bildungsroman* as the growth of a young man to a character integrating aspects of rationality, emotion, aesthetics and social responsibility. The paradigmatic education novel in this sense is Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship* (1795–96). Several modern novels written at the turn of the century and in early twentieth century are based on this paradigm but show the crisis of this concept of *Bildung*. A famous example is Robert Musil’s novel *The Confusions of Young Törless* (1906).

and Hanna? Nonetheless, Kramer is right, I think. I would even go as far as to argue that nowhere else does the supplementary character of music-narrative relation become more apparent than in case of the *Lyric Suite*.

Berg was not the first to deny the programmatic nature of his composition or to have suppressed an existing programme.<sup>1</sup> Mahler, for one, had done it before in the case of his Symphony nr. 3, the programme notes of which he explicitly withdrew. Consider also the case of his Symphony nr. 6, known as “The Tragic.” Here, the “secret” programme was not detected by musicologists but was revealed by Mahler’s widow, Alma, although musicologists did take a part in propagating the secret.<sup>2</sup> A similar fixation of critics and audiences has since set in with regard to the three hammer blows in the finale, supposedly symbolising the anticipated three strokes of fate in Mahler’s life. But there is a difference: Mahler’s symphony stands in the tradition of the Beethovenian symphony, which in Kramer’s words “compels audiences to find originary stories where the composer has left them unspecified” (1991: 154). Berg, however, didn’t write a symphony of this type, predicated on the elaboration of an implicit narrative, but a composition in a technique, which, if we follow McClary, was invented partly with the purpose of putting an end to the nineteenth-century narrativisation of music.

Berg consciously suppressed the narrative, not only by doing away with the programme and removing the text of Baudelaire’s poem, the text of the so called the hidden vocal part, but also with his decision, already taken, to write a twelve-tone composition. In the reception of the piece, however, a reversal of the supplementary relation of music and narrative seems to have occurred: the suppressed narrative as a “secret” makes itself the centre of attention, pushing the music into the background. With the revelation of this “secret,” the autobiographical narrative itself starts to act as a supplement, squeezing out the cultural narratives the music refers to.

What cultural narratives can we associate with the *Lyric Suite*? One of them is hiding behind the “concealed vocality” of the *Largo desolato*, as discovered in the 1950s by Hans Ferdinand Redlich (cf. 1957: 142). Behind this concealment is more than just a “secret vocal part” and the suppression of the text of Baudelaire/George’s poem *De*

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<sup>1</sup> Berg’s composition contains several references to his love affair, his longing for fulfilment of this love and its impossibility. These references are coded with the help of number symbolism and German pitch names (for example A B for Alban Berg and H F for Hannah Fuchs) without any explanations and therefore invisible in the published score. Berg, however, annotated a printed score revealing and explaining these hidden references in different colours and writing the words of Stefan George’s translation of Baudelaire’s poem between the staves of the last movement. George Perle, who discovered this annotated score, constructed what he calls a “secret vocal part” by extracting and, where indicated, transposing the notes assigned to the words (2005: XVI).

<sup>2</sup> In contrast to the case of Berg’s *Lyric Suite* there is no evidence that Mahler had such a “secret” programme in mind when he was composing his symphony. The programme “revealed” by Alma is possibly her own fabrication serving the purpose of popularizing the symphony.

*profundis clamavi*. It is true that Berg wrote to Hanna Fuchs-Robettin of the *Largo desolato* as “this song without words (for no one but you is to know that these notes of the last movement are underlain by Baudelaire’s words)” (Berg quoted in Perle 2005: XVII); but to conclude, as George Perle does in his critical edition of the *Lyric Suite*, “including the secret vocal part,” that the composer “suppress[ed] the authentic version and le[ft] to the world in its stead what amounts to an ‘arrangement’ with no more title to acceptance as an ultimately authentic representation than is the once familiar orchestral version of *Isoldens Liebestod* from *Tristan und Isolde*” (XVI) is mistaken.

It is mistaken, first, because as Hermann Danuser explains, through Baudelaire’s poem the aesthetic subject is transposed into a sphere of aesthetic modernity. Therefore, the work should not be reduced to an autobiographical confession (cf. 2001: 30–31). The suppressed poem gives the work a radical meaning which exceeds the frame set by the author for his addressee. The concept of immortalization of love in the *Liebestod*, to which Berg refers with his quotations from Wagner’s *Tristan* (one of them in measure 26 you can hear at the beginning of the first audio example below), gets linked with Baudelaire’s modernist concept of the impossibility of the love of the *poète maudit*, cast away into the abyss (cf. 32).

Perle’s claim is further mistaken to the extent that Berg did not simply suppress the text of the poem, but turned it into music. Calvin Scott has shown that the melodic line of the “secret” vocal part perfectly mirrors the intonation of the verses recited in the manner of contemporary actors reading poetry. This transformation of words into music, known as “intermedial contouring of the declamation,” is evident, for example, in the arch-shaped contour of the melodic lines in measures 22–27, the acceleration in measure 30, and the descending melodic line beginning in measure 40 (cf. Scott 2007: 139).

Scott also points out that George’s translation of the Baudelaire text is already an intermedial transformation because its starting point is the musical quality of language. He notes that George tried to transform the “*mélodie rythmique*” and the musical sounds of the French poem into a “flow of carefully chosen sonorous words” (139). This shift away from meaning and towards sound in modern poetry is described by Jacques Le Rider following his interpretation of Julia Kristeva’s *Revolution of Poetic Language* as the “feminizing of writing,” one of the two types of modernity he distinguishes (1990: 151). This type of modernity follows the dream of a cosmogonic eros and is, for Le Rider, represented by Gustav Klimt. The other type he associates with Arnold Schönberg and Ludwig Wittgenstein, whom he calls the ascetic moderns. Their vision is one of recovery from the crisis of culture and artistic

creation not by erotising culture and art, but on the contrary, through the genius of the male, who hardens himself, deadening sensuality and erecting barriers against the feminization of art (cf. 162). Male protest, the search for aristocratic beauty, the soul, on the one hand, and the feminizing of writing, writing as a promise of happiness, of the body, on the other hand – these are the binary oppositions of male and female in this cultural context (cf. 152).

While the first phase of Arnold Schönberg's works can be associated with Jugendstil, in the following phases, with the liberation of dissonance and the elaboration of the twelve-tone system, he turned away from sensuality and mysticism in favour of logic and rationalism (cf. Le Rider 1990: 160; Gerlach 1985 and Rosen 1996: 26 ff.). It is no coincidence that Schönberg, in the preface to his *Theory of Harmony* (1911), refers to Otto Weininger, who considered the female principle as uncompromisingly opposed to the male. Karl Kraus agreed, but in contrast to Weininger, who regarded this antagonism as deadly, he concluded that this conflict between the two principles is the creative force of man (cf. Le Rider 1990: 159). But at this point a dilemma arises. On the one hand, male genius needs the feminine to be creative; on the other hand, this need pulls him down. The only possible solution, as Nike Wagner concludes, is sexual abstinence, as illustrated by the figure of Gustav Mahler, described by his wife in her autobiography as living in celibacy because he feared being pulled down by the feminine (cf. Wagner 1982: 149). When Kraus staged Wedekind's *Büchse der Pandora* as a private performance in Vienna, he idealized the figure of the writer Alwa. A decadent product of the Kaffeehaus world in the Wedekind's play, Kraus characterized him as the only one who, intellectually, is above the incidents taking place around Lulu. In his version, Alwa is a masochist-heroic prisoner of hopeless love who does not perish but turns his suffering into creativity (cf. Wagner 1982: 182–185). Alban Berg, who was one of the guests invited to attend Kraus's private performance, made Alwa a composer in his *Lulu*, identifying with this figure in a similar way. Leon Botstein summarises Berg's idealizing of the feminine inspired by Kraus:

Like Kraus he idealized a premodern and nostalgic notion of nature and the feminine, and therefore an idealized characterization of love. The spiritual in love emerged from the carnal desire [*sic*] but had to lead to creativity. (Botstein 2010: 321)

Now, how do these cultural narratives relate to the *Lyric Suite*? We have seen that Berg, when he wrote his "song without words" in the *Largo desolato*, transcribed the words of the poem into music by turning away from the discursive meaning of the words and towards their sound and rhythm. The consequence of this process is that sound and rhythm are highlighted but that the meaning of the words disappears.

This intermedial transposition can be regarded as the final consequence of the process of the feminization of writing. This suppression of the words of the poem and their sublimation in the music must be correlated with the question as to why Berg chose the genre of the string quartet in order to declare his love to Hanna Fuchs-Robbetin. In his long letter to her in July 1925, he wrote that he would love to write songs but that he could not because the words of these songs would reveal his secret. He concluded that he was forced to write songs without words and then laconically declared: "Maybe I will write a string quartet!" (cf. Floros 2001: 32). He could hardly have chosen a better genre to declare and conceal his love at the same time!

According to Melanie Unseld, the post-Beethovenian genre of the string quartet is characterized, on the one hand, by the highest level of rationality, and for Berg is thus a way of both gaining distance and concealing his inner self (cf. Unseld 2001: 203). On the other hand, the string quartet is an intimate genre because it is intended for performance in a non-public space. For these reasons, it can be used to express intense subjectivity (cf. 331, n. 47). Unseld concludes that Berg redirected his intense emotions into extreme aestheticization (203).

It should also be pointed out that a similarly high level of aestheticization is already present in Stefan George's translation of Baudelaire's poem, the translation Berg used for his "song without words" in the *Largo desolato*. We have already seen that George's aestheticism can also be located in the context of the feminization of writing. Baudelaire, however, was situated by Le Rider in a cultural context where the cult of *mundus muliebris* and misogyny coexist. This coexistence of antagonistic notions of the feminine follows a pattern similar to that of the coexistence of "spleen" and "ideal." Karin Westerwelle (2007) has argued that Baudelaire did not seek to transcend "spleen" in favour of "ideal." The production of art (the *idéal*) is guided by the perspective of temperament, "spleen." On this basis, *De profundis clamavi* can be read as a descent (*katabasis*) into the hell of the "spleen." Its first title was *La Béatrix*, and was later entitled *Spleen*. A dark inner vision and representing the ideal figure of the feminine seem to be connected, the two poles seem to be invertible (cf. Westerwelle 2007: 33-36).

All this places Berg in an intermediate space – not between romanticism and modernism, which remains a popular characterization of Berg even today – but between different modernisms: the ascetic modernism of Schönberg's twelve-tone system as opposed to the feminization of writing. In no way, then, is it a coincidence that we can find this ambivalence inscribed in the music of the *Lyric Suite*, precisely at the point where the poem exclaims "und dieser nacht: ein chaos riesengroß!" [And of this night, a gigantic chaos!]. In measures 31 and 32 (see example 1), we find a surface of sound which is itself in motion [in sich bewegte Klangfläche], a technique used in atonal music as a tonal area of resolution [Auflösungsfeld]. Schönberg uses



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LaSalle Quartet, Margaret Price: Schönberg, Berg, Webern: String Quartets, CD 4;  
Track 6

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As it is generally the case in Schönberg's "Weltanschauungsmusik," the combination of sound surface and an ethereal vocal part represents the idea of the supernatural in music (cf. Sichardt 1990: 7–27). In the preceding measures you can hear at the beginning of the second audio example above, the subject of the poem looks at a "sonnerfüllte klare freie" [sun-filled, open expanse] and climbs "über schluchten ungeheuer" [over enormous canyons]. The subject of *De profundis clamavi*, in contrast, is trapped in the "deepest abyss," in darkness and chaos. Again, the antagonistic poles seem to be interchangeable, as they were in the title of Baudelaire's poem. Using such a surface of sound not in atonal but in twelve-tone context, Berg places himself between Schönbergian male heroism and the feminization of music Le Rider associates with his *Lulu* and his *Violin concerto: To the memory of an angel* (1990: 162). But should we, after all, call the *Lyric Suite* "music as autobiography" or "experienced music," as Constantin Floros (1992: 99) suggests? I think we should not. If music cannot be narrative, it cannot be autobiography either. But if music can contain narrative elements as forces of meaning, it can contain autobiographical narrative elements, too. There can be autobiographical forces of meaning in music, and surely there are such forces in Berg's music.

Floros uses the term "autobiography" in a naive way. He does not even ask the question what kind of narrative autobiography is. Thus he fails to take into account the role of both intertextuality and intermediality in this context. Like other narratives, the autobiographical narrative also circulates in a field of intertextuality on a textual level. Dealing with autobiographical narratives in music further complicates the case, because at least two different media, words and music, and various kinds of relations between them are involved. If we thus look only for an apparently simple and closed autobiographical narrative behind a musical composition and use it as the key to understanding that music, this will force us to entirely overlook the intertextual nature of cultural narratives connected to the



narrative elements in music and their specific intermedial transformations.<sup>1</sup> Paradoxically, then, “music as autobiography” continues the practice of ruling out the narrative reading of music in terms of cultural narratives. With the aphoristic phrase “Better NO meaning at all than THOSE meanings!” (McClary 1997: 31), McClary reveals the subliminal motivation lying behind this practice. In relation to the *Lyric Suite* and its interpretation as autobiographical music, we may modify McClary’s aphorism: Better only AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL meaning than THOSE CULTURAL meanings! I am convinced, however, that we should read musical works as cultural texts, considering their whole range of intertextuality and intermediality.

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<sup>1</sup> To model narrative as a transmedial cognitive frame allows us to talk about narrative elements in music. Music, however, does not signify in the same way as language and therefore does not narrate in the same way either. Albrecht Wellmer (2009) has pointed out that musical events are not signs like phonetic events in verbal discourse. While discourse establishes semiotic interrelations between signs, musical meaning is not based on signifying signs but on a field of significance (cf. 111). Because music, however, is also addressed to talking and reflecting animals (cf. 103), a discursive and reflective dimension is not something attached to it, but intrinsically belongs to it (cf. 105). Wellmer calls this phenomenon the “latent intermediality of music” (24). Thus, whenever music becomes narrative, inevitably intermediality is involved.

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*“So pocht das Schicksal an die Pforte”*: Some Remarks on Narrativity in Music

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In literary studies, according to Wolf Schmid, there exist two distinct concepts of narrativity. On the one hand is a strand from “classical narrative theory” which focuses on the “mediator between the author and the narrated world” as “the defining feature of narrativity” Schmid (2003: 17–19; cf. Schmid 2010: 1–5). On the other is a concept, developed by the structuralist study of narrative, which focuses on “temporal structure” and the representation of “changes of state” (Schmid 2003: 17–18; cf. Schmid 2010: 2).<sup>1</sup>

As Schmid demonstrates, these two fundamental positions, conveyed in various theories, rarely occur in pure form. For an initial foray into such an elusive topic as art music in western cultural (hereafter “music”), I find these primary categories very well suited to delimiting genuine musical-aesthetic issues. As will be shown, the specific questions, constraints and problems of musical narratology, together with their scholarly discourse and aesthetic premises, are analogous.

To find an orientation in the vast field of musical phenomena, it is important to bear in mind that most narratological research in the field of musicology is devoted to western classical music, and more precisely European art music of the classical and romantic eras up to the so-called classic modernists in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> To delineate the topic, I will explore the border areas of the subject field, notably atonality and new music, in an interdisciplinary discourse between narratology and musicology. An important aspect of my approach to this subject is the temporality of music, for as it will be seen, temporality forms a nexus in the music-narrative relation. To clarify this situation in detail, it will be necessary, among other things, to take account of certain claims and issues in Anglo-Saxon musicology, especially in the so-called new musicology dating from the early 1990s, an undertaking I cannot take up in detail here.

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<sup>1</sup> I am deeply indebted to Glenda Dawn Goss (Helsinki) for her substantial help with the English translation. I am also most grateful for the discussion that followed my talk at the 3rd ENN (European Narratology Network) Conference Paris 2013, particularly to Jan Christoph Meister for his remarks on fictionality.

<sup>2</sup> Among the most important texts in this debate are Abbate (1989, 1991), Nattiez (1990) and Micznik (2001). See also the workshop “What Kind of Narrative Theory for Musical Narratology?” at the 3rd ENN Conference Paris 2013, where papers were given by Márta Grabócz, Vera Micznik and Christian Hauer. I am grateful to Christian Hauer who was so kind as to send me his paper which sheds new light on the question of performativity in music. See in the present collection his article “The Contribution of Musical Narratology to Contemporary Narratology: On Monika Fludernik’s Concept of ‘Experientiality’”. For one of the few analyses in the area of new music, see Dack (1999).

## 1. Subjectivity and development as aesthetic premises

In the historical development of musical classicism and romanticism, two aspects coincide which, in certain respects, recall the two systematic and therefore non-historical concepts of narrativity identified by Schmid. Although they seem to be mere analogies, they are, as will be shown further on, crucial for the reception of music as narrative.

On the one hand, we encounter in the writings on music aesthetics during the nineteenth century the nurturing of a bourgeois aesthetic of genius in the wake of the contemporary Beethoven reception. According to romantic music aesthetics, instrumental music is able to tell us something about our existence which cannot be told in other art forms. Therefore, (instrumental) music is considered the highest form of art. The composer is the mediator between the real world and the art world; he is able to give us a glimpse into this 'other' world of art. This concept of creating art resembles the concept of mediation between the author and the narrated world.

On the other hand, we also witness a trend toward structuralism in the theoretical and analytical writings about music during the nineteenth century. In this trend, authors differentiate between musico-structural characteristics in order to place all musical parameters in the service of organic musical development. Most often this organic development and its musical objects are anthropomorphized and described in terms of storytelling, as though we were to hear "musical figures" become figures of a story or to hear "musical motives" which seem to be "motivated" by a physical or psychic event.

One of the leading figures in these debates was Franz Liszt. Dahlhaus summarizes his concept as follows:

Liszt's outspoken conviction that a "tonal language" was constituted not only by the strong imprint of motifs, but also through their characteristic transformation, which was capable of expressing feelings along with thoughts and outlining actions, can be construed as a consequence of the insight that the intelligibility of a language depends to an even higher degree on external and internal context, on the indefiniteness of word meanings in their own right. (Dahlhaus 1976: 123, translation mine. On this discussion, cf. Holtsträter 2008: 135)

Interestingly – and probably contradictorily to the field of narratology – in music aesthetics of the nineteenth century, one concept cannot exist without the other: narrative cannot establish itself without the structure and vice versa.

Both concepts of musical understanding are particularly pronounced in the discussion about the sonata form and its varieties and hybrids in the current genres of instrumental music like the piano sonata, the concerto, the symphony and the overture. These concepts underlie the journal debates on symphonic program music or the symphonic poem, which were at their peak in the nineteenth century. This musico-aesthetic paradigm pervades discussions about all relevant genres of instrumental music. Even the vocal genres of classic and romantic music such as the aria, the art song, opera and oratorio were unable to escape this aesthetic discourse.

Closely connected with the operative aesthetic or ideological premises are such factors as emphasis on musical rhythm and meter, thinking in musical motifs and themes, contrasting and varying treatment of motifs and themes – that is, the so-called motivic-thematic work which forces all music in this era into the primacy of development. Beethoven's instrumental compositions, especially his symphonies, are the first musical works in which musicology locates the "musical subject" (cf. von Massow 2000, 2001) or the "aesthetic subject" (Dahlhaus [1978] 1989: 134). This assumed artistic subject was often identified with the biographical subject and its expression of emotions, transmitted to us in documents with accounts of Beethoven's historiographically or anecdotally conveyed "suffering," "will" and "redemption."<sup>1</sup> The aesthetics of genius of this time had and continues to have immediate effects on the reception attitudes encountered by this music. In this sense, Beethoven's own comment on the opening of his Fifth Symphony – "Thus Fate knocks at the door" – could be a way to understand his symphony properly.<sup>2</sup>

The subjectivity of the artistic process is communicated in music, more so than in the field of literature, by a mechanism of authorization. This is assumed in the compositional process, and it affects the act of musical performance (by musicians), from reading the score and the physical perception of listening to music up to aesthetic appreciation. Interestingly, this shared working process in producing and receiving music appears not to diminish the general feeling of the immediacy of subjective expression we assume in classic-romantic music, but rather to strengthen

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. von Massow's (2001: 77-78) discussion of Hans-Heinrich Eggebrecht's ([1996] 2000: 575) astute observation on Beethoven reception in the nineteenth century. Dahlhaus ([1978] 1989: 132-134) exemplified this problem with Richard Wagner's conviction that Beethoven's music could testify to something of the composer's "inner biography" and criticized it, saying that Wagner obviously did not yet operate with the authority of the "aesthetic subject."

<sup>2</sup> "What a life of poetry this work unfolds before our senses, allowing us to see into its depths! The composer himself provided the key to those depths when one day, in this author's presence, he pointed to the beginning of the first movement and expressed in these words the fundamental idea of the work: 'Thus fate knocks at the door!'" This statement, attributed to Beethoven, is one of numerous anecdotes recounted by Schindler ([1860] 1972: 146).

it. Here as well, Beethoven serves as a suitable example. Because of his deafness, he was no longer able to function as an active musician and was dependent on the composition of music and its publication. Yet this shared-work discourse of notated music, with the artistic process of composing as an act of writing, is not taken into account in most musical analyses. The assumption behind most narratological approaches is that the composer is the only artist: he is the author of the “music.” Jean-Jacques Nattiez seemed to have this problem in mind when he spoke in a narrower sense of the “work”: “Through the work, the composer speaks to us.” (1990: 240)

If, in contrast to literature, one regards music as an art form that lives through its performance, then this premise inevitably leads to other conclusions: the performer, both as the medium of the music and as an artistic entity in his own right, is regarded as the interpreter of the musical work. He “executes” a score rather than “plays” the music; he navigates his instrument or voice along a narrow path of freedom to decide between the right or wrong execution of the given text, the score, *Partitur* or *Werk*. For the narratological approach to music, this fundamental scope (which I see as interpretive in nature and thus a topic for further historical research) ensures that the master narrative, or *Meistererzählung* of classic-romantic music, including absolute music, concepts of genius, suffering-redemption, nostalgia and dialectical thinking, such as the model of two worlds,<sup>1</sup> etc., remains valid and successful. This master narrative is effective not only in the historiography of its genre and in the biographies of composers (i.e., the authors), but also in the (presumed) artistic expression of composers: the music itself. To hear classical music against this background enables us, both listeners and scholars, to talk about “musical language,” to hear, and not just read, music as “texts,” to study its structures in a narratological or hermeneutical manner as a “story” or a “plot” and to interpret musical “texts” in relation to other texts.

This metaphorical use of narratological terms may cause horror amongst scholars of literature. But these premises have their origins in historical phenomena, and the scientific approach in musicology is largely determined by this way of perceiving music.

## 2. Musical structure, musical development

Up to now, the narratological approach to music – from a musicological as well as from a narratological point of view – has been a highly specialized affair with a limited set of aesthetic and analytical means and a highly canonized set of musical

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<sup>1</sup> For further reading on this topic, see Dahlhaus ([1978] 1989), Eggebrecht ([1996] 2000) and Geck (2001).

works. This is in no way to disparage significant work that has been carried on in the field. It is, rather, an appeal to undertake further discovery of a largely unexplored domain.

Basically, the problem is to distinguish between what can be conveyed “extramusically,” in a narrative way, and what cannot. This is bound up with the question of what this “extramusical” is and how it is expressed. Nattiez defined narrative mainly through action relative to the so-called plot or “narrative thread” (1990: 243). Under certain circumstances, action can be caused by musical development, but this issue cannot be specified more precisely. Nattiez observes that the idea of development as “suffering-redemption” is a “typical schema of behaviour, a cultural scheme and a way of being” (249–250), and thus a cultural topos or cultural paradigm that does not allow for further differentiation.

Nattiez describes this more or less “topical” aesthetic process of *per aspera ad astra* in connection with Beethoven’s music as an illusion of narrative which is not more precisely determined (248–249). He assumes that musical development (i.e., motivic-thematic work, the sonata form) and the narrative of a plot demonstrate structural similarities, so that the musical development found in a composition creates the illusion or suggestion of a narrative. The impression that this process is subject to narrative treatment would thus result from the degree of communicability.

Nattiez’s approach does not proceed from the question of whether music is “narrated” (a story) or “narrating” (the act of telling a story). He accepts musical processes as already narrated. For him, a “narrative structure” consists of “existents” and “events” which are brought into relation with one another by the linear dimension of a temporal sequence and by the causal connections of these existents and events (242). These terms are borrowed from Seymour Chatman (1978: 43–145), where “existents” are action-enabled subjects and objects (characters, persons, identities), while “events” are the actions themselves (sequences, causalities). (Nattiez nevertheless has reservations about Chatman’s “minimum ingredients for a narrative”; 1990: 241, n. 12). Moreover, according to Nattiez, two conditions must be met before a “narrative treatment” or “thread” can be created: 1) at least two objects of any kind must be offered, and 2) both of these objects must be presented in a linear and temporal dimension so that a relationship can be established between them (246).<sup>1</sup> Transferring these principles to music and combining Chatman’s idea of the “objects” of narrative with the general idea of “musical object” in music aesthetics (cf. Barry 1990: 43–59) allows musical features such as motifs and themes (as musical

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<sup>1</sup> Note, however, that Nattiez does not distinguish systematically between the author – that is, the composer – and the narrator.

objects) to be described as existents. Furthermore, the compositional treatment of existents in the course of the musical development and thematic development (e.g., the motivic or thematic juxtaposition of two different types of motifs and their combination and synthesis into a third type) constitute the musical “event.” Through action, the subject or the object of action undergoes changes: it experiences a transformation in the process of the musical passage.

However, if we apply this idea to the interpretive analysis of music, it proves difficult to distinguish between existents and events, even in compositions with a single theme, since themes are often a combination of different motifs. If we consider a simple theme, such as the unison at the beginning of the first movement of Béla Bartók’s Fifth String Quartet (1934), it is clear that inherent in the musical contour is

an impetuous or metrically irregular movement that seeks to break out of the initial note repetition but is always unpredictably stopped (see example).

Example: Béla Bartók’s Fifth String Quartet Sz 102, Movement 1, measures 1–8



The clearly distinguishable impetus of the musical motif does not only characterize this “musical object” (in the sense that the object is described as an “existent”), but it also bears the motivation for further musical development and determines the motifs and the general musical passage that follow. The impulsive, almost aggressive movement of the insistent eighth note repetitions leads first to a leap in ever larger intervals until the driving movement of the melodic line finally appears to be spent and flows into a melodic motif from which, later, there comes a gliding motion through all the instruments.

We thus witness how a simple impulse of musical notes (the repeated eighth notes) mediates ‘presentness’ through its irregular insistence. The impulse has broken out of its given essence before (in intervallic steps and leaps), obviously with the goal that this change will be sustainable (new pitches will be introduced).<sup>1</sup> Finally, this succeeds, and the tonal motion finds its contoured form in a small yet complex structure, a small motif. We witness how the melodic motifs emerge from the three components of rhythm, melody and harmony.<sup>2</sup> Thus the musical subjects and objects lead us to the impression that they interact with the musical processes to which they are exposed or that they cause, but to isolate them from each other is difficult. They appear before the mind’s eye like the forms that are constantly in flux in an abstract film study by the animated film artist Oskar Fischinger: only at the moment in which the specks of light come to rest are they recognizable as round or square and thus reveal their identity, their essence or their *gestalt* as objects.

To what extent we, as readers of the score or as listeners, ascribe the property of subject or object to the motifs and themes depends on the musical structure and the degree of relationship made possible by this structure. A stand-alone motif can be considered an object in itself if, in the overall musical context, it sounds “inserted”; yet it can also function as a subject if it has the appearance of acting for itself. (In the example above, I have interpreted the initial motif as a subject which, still unfinished,

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<sup>1</sup> Bartók works less with keys than with tonal centers which he often adopted from the *topoi* of the folk music of his Hungarian homeland and with which he was well acquainted through his ethnomusicological fieldwork. The tonal coherence at this point initially has a B-flat as the starting point, whereupon in the tonal context, a harsh minor with many dissonant passing tones, ensues. The lines proceed in small steps which are in part no longer tonally bound but act only through their linear context and rhythmic gestures. Even the other tonal centers, which will be addressed later (and could in fact offer a new orientation), stand in extreme intervallic dissonance. In this music, the harmonic relationships appear to be vertically static vis-à-vis one another, not in an orderly fashion of tension and release. Here, nothing more ordered is brought to rest but only replaced by new, continuous motion, the only musical moment that seems important.

<sup>2</sup> This observation is based on Ernst Kurth’s (1947) energetic approach to music analysis, about whom Tarasti prophesied that his “theoretical thinking will one day attain a status in musical semiotics equal to that of Heinrich Schenker in contemporary music theory” (Tarasti 1994: 98). Kurth defined tone and the tonal step above all through motion.

was “placed in the world” and is now left to its fate even though it possesses sufficient properties for further development. But this could be interpreted otherwise.) This fundamental difference between subject and object can be detected by a small nuance in musical interpretation through, for instance, hesitant or distinctive rhythmic phrasing. It is therefore important to observe at this point that in music it is generally possible to adopt the role of a subject or object.

In this example, the prerequisite for the impression of an act of narration is the structural arrangement of the music. In the Fifth String Quartet by Bartók, we still find the classic-romantic idea of motivic-thematic working out fully developed. If this motivic-thematic work is no longer present, such that the contingent musical structure is lacking, then the subjects and objects cannot be interpreted as related to one another. However, the interpretation of a “plot” is difficult. In this regard, Nattiez nevertheless firmly emphasizes that music alone cannot fulfill the task. Rather, the listener’s interpretation must do the lion’s share of the work; it is the “gap-filler” between two components of meaning independent of one another. Only the listener can make a connection between these components.

### 3. “New sounds”... old stories?

The same problem can also be found in the interpretation of twentieth-century music such as the American-European avant-garde music which formed around the “Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik” in Darmstadt in the 1950s (Karel Goeyvaerts, Karlheinz Stockhausen, John Cage, Pierre Boulez, etc.). The so-called serial music, which is organized according to a series of numbers and ratios, followed a radical aesthetic that negates the romantic concept of creative subjectivity and musical development. In this music every musical event can serve as an object or a subject or as an event which is exposed in a quasi-sounding temporal space, like exhibits in a (probably poorly curated) museum show.<sup>1</sup> These isolated quasi sound-points function as sound objects which no longer interact in relation to each other as subjects. This kind of composing can be compared with the pointillistic techniques employed in the fine arts, with the difference that the “points” which are created in music form no representational image but remain abstract as a whole. Here an interpretation as narrative according to Nattiez’s criteria no longer seems possible, because it is not possible to distinguish between the musical objects (the “existents”) and the “musical events” that link them together.

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<sup>1</sup> See also Dahlhaus ([1965] 2005) which provides a comparative analysis of the music of Igor Stravinsky and Anton Webern and also speculates on the new music.

Vincent Meelberg took up these problems in his study *New Sounds, New Stories* (2006), a recent attempt to make the area of contemporary music accessible to a narratological reading. In this book he applies findings from recent narrative research to trace narrativity even in such extremely slow and uneventful works as Morton Feldman's *Rothko Chapel* (1971) and Kaija Saariaho's *Petals* (1998). He refers to the writings of cultural theorist and narratologist Mieke Bal when he writes that "a narrative is the representation of events that succeed each other in time" (Meelberg 2006: 39). Currently, this is probably the widest possible definition of a narrative and also the lowest common denominator on which the different subjects and disciplines dealing with narratology can agree. Meelberg emphasizes, as does Nattiez, the temporality of music as an important criterion of narrativity in music, thus taking into consideration that this question is generally associated with narrative in musical aesthetics and reception research.<sup>1</sup> According to Meelberg, and in contrast to Nattiez who states, with Abbate (cf. Abbate 1989: 230), that music "has no past tense" and can only "evoke the past by means of quotations or various stylistic borrowings" (Nattiez 1990: 244), music can give the impression of "tense" if, for example, it includes repetitions on the micro-level as well as on the macro-level – repetitions in the sense of the recurrence of sounds, noises, soundscapes, etc. (Meelberg 2006: 95–112).

The second important criterion for narrativity in music, and perhaps the decisive one for Meelberg, is the characteristic of representation:

Thus, the construction of a house, say, can be regarded as a succession of events, but it is not a narrative. Rather, it is a process. But as soon as I record this process on video, for instance, this recording can be regarded as a narrative. After all, now we have a representation, namely a video recording, of a temporal development, i.e. the construction of a house. (Meelberg 2006: 39)<sup>2</sup>

Could music as a temporal art also portray action and thus qualify as narrative, thanks to its capacity to represent temporal processes and its character of "form created by sound"? And where would the limits of the diegesis be? Where would the

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<sup>1</sup> In the debate over new music, the problem of form is expressed in many ways, whether it be in Bernd Alois Zimmermann's concept of *Kugelgestalt der Zeit* ("spherical shape of time"), Mauricio Kagel's confrontation with the rhetorical quality of musical form in several writings, or the theoretical expressions of Karlheinz Stockhausen on his concept of *Momentform* ("moment form"). See also Auhagen, Busch and Mahrenholz (1989), especially the section by Mahrenholz on the twentieth century (2239–45), as well as the literature consulted by Svetlana Neytcheva (2001). On Stockhausen and Kagel, see Holtsträter (2010: 94–107).

<sup>2</sup> Nattiez notes something similar when he assesses the independence of the medium (based on theories of English-language literature) as a dichotomy between "story" and "discourse": "The content of a narrative, the story which is told, can be 'unglued' from its linguistic support in order to be taken on by another medium, another kind of discourse, film or comic strip" (1990: 244).

limits of the extramusical be? In cases in which music behaves as pure sound and, for example, through its signal effect startles or frightens us, it indeed seems, in its unmediated way, to act as operative instance.

A good case in point is the twelve-tone sound field at the beginning of the second part of Alban Berg's Violin Concerto which, with its dynamics swelling to *fortissimo*, can make the hair of the most jaded and well-prepared listener stand on end at every hearing. In the sense of the opposites "showing vs. telling," this music is presented to us as "showing," as theatrical. According to Meelberg, the condition created would no longer be one of representation and therefore no longer one of narration:

Drama, however, is not narrative, although it can contain narrative moments. Drama might in many cases be regarded as a temporal development, thus as a transformation from one state to another, but it is not a representation. Rather it is a presentation, or a demonstration, of this development. (Meelberg 2002: 39)

On closer examination, and in view of common theories of acting and theater, this argument is not sustainable, as Monika Fludernik has demonstrated in an astute analysis of dramatic texts (2008).<sup>1</sup> The problem of representation in music could consequently be one that touches on the qualities of music as a medium constrained only by aesthetic norms, as indeed this was the case during the nineteenth century with the argument over program music or the symphonic poem.

#### 4. The presentness of music

Why does musical narratology have such problems with contemporary art music, and with new music in particular? In my opinion, the crux of the problem lies in reception, and more particularly in the reception of the rhythmic structure of music. To address this issue, a detour on the problem of atonality may be permitted.

Meelberg adopts the narratological categories of Nattiez and Tarasti and states, with a broader look at the literature on contemporary music, that the problem of developing narration is inherent in atonal music because it tends to create a "now," a "present" (Meelberg 2006: 101-102). With this argument, he adopts Nattiez's above-

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<sup>1</sup> From the perspective of performance theory, it can be added that the actor always serves in multiple functions as a mediator between the character role and his own corporality. David Graver (2003), for instance, describes seven forms of representation of the actor that are to be considered in a performance.

mentioned assumption that music “has no past tense” for the realm of the atonal music.<sup>1</sup>

According to Tarasti, there was a loss of narrativity in the transition from tonal to atonal music, and thus a loss of a “unified tonal language inherited from Classicism” (2002: 43). This argument is opposed to Adorno’s observation that atonal music has a much greater ability to express itself, as he wrote in connection with Webern’s String Quartet, op. 5:

A shudder surrounds each of these dissonances. They are felt as something uncanny, and are introduced by their author with fear and trembling. Right into the treatment of sounds it is possible to follow how carefully Webern took hold of them. Only with hesitancy does he separate himself from each and every sound; each one he holds fast until its expressive values are exhausted. (Adorno 1956: 148; trans. qtd from Iddon 2013: 111–112)

Moreover, I believe that a more differentiated view of the various “musical languages” of the twentieth century, which Tarasti subsumes under the heading of “Modernism,”<sup>2</sup> would be worthwhile. After all, nearly 100 years of music history have yielded such distinct phenomena as expressionism, neoclassicism, serial and post-serial music, aleatoric music, minimalism, spectral music, and so on. These musical styles are mostly atonal, although they can sound very different. And in Meelberg’s sense, they tell “new stories.”

While the music of Arnold Schönberg and Alban Berg cannot hide their provenance from the motivic-thematic thinking of the classical and romantic era, and therefore still sounds “romantic,” the music of Anton Webern marks a paradigmatic change in the development of twentieth-century avant-garde music. Particularly in the works of the Darmstadt School of the 1950s and 1960s, the formative element of formal structure (i.e., the motivic contour) is not guaranteed even by tone rows and other procedures. As a result of the serialization of durations and pauses, the classic division of metric units into musical bars, which in Beethoven’s late works and among the romantics such as Robert Schumann and Richard Wagner, was at least questioned, has now completely disintegrated. With that, the framework for rhythmic design, which is dependent on meter and the division into strong beats and weak beats (thesis and arsis), is lost. In this reception context, each tone can no longer be understood as potentially bound but rather as potentially unbound, as a

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<sup>1</sup> Meelberg also refers to Neytcheva (2001: 102), where she reflects on contemporary music and music theater vis-à-vis opera. For fundamental reflections on the question of representation in music, see also Berger (1994).

<sup>2</sup> See the chapter “Modernism” in Tarasti (2002: 43–50).

continuous surprise and as a signal. The complex order of rhythmic structures which is intended by the composers of new music, and which could probably be identified easily through scholarly research, turns into chaos in the process of perception.<sup>1</sup>

The impression of the narrative “now,” of the presentness in the various forms of (atonal) “new” (i.e., avant-garde) music, which Neytcheva, Berger and others describe and which, according to Meelberg, can be regarded as a narrative quality, has to do with this continuous impression of being surprised. In my view, however, the moment of surprise is not due to atonality but rather to the lack of a clear rhythmic structure that enables us to position the sound events vis-à-vis one another.<sup>2</sup> Here, an upbeat motif can only be understood by its contour and its expressive value as a signal, as though the “Fate motif” of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, unexpected the first time, were to recur repeatedly with a knocking at the door, always with the same effect. The resulting increased awareness of hearing, being in the here-and-now, strongly influences receptive attitudes and thus the ability of music to continuously surprise.

If we ascribe an action to such music, it cannot be situated anywhere else than in the here-and-now, and thus it more likely belongs to the sphere of “showing” or presenting than it does in sphere of “telling” or representing.

Finally, in a narratological reading of music, the problem is to recognize musical moments that create relationships with other moments. Since music is a temporal art, and since we too are subject to the laws of temporality, relations can emerge only in retrospect, retroactively. This means that in the current experience of music, events must sound that can be brought into a relationship with past occurrences. These musical events are either 1) linked with events in the music just received, 2) linked with events known from other music or 3) recalled from other extramusically-connoted experience. The first would apply to any music that works with repetition, with clearly recognizable themes and motifs, thus music which the authors of the new musicology have studied.<sup>3</sup> This listening would be an analytical hearing, standardized and objectified by expert discourses, and would be placed on an enthusiast’s or an expert’s level. The second category would relate to the respective listening biography of the listener; in this hearing, subjective-biographical listening

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<sup>1</sup> For a further and a systematic discussion of meter and measure with respect to bar and beat, see London (2001: 278–287).

<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, in his book *On the Beautiful in Music*, Eduard Hanslick emphasizes rhythm over harmony and melody. The latter two would not occur in nature, while rhythm is “the only musical Ur-element”: “Only a third element in music, that which is borne by the first two, existed before and outside of mankind: rhythm” ([1854] 1991: 85, translation mine).

<sup>3</sup> This kind of hearing is mentioned by Barry (1990: 50), where she speaks of “temporary storage.”

experiences are mixed. This process can be achieved through specialization, on the one hand, but also by the enrollment of preferences, on the other. The third category is the one in which the inexperienced listener and the expert hear birds warbling in Joseph Haydn's *The Creation* (1796–98) or a UFO landing in Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Kontakte* (1958–60). Such a listening experience, built on musical painting, does not require short-term memory; one does not even need to listen carefully but merely cover one's extra-musical auditory perceptions with musical events.

As incomplete and simple as this tri-partite division seems, it nonetheless points to the dilemma of narrativity in music, namely the problematic requirement of an analytical listening in order to recognize the obvious. At the same time, this division also indicates the possibilities that musical narratology offers when one is free of the "master narrative" (*Meistererzählung*) of the sonata and program music and, following the example of the above-mentioned authors, when it is applied to new music or to vocal genres such as the art song and to the theatrical genres of opera and music theater or *Hörspiel* (radio play). One might also consider what would happen if not just one author but several appeared on stage and interacted with one another, as happens in improvised music, for instance.

## 5. Music and the perception of time

Music as a temporal art can be understood as a sequence of expressions (or metaphorically: utterances) produced by artists (composers and musicians) in an artistic context that is not bound by the laws of the factual world. Yet these utterances may have an autonomy determined by the artist with a particular focus, for instance, the perception of time. Composing music is also an artistic process which can focus on the temporal structure of music and, in general, on the way time is perceived.

In literature the perception of time occurs in a different form. Thus, it can be observed that there are many passages in fiction with neither a story nor development. For example, Thomas Mann's novels contain long passages that do not contribute to the story or that involve no story at all. Likewise, in James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) some actions are so drawn-out and detailed that they are read only as descriptions. Hermann Hesse proceeds in exactly the opposite way in *The Glass Bead Game* when he presents Joseph Knecht's first two-year stay in the monastery of Marienfels as a single, cumulative perception ([1943] 2002: 154–174). Expressed in terms of narrative theory, the conflict here is found between "narrative time" (*Erzählzeit*), or the time it takes to tell or read a story, and "story time" (*erzählte Zeit*), the time during which the actions take place (cf. Genette [1972] 1980: 33). In music, as

I understand Nattiez, these problems of temporality would be provided with the disposition of necessary musical “existents” and “events,” musical motifs which are foregrounded and combined in a manner such that the listener can distinguish them and relate them to a musical development. This exerts an influence on the process of perception: I can, as Kretzschmar does for Beethoven’s symphonies (cf. Kretzschmar 1898: 130–187), understand an entire heroic destiny in a half-hour sonata form as such only if I accept the conflict between narrative time and story time as already invested in the genre of the symphony. Or I can hear Liszt’s *Mazeppa* (first performed in Weimar 1851), a symphonic poem with a performance length of about 17 minutes, as a representation of Victor Hugo’s poem whose “story time” is about three days. In such cases, it would therefore be a question of whether this conflict of temporality is even more important for the adoption of a narrative than it is for the actual syntactical nature of music.

In the relations between narrative time and story time lies another general objection to the claim of narrative in music. According to Nattiez, music in its directness – and here it stands close to drama and theater – can speak predominantly only “in the present.” Against this argument, however, is the objection that fictionality generally touches on this problem of temporality. Thus, the sentence “Yesterday it rained in Cologne”<sup>1</sup> in a novel is as little determined temporally as a “remembered sound” motif in a Beethoven sonata or a wistful clarinet sigh in the work *Osten* from *Stücken der Windrose* by Mauricio Kagel which recalls the bygone music culture of East European Jews and sounds as though it “is” from the past.

Nevertheless, there remains an important difference between literature and music on these issues in that the perception of music is subject to a particular constraint. Although the listener can interrupt the reception process and turn off the car radio or leave the concert hall, he can neither influence the tempo nor interrupt the reception of the micro-structure in the same way that a reader, at any time, can quickly re-read or pause if he does not understand something. This problem is categorical in nature and distinguishes music from literature or the plastic arts, bringing it close to film and theater which also have the ability to “tell and show” simultaneously or, to be more precise: to present “forms moved by sounds” (cf. Hanslick [1854] 1991) as inner and outer experiences. Even when reading a musical score, a person cannot determine the speed of a piece of music without altering or distorting its aesthetic intention, which is indicated by a complex and rigid system of signification employing a system of notation (like tempo markings), any more than he can determine the general playability of a musical passage or the types of texture which emerge from different tempos, etc. This other-directedness of the reception process

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<sup>1</sup> “Gestern regnete es in Köln” (Petersen 1993: 5).



affects the perception of music: music is conceived of as an entity that is able to deploy itself by virtue of its narration in real time, while it is being performed.

## 6. Conclusion

It appears to me that, as regards narrativity, the structural aspect, the story, the plot or the development alone cannot be taken into account in the transfer of narrative to music. Since music is always an expression of an artistic subject, it is useful to examine the different compositional strategies used by the composer in the musical discourse with the opportunity to evaluate them as different approaches of an assumed author, a narrator or another instance that relates to the music. The historical figure Beethoven served as a role-model for the following generation of composers like Robert Schumann and Franz Liszt, and their writings can be viewed from a narratological perspective. Composers of the twentieth century like Karlheinz Stockhausen or Mauricio Kagel adapted these positions to modernism and postmodernism.

Communicability would then result from the closeness/ distance between the author and the work and from the closeness/ distance of the work vis-à-vis the recipient. On these levels could be located such instances as “author” or “narrator,” which Edward Cone (1974: 94) describes in “absolute music” (i.e., instrumental music) as yet “unidentifiable.”

From this perspective, music analysis which operates with the terms of narrative theory is able to highlight aspects of communication that emanates from the fringe of the actual subject: the musical genre and its underlying concepts of form, the compositional technique and its role in the aesthetic discourse of its time, or the explicit poetics of the composer and their realization in his work. Seeking out common perspectives and methods such as the comparison of music with language, the “reading” of story out of music or the interpretation of a musical development as “drama” should be encouraged. But at the same time, we must take into account the variety of aesthetic concepts in the history of composition and aesthetics which determine the artistic process in all steps.

These assumptions will combine the questions of systematic disciplines like musical analysis and music theory with questions of aesthetics, culture, genre and their historical development in the area of historical musicology. Considering that the concepts of subjectivity and organic development are largely determined by the bourgeois culture of the nineteenth century, I assume that these concepts are still commonplace in current musicology. (In this respect, I take the concepts of musical

narrativity to be merely a product of cultural processes, not a matter of the human condition.)

What methods and questions would be appropriate to achieve this goal? To give but one example, compositional sketches (autographs, etc.) can be examined to trace the poetic process in the genesis of a work. If we truly wish to discover an author's intention, we should not look at statements by authors (composers) but rather at creative processes as they emerge in documents in order to understand composition as a poetic process.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, we must consider that in each reception process there also exists a possible "identified wish to be" that interrogates the higher and lower intentions of one's own choice of context in which to listen to music, whether for entertainment, for solace during difficult moments or as a means of questioning social distinctions (cf. DeNora 2004: 109–150). This concerns the "longhair music" of Haydn and Beethoven, for instance, but also popular music such as that of Jean Michel Jarre and Justin Bieber.

Literature and literary theory are topics that musicologists have dealt with since the beginning of their discipline in the eighteenth century, particularly when it comes to questions about aesthetics and philosophy. I believe that we as musicologists can profit from the "boost" offered by narratology because it can enable us to express our knowledge intelligibly. It will also help us avoid the risk of lapsing into the jargon of formal analysis, incomprehensible to outsiders, and shift the burden of proof to twenty pages of musical score with a terse "as one can clearly hear."

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<sup>1</sup> Admittedly, this would presuppose that subjectivity, which in music can also be expressed as identity and thereby provide modes of identification, is a construct; the illusion of an "authorial intention" and of a "story" would then be given up.

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## **0. Introduction**

The following study develops research I carried out for my critical edition of six essays by S.-Y. Kuroda on narrative theory which were collected into one volume for the first time and translated into French as S.-Y. Kuroda, *Pour une théorie poétique de la narration*, published by Armand Colin in October 2012. This is the edition which the references to all French examples will cite (cf. Kuroda 2012a–f). The first three essays had already been translated into French and published in the late seventies (cf. Kuroda 1979b, 1979c and 1975); the other three had never been published in French before. In itself, the composition of the volume invites reflection on the historicity of translations and the fact that they form part of a cultural whole dating from a particular time, as well as on the conditions of possibility of the translation, or indeed the occasional re-translation, of Kuroda's essays today.<sup>1</sup>

In the first section, I will briefly present Kuroda's essays, seen in terms of their translatability. In the second section, I will offer a critique of the early translations, which I intend to be constructive, focussing essentially on the evolution of the reception of translations and on the variations in denotation and connotation of certain terms from the late seventies to the current time. I will also discuss foreign terms which Kuroda deemed untranslatable and compare them to any translations offered in English and French. In the third and final section, I will set out some of the difficulties encountered during my translation of the unpublished essays as well as the solutions proposed: it is up to the community of readers to validate or invalidate the target text. In certain cases, which I will outline, I chose an interpretative translation rather than a neutral one in order to allow better reception in the current context.

Taken as a whole, the paper aims to contribute to the history and epistemology of narrative theory, approached here from the angle of translation practice.

## **1. The translatability of Kuroda's essays**

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<sup>1</sup> On the interest of this publication in the context of current research, see my introduction to the volume (Patron 2012: 40–51).

1.1. In translating linguistic texts, it is necessary to distinguish between the general and the idiomatic, the latter in the sense of that which is peculiar, specific and sometimes exclusive to one language. The general part does not pose any particular translation problems. As long as the language facts described exist in both source and target languages, the transfer of conceptual content is generally easy to achieve. The idiomatic part, on the other hand, can lead to certain difficulties when the target language does not recognize identical or similar facts to those described in the source language (cf. Mejri 2003: 182–184; 2008: 9–12). Kuroda's essays offer an original take on this problem. They include an idiomatic part consisting in all the passages pertaining to the Japanese language, a language which is structured and functions very differently from European languages. Such passages make up the greater part of the first essay, "Where Epistemology, Style, and Grammar Meet – a Case Study from Japanese." Some of them are repeated and redeveloped in the second and third essays, "On Grammar and Narration" and "Reflections on the Foundations of Narrative Theory" (cf. Kuroda 1973, 1974, 1976). Kuroda spoke of the issue in *The W(h)ole of the Doughnut: Syntax and its Boundaries*: "My interest in this area [i.e. narrative theory] [...] has its origin in problems in Japanese syntax," before adding: "but the problems dealt with in these articles are of a general character" (1979: VIII). The sixth and last essay, "A Study of the So-Called Topic *wa* in Passages from Tolstoy, Lawrence, and Faulkner (of course in Japanese Translation)," also deals with studying a problem if not of pure syntax, then at least of textual syntax and semantics in Japanese (cf. Kuroda 1987). However, this idiomatic part does not lead to major difficulties in translation. On the one hand, this is because Kuroda was writing for readers who were not supposed to be specialists or even to have any particular knowledge of the Japanese language. The sixth essay, for example, does not give examples in Japanese but indicates the presence or absence of *wa* using braces or square brackets around the subjects of quotative verbs in passages from English novels. On the other hand, it is because Kuroda was writing in English, a language which does not recognize facts that are identical or similar to those described in Japanese. He was therefore obliged to make use of a particular metalanguage which was both non-general and non-idiomatic: non-general, because the facts described were specific to Japanese; non-idiomatic, because they dealt with a different language from the one in which they were described (again, cf. Mejri 2008: 11). As a result, a translator has no need to develop the metalanguage herself, as she would have to do were she translating from essays written in Japanese, but merely to transpose it from English to French with its approximations, self-corrections and marks of enunciative heterogeneity.

Here are two examples, taken from the first and the third essay:

(1) (a) Thus, the semantic effects of *no da* are difficult to characterize clearly and completely. The only generalization one can make from the preceding examples is that *no da* somehow serves as a marker to indicate that some “second order” assertion, so to speak, is made with respect to the proposition expressed by the sentence to which *no da* is attached. That is, it serves to indicate that some assertion is made as to how the proposition in question is related to some other proposition or propositions that are stated (or even understood) in a particular discourse context. However, even such a vague characterization may be too narrow. (Kuroda 1973: 37–38)

(b) On voit qu’il est difficile de donner une caractérisation claire et complète des effets sémantiques de *no da*. La seule généralisation qu’on puisse extraire des exemples précédents serait que *no da* est utilisé de quelque manière comme un marqueur indiquant que la proposition exprimée par la phrase à laquelle cette expression est attachée devient l’objet d’une sorte d’assertion de “second ordre”; *no da* permet d’indiquer qu’une certaine assertion porte sur la façon dont sont reliées la proposition en question et une (ou plusieurs) autre(s) proposition(s) énoncée(s) (ou, simplement, sous entendue(s)) dans un contexte de discours particulier. Toutefois, aussi vague soit-elle, la caractérisation que nous venons de proposer pourrait se révéler trop restrictive. (Kuroda 2012a: 60–61)

(2) (a) What is relevant to us here is the word *zibun* (self) in the first sentence of this story. *Zibun* in the function exemplified here might be called a reflexive pronoun, although the context in which it can occur is quite different from the one for English or French reflexives. In fact, the exact condition for the occurrence of the reflexive *zibun* is hard to determine and has not yet been made clear. (Kuroda 1976: 120)

(b) Ce qui nous intéresse ici, c’est, dans la première phrase de cette histoire, le mot *zibun* (“soi”). *Zibun*, dans la fonction qu’il a dans cet exemple, pourrait être appelé un pronom réfléchi, bien que le contexte où il peut apparaître soit assez différent de celui où apparaissent les pronoms réfléchis en anglais ou en français. En fait, la condition exacte de l’emploi du réfléchi *zibun* est difficile à déterminer et n’a pas encore été définie clairement. (Kuroda 2012c: 109)

The last point that should be mentioned here is the particular use made by Kuroda of his knowledge and analyses of Japanese. Nicolas Ruwet describes it very well at the end of his preface to *Aux quatre coins de la linguistique*: “Kuroda always takes advantage of certain facts of Japanese to draw conclusions which are universally valid. Japanese, here – like English for Chomsky – is used as an indicator of something universal; it is simply the case that certain universal characteristics of

languages are revealed more clearly and lend themselves better to empirical study in one particular language than another. In studying Japanese, Kuroda is speaking of ourselves" (1979: 11–12, translation mine). The conclusions drawn from Japanese linguistic facts are linked to the part of general linguistics mentioned at the start of this section which, in the end, prevails quantitatively over the idiomatic part.

**1.2.** Owing to the use of formalization, certain passages of the fourth and fifth essays, "Some Thoughts on the Foundations of the Theory of Language Use" and "The Reformulated Theory of Speech Acts: Toward a Theory of Language Use," may create "the illusion of translative transparency," to use Jean-René Ladmiral's phrase ([1979] 1994: 230). The passage from source text to target equivalent is indeed achieved through a simple transposition of symbols:

- (3) (a) Using the symbols  $b_S$  and  $b_H$  for "the speaker believes..." and "the intended hearer believes...", respectively, we have the following list of propositions that are held in the speaker's belief system:  $W, R, b_H b_S W, b_H b_S R$ . (Kuroda 1979a: 5)  
 (b) Si l'on utilise respectivement les symboles  $c_L$  et  $c_A$  pour "le locuteur croit..." et "l'allocutaire croit...", la symbolisation des propositions contenues dans le système de croyances du locuteur doit se faire de la façon suivante:  $V, R, c_{ACL} V, c_{ACL} R$ . (Kuroda 2012c: 140)
- (4) (a) But so long as he understands the speaker's speech act of issuing the order, he believes that the speaker believes  $P$ , i.e. the intended hearer holds proposition  $b_S P$ . This proposition entails  $b_S b_H b_S P$ . (Kuroda 1980: 72–73)  
 (b) Mais dans la mesure où il comprend l'acte illocutionnaire consistant pour le locuteur à donner un ordre, il croit que le locuteur croit  $P$ , autrement dit il croit la proposition  $c_L P$ . Cette proposition entraîne  $c_L c_{ACL} P$ . (Kuroda 2012d: 165)
- Note that such formalisms are also part of a generalizing project. Kuroda's proposals concerning the meaning of speech acts are meant to be universally valid, independently of the language used to carry out such acts. Formalization answers, of course, to a need for concision, but it also serves the purpose of description and indication – in this case in the form of prediction, of a universal pragmatic truth.

## 2. Critique of translations and occasional re-translations

I shall take two examples aimed essentially at illustrating the historicity of translations: the fact that they form part of a cultural whole dating from a particular time which does not coincide, at any rate not completely, with the one in which we are currently living in.

**2.1.** The first example concerns the translation of the source terms *story*, *narrative* and *narration*.<sup>1</sup> The equivalent French target terms would quite simply have been *histoire*,

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<sup>1</sup> As Anna Wierzbicka shows very well in the case of *story*, these are everyday words which have not always been attributed a consistent terminological value (cf. 2010). My thanks to Brian Schiff for bringing her article to my attention. It approaches issues relating to translation which are, however, quite different from the ones concerning me here.



*récit* and *narration*. However, the fact that they do not always carry the same conceptual content in the source text led to the risk of confusion in the translation. Note first of all that *story*, *narrative* and *narration* do not always enjoy the same stability in their use, the same conceptual precision. *Story* and *narrative* are subject to various uses and are easily interchanged. Kuroda writes, for example, in the third essay, “Reflections on the Foundations of Narrative Theory” (using *story*):

- (5) (a) Taken seriously, or literally, then, a theory of narration based on the notion of narrator (the narrator theory of narration) must claim that each sentence of a *story* – for the time being let us exclude direct quotations – is a message communicated by the narrator; each sentence is the product of an act of judging in the narrator’s consciousness.
- (6) In essence, both Benveniste and Hamburger challenge the attempt to interpret a *story* as a message in the framework of the communicational theory of linguistic performance.  
– but also (using *narrative*):
- (7) We have so far been primarily concerned with the existence of *narratives* that do not fit the communicational theory of narration. But there are also *narratives* that can be treated within the framework of the communicational theory of narration. (1976: 109, 115, 127, emphasis added)

The term *story* in particular seems to lack the desired conceptual precision, as the following list of occurrences suggests: “first-person story” or “stories” (Kuroda 1973: 382, 383, 384, 387, 388; 1974: 172; 1976: 124, 127); “the world the story describes” (1973: 388); “the world of the story, the world the story is describing”; “the way the story is told” (1987: 150). In most of these occurrences, *story* has the same conceptual content as *narrative*, but in “the world of the story” it has the content of Eng. *story*, corresponding to Fr. *histoire*, taken in a technical sense, in the context of a terminology.<sup>1</sup> The use of the term *narration* is a lot more stable and designates (with a few exceptions, one of which I shall discuss later) the linguistic performance which consists in the production of a narrative with a conceptual opposition between Eng. *narration* and *narrative* which is close to Genette’s distinction between Fr. *narration* and *récit*, even if Genette’s and Kuroda’s understanding of narration differ greatly.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Genette (1972: 15): “Je propose, sans insister sur les raisons d’ailleurs évidentes du choix des termes, de nommer *histoire* le signifié ou contenu narratif [...], *récit* proprement dit le signifiant, énoncé, discours ou texte narratif lui-même, et *narration* l’acte narratif producteur et, par extension, l’ensemble de la situation réelle ou fictive dans laquelle il prend place” (1980: 27: “I propose, without insisting on the obvious reasons for my choice of terms, to use the word *story* for the signified or narrative content [...], to use the word *narrative* for the signifier, statement, discourse or narrative text itself, and to use the word *narrating* for the producing narrating action and, by extension, the whole of the real or fictional situation in which that action takes place”). Cf. also Prince (1987, 2003: 57, 58, 93) and Herman, Jahn and Ryan, eds. (2005: 338–339, 566–568).

<sup>2</sup> A reminder that for Genette, narrating is always understood as communication; for Kuroda, while some acts of narrating are acts of communication, not all acts of narrating can be assimilated with communication in a precise linguistic sense.

Kuroda's early translators do not seem to have been properly aware of the problems posed by the translation of *story*, *narrative* and *narration*. On the one hand, Cassian Braconnier spontaneously translated *story* by *récit* in "first-person story" ("*récit à la première personne*"), or in sentences such as (8):

- (8) (a) Taken seriously, then, narrative theory based on the notion of narrator must assume that each sentence of a *story* is a message communicated by the narrator, and represents the content of a mental act of judging by the narrator. (Kuroda 1974: 166, emphasis added)
- (b) Si on la prend vraiment au sérieux, une théorie du récit fondée sur la notion de narrateur implique inévitablement que, dans un *récit*, chaque phrase est un message communiqué par le narrateur, et représente le contenu d'un acte mental de jugement qu'on lui prête. (Kuroda 2012b: 82, emphasis added)

Note that the same sentence, give or take a few details, was translated by Tiên Fauconnier in the following way:

- (5) (b) Dès lors, prise rigoureusement ou littéralement, une théorie de la narration basée sur la notion de narrateur (que nous appellerons théorie narratrice de la narration) se doit d'affirmer que chaque phrase d'une *histoire* – écartons pour le moment les citations directes – est un message communiqué par le narrateur; chaque phrase est le produit d'un acte de jugement dans la conscience d'un narrateur. (Kuroda 2012c: 95–96, emphasis added)

Yet there are no translator's notes addressing such translation choices. On the other hand, Braconnier mistranslates "On Grammar and Narration" as "Grammaire et récit," "modern theories of narration" as "théories modernes du récit," "the communicational conception of narration" as "la conception communicationnelle du récit," etc. (Kuroda 2012b: 81, 82, 88, etc.). There is however one exception. The source sentence is as follows:

- (9) (a) Hamburger states that *narration* is a function by means of which what is narrated is generated, i.e. the narrative function which the narrating artist avails himself of just as the painter uses brush and color. (Kuroda 1974: 171, emphasis added)

Braconnier translates:

- (9) (b) Selon Hamburger, *le récit, ou plutôt la narration*, est une fonction qui engendre ce qui est narré, c'est une fonction narrative, que l'artiste qui crée un récit utilise tout comme le peintre utilise le pinceau et les couleurs. (Kuroda 2012b: 88–89, emphasis added)

In doing so, he makes use of a target addition ("ou plutôt" is nowhere to be found in the source text), which seems questionable, since he is not aiming to clarify the source-author's argument but rather expresses the translator's non-coincidence with his own translation. Fauconnier, by contrast, systematically translates Eng. *narration* by Fr. *narration*. She even adds one occurrence of Fr. *narration* in the title of the target

text: “Réflexions sur les fondements de la théorie de la narration” (Eng. “Reflections on the Foundations of Narrative Theory”).

The issue here is to know whether it is better to keep the instability in the use of *story*, *narrative* and in some cases *narration*, and the conceptual imprecision of *story* or, on the contrary, to introduce the formal coherence of a terminology into the source text – knowing that the context generally removes any risk of ambiguity. This issue is part of the perpetual debate between historicization and modernization, which is itself one of the forms of debate between source-oriented translation and target-oriented translation.

In the translations for which I was responsible myself, I adopted a compromise solution. I translated Eng. *story* and in one case *narration* by Fr. *récit*; in other words, I took account of the terminological reform put forward by Genette, on which current usage of *histoire*, *récit* and *narration* is based. I also indicated the terms used in the source text in notes and discussed translation choices that were made. The following two examples are both taken from the sixth essay, “Étude du ‘marqueur de topique’ *wa* dans des passages de romans de Tolstoï, Lawrence et Faulkner (en traduction japonaise, évidemment)”:

- (10) (a) The *wa* attached to Nicolai in our present example, then, would have to be justified on the basis of the fact that Nicolai is the subject of the point of view. This fact is not itself a component of the world of the story, the world the story is describing. Rather, it is a feature of the way the story is told. (Kuroda 1987: 150)  
(b) Le *wa* postposé à *Nicolas* dans « “Papa est-il à la maison”, demanda-t-[il] » doit donc recevoir une explication qui tienne compte du fait que *Nicolas* est coréférent du sujet du point de vue. Cette donnée ne fait pas partie du monde de l’histoire, c’est-à-dire du monde représenté dans le récit.<sup>1</sup> Il s’agit plutôt d’une caractéristique de la narration, de la façon dont le récit est raconté.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Angl. *the world of the story, the world the story is describing*. Le terme *story* correspond ici à *histoire*. On pourrait également traduire *world of the story* par *monde fictionnel* ou *monde de la fiction* [NdT].

<sup>2</sup> Angl. *Rather it is a feature of the way the story is told*. Le terme *story* correspond ici à *récit* et *the way the story is told* à *narration* [NdT]. (Kuroda 2012f: 184)

- (11) (a) Our third and last example is from William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, the first section, April seventh, 1928. This section is a first-person narration by Benjy, an idiot, of his experience in the afternoon and in the evening until he went to bed on April seventh, 1928, his 33rd birthday. (Kuroda 1987: 158)  
(b) Notre troisième et dernier exemple est extrait de la première partie du *Bruit et la fureur* de William Faulkner. Cette partie constitue le récit à la première personne<sup>1</sup> d’un déficient mental, Benjy. Il raconte ce qu’il a vécu dans l’après-midi et la soirée du 7 avril 1928, jour de son 33<sup>ème</sup> anniversaire.

<sup>1</sup> Angl. *This section is a first-person narration* [NdT]. (Kuroda 2012f: 195)

2.2. The second example concerns the translation of a problematic source term (precisely, two, but one is derived from the other). In “Where Epistemology, Style, and Grammar Meet,” Kuroda introduces the terms *reportive* and *nonreportive*, first “nonreportive style” vs “reportive style,” then in “reportive stories” or “story”:

- (12) (a) Contrary to what was said earlier, forms like these and like (5) are actually permitted as independent sentences, provided that they are used in a particular style, which, for the lack of a better name, I shall call *the nonreportive style*, to contrast with the *reportive style*. (1973: 381)

I should point out that the forms in question are morphological or syntactic combinations specific to Japanese.

- (13) (a) Let us group together first-person stories and non-first-person stories with a neutral or effaced narrator and call them *reportive*. A story is *reportive* if it is told by a narrator who may be omnipresent but not omniscient; otherwise, a story is *nonreportive*. This is the dichotomy that is relevant to us here. (1973: 383)

The binary opposition *reportive/nonreportive* has an absolutely essential terminological value for Kuroda. Braconnier translates *reportive* and *nonreportive* as *rapporté* and *non rapporté*, respectively:

- (12) (b) Contrairement à ce qui a été dit plus haut, des phrases comme celles-ci (ou comme (5) sont en fait permises, *pourvu* qu’elles soient employées dans un certain style, que, faute d’un meilleur terme, j’appellerai style *non rapporté*, par opposition au style *rapporté*.

- (13) (b) Groupons ensemble les récits à la première personne et les récits qui ne sont pas à la première personne mais dont le narrateur est neutre ou effacé, et appelons-les récits *rapportés*. Un récit est *rapporté* s’il est raconté par un narrateur qui peut être omniprésent mais qui n’est pas omniscient; dans les autres cas, le récit est *non rapporté*. C’est cette dichotomie qui sera pertinente pour notre propos. (Kuroda 2012a: 62, 66)

While it may appear obvious, his translation is actually unsatisfactory on several accounts. First, Kuroda uses the term *reportive*, which is his own, and not the term *reported*, which he could have taken up and injected with new meaning. The translation of *reportive* by *rapporté* loses the “authorial,” neological connotation added by the suffix *-ive*. On the other hand, it introduces troublesome connotations by implicitly comparing *style* or *récit rapporté* to *discours rapporté* (i.e. direct, indirect or free indirect discourse according to the traditional terminology and approach). In the addendum attached to the end of “Where Epistemology, Style, and Grammar Meet,” Kuroda makes a link between *nonreportive style* and the linguistic and stylistic phenomenon called *erlebte Rede* in German and *style indirect libre* in French; but he does so in order to reject the traditional approach in terms of reported speech:

- (14) (a) The distinction I intend to make in terms of nonreportive style, however, seems to be of a more general character than made by *erlebte Rede*. Basically, it is not to be

characterized with reference to direct and indirect speech nor in terms of “inner voice”. (1973: 38)

Significantly, Braconnier’s translation removes the reference to reported speech from this occurrence:

- (14) (b) La distinction que j’entends établir en termes de style non rapporté me semble cependant revêtir un caractère plus général que celle qui est exprimée en termes d’*erlebte Rede*. Fondamentalement, la distinction que je propose ne s’appuie pas sur la notion de “voix intérieure”. (Kuroda 2012a: 78)

*Reportive* and *nonreportive* could be translated by “de type rapport” and “qui n’est pas de type rapport,” which would enable the worrying connotations of *rapporté* to be avoided. But this translation, in the end, would present more drawbacks than advantages: loss of the neological connotation, under-terminologization, etc. It functions very poorly in the translation of the source sentence containing the first occurrence of *reportive* and *nonreportive* (cf. supra (12)). Dissimilatory translations, like “objectif” and “non objectif” (the translations used by Cyril Veken, the French translator of Banfield; cf. [1982] 1995), or “non omniscient” and “omniscient,” do not appear worthy of retention either due to potential contradictions. For example:

- (15) En utilisant seulement des phrases comme (25) et (26), et en évitant celles qui ressemblent à (22), (23) ou (24), on peut écrire un récit objectif [*reportive*] sans qu’il soit nécessaire d’introduire un narrateur à la première personne (*je*).

In other cases, they lead to tautologies. For example:

- (16) Le narrateur omniscient ne peut être identifié par aucun mécanisme linguistique dont l’existence soit établie indépendamment de l’hypothèse qu’il existe un tel narrateur, alors que cette possibilité existe pour le narrateur des récits écrits dans le style non omniscient [*in the reportive style*]. Le narrateur omniscient est dépourvu des justifications linguistiques qui valent pour le narrateur des récits écrits dans le style non omniscient [*in the reportive style*].

In the translations for which I was responsible, I resorted to the desperate solution of borrowing: since the loan translation *rapportif* or *non rapportif* is stylistically impossible, I imported the source terms directly, accompanying them with a note.

The two examples are from the fifth essay, “La théorie des actes de discours reformulée. Pour une théorie de l’usage du langage”:

- (17) Dans une autre perspective, il y a un certain nombre d’années que je m’intéresse au problème de ce que j’ai appelé le style nonreportive,<sup>1</sup> un style de prose narrative qui se rencontre fréquemment dans le roman moderniste. D’autres chercheurs l’ont abordée, naturellement avec quelques variantes : c’est le cas, entre autres, d’É. Benveniste avec sa notion d’*histoire*, couplée avec celle de *discours*, et de K. Hamburger avec sa notion d’*Erzählung*, qu’elle oppose au système de l’*Aussage*. J’ai expliqué de façon détaillée pourquoi on ne pouvait pas rendre compte des récits écrits dans le style *nonreportive* dans le cadre de la théorie communicationnelle de

l'usage du langage. En revanche, je n'ai pas encore eu l'occasion de resituer ma démonstration dans le cadre conceptuel de la théorie des actes de discours de Searle : de montrer, en particulier, que la théorie des actes de discours échoue à rendre compte des récits écrits dans le style *nonreportive* et de déterminer la place que la théorie des actes de discours pourrait avoir dans une théorie adéquate de l'usage du langage qui s'intéresserait à la fois aux actes de discours ordinaires et aux récits écrits dans le style *nonreportive*. (Kuroda 2012a: 160)

<sup>1</sup> Voir Chap. 1, p. 62, n.1 [NdT].

- (18) Comme je l'ai affirmé dans les travaux cités précédemment, la théorie communicationnelle de la performance linguistique est incapable de rendre compte des récits écrits dans le style *nonreportive*. Cette affirmation peut maintenant être extrapolée dans le cadre de notre étude. (173)

**2.3.** I will say a little more about two pairs of terms which Kuroda considered untranslatable: Benveniste's *histoire/discours* distinction and Hamburger's distinction between *Aussage/Erzählen* or *Erzählung*. The first does not pose any translation problems to the extent that it concerns terms borrowed from the target language. The ambiguities which could arise from the existence of two source terms, Eng. *discourse* and Fr. *discours*, for the same target term *discours*, are avoided by using italics when *discours* appears in reference to and/or in the sense of Benveniste.<sup>1</sup> In the case of *Aussage/Erzählen* (or *fiktionales Erzählen*, or *Erzählung*), *Aussage* is the most difficult term. In his translation of the first essay, "Où l'épistémologie, la grammaire et le style se rencontrent," Braconnier successively translates Ger. *Aussage* by Fr. *énonciation*, in "'Aussagesystem der Sprache' ('système linguistique de l'énonciation')", then by Fr. *parole* (with *Aussage* in brackets), at the end of the long passage from Hamburger quoted in the addendum (Kuroda, 2012a: 78–79). In his translation of the second essay, "Grammaire et récit," he translates Eng. *statement* by Fr. *énonciation*:

- (19) (a) She claims that narration is categorically different from statement. (Kuroda 1974: 170)  
 (b) Hamburger soutient que récit et énonciation appartiennent à des catégories différentes. (Kuroda 2012b: 88)

He then follows the usage in Kuroda, who directly imports the source terms *Aussagesystem*, *Aussage* and *Erzählung*, subsequently modified to *Erzählen*. Note that the same sentence, repeated in the third essay, "Reflections on the Foundations of Narrative Theory," is translated by Fauconnier in the following way:

- (20) Elle soutient que la narration est radicalement différente de l'énoncé (*statement*). (Kuroda 2012c: 104)

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Benveniste (1966: 241–242): "Il faut entendre discours dans sa plus large extension: toute énonciation supposant un locuteur et un auditeur, et chez le premier l'intention d'influencer l'autre de quelque manière" (1971: 208–209: "Discourse must be understood in its widest sense: every utterance assuming a speaker and a hearer, and in the speaker, the intention of influencing the other in some way").

I should mention that Eng. *statement* is the term recommended by Hamburger to translate Ger. *Aussage*.<sup>1</sup> Fauconnier, and not Braconnier, is therefore correct in translating Eng. *statement* by Fr. *énoncé* and avoiding translating Ger. *Aussage* by Fr. *énonciation*, which does not convey the same conceptual content nor the same relationship with other concepts.<sup>2</sup> As for *Erzählen* and *Erzählung*, Kuroda imports the terms directly without providing an English translation or making a distinction between them.<sup>3</sup> Their translation into French therefore does not raise any translation problems and their distinguishability remains implicit in source and target texts alike.

## 2. Translating Kuroda today

In this section I will return to my own experience as a translator and once again focus on two points: first, the translation of difficult source terms contained in the fourth and fifth essays; second, a few examples of interpretive rather than neutral translations taken from the translation of the sixth essay.

**3.1.** In the fourth essay, “Some Thoughts on the Foundations of the Theory of Language Use,” Kuroda discusses the place occupied by the communicative function of language in the hierarchy of the functions of language. The analysis at first fits into the framework of speech act theory. Kuroda develops a form of illocutionary logic making it possible to model the beliefs of the speaker and addressee of a speech act. The following paragraph represents a key stage in his argument:

- (21) (a) The communicative function involved in issuing an order, then, might be assumed to consist in getting the belief  $b_S P$  and hence also  $b_S b_H b_S P$  produced in the intended hearer’s mind. But, now, assume that there is a bystander who hears A issuing the order to B and understands the order. What does it mean that the bystander understands that the order is issued? The bystander understands the order in terms of exactly the same belief,  $b_S P$  and hence also  $b_S b_H b_S P$ , produced in his mind, as the intended hearer does! As far as the matter of understanding speech is concerned, issuing an order has the same function with the intended hearer as with the bystander. We must conclude, then, that the communicative function of language involved in issuing an order does not consist simply in getting *someone* to understand the relevant beliefs of the speaker’s, but rather in getting the *intended hearer* to understand them. The conclusion sounds trivial, and indeed is trivial as long

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hamburger ([1968] 1993: 363, n. 148): “The German concept *Aussage* as it occurs in grammar and in the logic of judgment is to be rendered in English by ‘statement’, which has a general meaning beyond that of ‘assertion’ (*Behauptung*).” Hamburger adds that, in the English translation of Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations*, Ger. *Aussage* is translated by Eng. *statement*. Note that in the French translation of the same work, Ger. *Aussage* is translated by Fr. *énoncé*.

<sup>2</sup> On this point, cf. Patron (2009: 152–155) (on Hamburger 1986). *énoncé* is the result of its *énonciation*; it is opposed to the latter as the product is to its production.

<sup>3</sup> *Erzählen* can refer to the narrative as a process – this is how Hamburger refers to the narrative process; *Erzählung*, the product of the process.

as one sees in it only the specification of the necessary role of the intended hearer. The crucial feature of this conclusion in the following discussion lies rather in its other aspect, namely that we can abstract from the communicative function involved in issuing an order a subfunction which induces the same effect in the bystander as in the intended hearer. (Kuroda 1979a: 6)

The terms *bystander* and *intended hearer* need to be recognized as terminological units. The argumentative context is clear: the *bystander* is a hearer of A, without being his *intended hearer*, but a hearer outside the interlocutory relation; his or her role is to de-specify the beliefs produced by a speech act like an order in the mind of the intended hearer. In the absence of strictly superimposable equivalents in the target French, I opted to translate Eng. *bystander* by Fr. *tiers auditeur* and Eng. *intended hearer* by Fr. *allocutaire proprement dit*. In fact, I took the first term from the philosopher Francis Jacques, a specialist in the philosophy of language and communication (cf. 1979: 144, 235, and index 417; 1985: 249; 2000: 75).<sup>1</sup> The expression *allocutaire proprement dit* is also used by Jacques (cf. 1979: 144), but it has no particular terminological value. In my translation, the repetition of the term, paired with that of *tiers auditeur*, constitutes a case of the terminologization of Jacques' expression. On a stylistic level, *allocutaire proprement dit* fits in with one of the characteristics of Kuroda's style in the essay, which is the frequent use of metadiscursive glosses ("in the sense specified in the paper"; "in the strict sense of the term"; "in the technical sense in which I want to understand the term in this present context", etc.; Kuroda 1979a: 1, 3, 4, etc.). The translation of the paragraph quoted above therefore produced the following:

- (21) (b) On pourrait donc considérer que la fonction communicative impliquée dans le fait de donner un ordre consiste à induire la croyance  $c_L P$ , partant également  $c_{LCACL} P$  dans l'esprit de l'allocutaire. Mais supposons à présent qu'il y ait une tierce personne, qui entend X donner un ordre à Y et qui comprend que l'ordre est donné. Que signifie exactement le fait que le tiers auditeur comprend que l'ordre est donné? Le tiers auditeur comprend l'ordre donné exactement de la même façon que l'allocutaire proprement dit; ce sont exactement les mêmes croyances,  $c_L P$ , partant également  $c_{LCACL} P$ , qui sont induites dans son esprit! Du strict point de vue de la compréhension de ce qui est dit, il n'y a pas de différence entre la fonction de l'ordre vis-à-vis du tiers auditeur et vis-à-vis de l'allocutaire proprement dit. Nous devons en conclure que la fonction communicative du langage impliquée dans le fait de donner un ordre ne consiste pas seulement à amener *quelqu'un* à comprendre les croyances pertinentes du locuteur, mais plutôt à amener *l'allocutaire proprement dit* à comprendre ces

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<sup>1</sup> The term *tiers auditeur* (sometimes written *tiers-auditeur*) also has a terminological value for Jacques and is used in an argumentative context which is quite close to Kuroda's: the *tiers auditeur* is an *auditeur* but not the *allocutaire* of the *locuteur*; he or she is a hearer who stands outside the interlocutory relation. However, the introduction of the *tiers auditeur* in Jacques only serves to specify the role of the *allocutaire* (cf. e.g. 2000: 75).



croyances. Cette conclusion peut paraître triviale et elle l'est effectivement si l'on n'y voit que la réaffirmation du rôle nécessaire de l'allocutaire. Il est beaucoup plus important pour la discussion qui va suivre de l'envisager sous son autre aspect. Il apparaît qu'il est possible d'abstraire de la fonction communicative impliquée dans le fait de donner un ordre une sous-fonction qui produit le même effet dans l'esprit du tiers auditeur et dans celui de l'allocutaire proprement dit. (Kuroda 2012d: 140-141)

In the translation of the fifth essay, "The Reformulated Theory of Speech Acts," it was logical to reuse the translation of the opposition *bystander/intended hearer* by the opposition *tiers auditeur/allocutaire proprement dit*:

(22) (a) It is often the case that somewhat atypical situations help us see distinctly different factors in the phenomenon under investigation that are not obviously differentiable in typical situations. I am here resorting to this familiar technique of investigation by introducing the role of the bystander (or bystanding hearer, to contrast it with intended hearer) into our consideration of speech acts. To speak of the role of a bystander in the speech act might sound almost self-contradictory. Is not the bystander by definition the one who has no role in the act? But it is, I claim, precisely the role the innocent bystander plays, or indeed must play, just by standing by, that reveals us a conspicuous, characteristic feature of the speech act. (Kuroda 1980: 71-72)

(b) Il n'est pas rare que des situations plus ou moins atypiques nous permettent d'avoir une vision plus différenciée du phénomène soumis à l'investigation que celle qu'on aurait en considérant seulement les situations-types. Je vais justement me servir de ce mode d'investigation en introduisant le rôle d'une tierce personne (ou d'un tiers auditeur, que j'opposerai à l'allocutaire proprement dit) dans mon examen des actes de discours. Parler du rôle du tiers auditeur dans l'acte de discours peut sembler presque contradictoire dans les termes. Le tiers auditeur n'est-il pas par définition celui qui ne joue aucun rôle dans cet acte? Mais de mon point de vue, c'est précisément le rôle que ce "tiers inclus" joue, ou est obligé de jouer, dès le moment où on l'inclut, qui nous révèle un trait notable, caractéristique, de l'acte de discours. (Kuroda 2012e: 163)

In doing so, I had to do without rendering the variation *bystander, bystanding hearer*, as well as the word play on "bystander" and "just by standing by." I also had to find an equivalent for the fixed expression *innocent bystander*, corresponding to Fr. *simple passant*, which I did not feel was entirely satisfactory. I employed a form of compensation by playing on the words and expression "tiers exclu," "tiers inclus," "dès le moment où on l'inclut."

**3.2.** My final examples will be from the translation of the sixth essay, "A Study of the So-Called Topic *wa*." This essay is based on the analysis of passages from novels by Tolstoy, Lawrence and Faulkner, translated into Japanese (although, as I mentioned earlier, Kuroda cites all examples in English). When he refers to these passages in the

form of summaries or commentaries, Kuroda always reports the content of the passages in the past tense; for example:

- (23) (a) We may assume that the quoted passage as a whole represents Nicolai's point of view. It is a description of the scene in the ballroom and the drawing room as reflected in Nicolai's consciousness when he *entered* the ballroom and *proceeded* to the drawing room. (1987: 146, emphasis added)

In my translation, I chose to replace the *simple past* by the present, which seems to me both more natural and theoretically better founded (this is the present which Hamburger calls the *reproducing present*<sup>1</sup>); which, for the preceding paragraph, produces the following:

- (23) (b) On peut considérer que le passage tout entier représente le point de vue de Nicolas. Il s'agit de la description d'une scène qui se déroule simultanément dans le grand salon et dans la pièce voisine, telle qu'elle est reflétée dans la conscience de Nicolas au moment où il entre dans le grand salon et tandis qu'il se dirige vers la pièce où se trouve sa mère. (Kuroda 2012f: 179)

There is nevertheless one case where the use of the past could have been retained, with a value of anteriority in relation to the present (this is indicated in a note).

- (24) (a) We can no longer read from the passage any sign of Nicolai's consciousness to the reality surrounding him. It is as if we were listening to someone describing to us a scene s/he saw on the stage. (Kuroda 1987: 155)

(b) Nous ne pouvons plus déceler dans ce passage aucun signe de ce que la conscience de Nicolas réagit à la réalité qui l'entoure. Tout se passe comme si nous entendions quelqu'un nous décrire un ensemble d'événements qu'il ou elle voit représentés sur scène. (Kuroda 2012f: 191–192)

Nous ne pouvons plus déceler dans ce passage aucun signe de ce que la conscience de Nicolas réagit à la réalité qui l'entoure. Tout se passe comme si nous entendions quelqu'un nous décrire un ensemble d'événements qu'il ou elle avait vu représentés sur scène.

In two more cases, I chose an interpretive translation over a neutral one (slightly interpretive in the text body, more obviously interpretive in the notes):

- (25) (a) In this passage [which is from *Sons and Lovers* by D. H. Lawrence], Paul's, Miriam's and the "objective" point of view are interwoven, often indistinguishably.  
(b) Dans ce passage, le point de vue de Paul, celui de Miriam et le point de vue, si l'on peut dire, objectif<sup>1</sup> se mêlent de façon inextricable par moments.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hamburger (1973: 109): "As an indication of the a-temporal conditions in epic fiction we may cite that present tense which we use involuntarily, but with logical necessity, whenever we re-tell the content of a narrative, as well as that of a drama, and which we can therefore term the *reproducing present*. The function and significance of this present tense emerges clearly if, instead of it, we were to use the past tense. For this past would immediately give the piece of fiction the character of a reality-document – it being, as scarcely needs to be said, not identical with the epic preterit. Just for this reason the reproducing present is not a historical present either, but rather the a-temporal present tense of statements about ideal objects."

<sup>1</sup> Kuroda écrit *the “objective” point of view*. Cependant, le problème, selon moi, vient plus de l’utilisation du terme “point de vue” dans les trois cas considérés, ou de son utilisation pour ce qui se définit précisément par opposition au point de vue des personnages, que dans l’utilisation de l’adjectif “objectif” en lui-même. Je renvoie sur ce point à Banfield 1995 [1982]: 277–329 et 375–398, et Patron 2012 [NdT]. (Kuroda 2012f: 193)

(26) (a) In comparison, a rough count indicates that the subjects of quotative verbs are translated with *ga* and *wa* about half and half in the fourth part of the book [*The Sound and the Fury* by Faulkner], which is written from an “omniscient,” or “objective,” point of view.

(b) Par comparaison, d’après un calcul approximatif, il y a à peu près autant de syntagmes en *wa* que de syntagmes en *ga* dans la quatrième partie du roman, où le récit est écrit d’un point de vue, si l’on peut dire, omniscient ou objectif.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Angl. *which is written from an “omniscient,” or “objective,” point of view*. See p. 193, n. 1 [NdT]. (Kuroda 2012f: 197)

In all these cases, the element of interpretation goes beyond the interpretive minimum no translation can do without (cf. Ladmiral [1979] 1994: 231). It seemed to me nevertheless that it was the way to ensure a better reception of Kuroda’s text in the current context.

#### 4. Conclusion

This discussion of the translation of Kuroda’s essays on narrative theory, although quite limited in scope, has the merit of reflecting several essential propositions in the epistemological history of theories: there is a diachronic uncertainty in the use of terminologies; there are inadequacies between stages of terminological stability; there are untranslatables which are defined not by the terms we do not or cannot translate, but rather by the ones we keep (not) translating (cf. Cassin 2004: XVII); there is interpretation involved in the translation of theory, just as there is in any other translation. Translators must be aware of these variables and translation users must not fail to take them into account.

*Translated by Susan Nicholls*

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## 0. Introduction

Although words can be translated, their usage cannot truly be transplanted because usage depends on word users' habitus, which is always implicit and has no clear-cut stipulations comparable to the rules of games and sports. In the case of Japanese translations of material in the humanities, problems arise less frequently in translation itself than in the transplantation of ideas to a Japanese context and their reception by Japanese-speaking readers.

### 1. Typical (mis)understanding about narratological notions: ironic proof of narratology's universality?

Narratology aims to be a science; that is, it endeavors to be a universal field of knowledge. On a basic level, certain fundamental understandings seem to be widely shared among many Western and Eastern researchers in narratology. Some may state that these narratological understandings are insufficient to justify the universality of the discipline; I respond that the same types of misunderstandings occur in the East and the West which, ironically, makes a strong case for the worldwide relevance of narratology.

The Japanese scholar SAKAKI Atsuko erroneously criticized structuralist narratology by mistaking the notion of story (*histoire*) for the narrative referent.<sup>1</sup> This

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<sup>1</sup> "A narrative text is not a realistic representation of objectively grasped events but a once-in-a-lifetime act performed in the context of each occasion. [...] [In some pages in KANAI Mieko's novel *Bunshō Kyōshitsu*], [n]arration takes a predictive form; by this, the major structuralist premise of the pre-existence of the story in relation to narrative discourse is denied. It is not to communicate events that have already occurred but events that come into being, using words that have existed previously. Binary opposition of content and discourse is no longer valid. Events are now hypothetically supposed in the act of narration" (Sakaki 1996: 238, translation mine).

Despite this, readers cannot find any "major structuralist premise of the pre-existence of the story in relation to narrative discourse." Sakaki speaks in scathing terms mainly about *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* by Gérard Genette, which had already offered, despite Sakaki's judgment, a firm dismissal of the idea: "It seems evident that the narrating can only be subsequent to what it tells, but this obviousness has been belied for many centuries by the existence of "predictive" narrative in its various forms [...], whose origin is lost in the darkness of time [...]" (Genette [1972] 1983: 216).

misunderstanding is identical to that in Jonathan Culler's *The Pursuit of Signs*.<sup>1</sup> Another Japanese scholar, HARA Kōichirō, faults Tzvetan Todorov's theory of the fantastic with confusing the notion of the implied reader with the empirical reader.<sup>2</sup> This error is similar to one previously made by Harold Bloom in *Agon: Toward a Theory of Revisionism*.<sup>3</sup> Scholars thus sometimes reproach narratologists for statements they never made. All these misunderstandings ironically demonstrate narratology's universality by crossing the border between the West and the East.

The universal character of narratology reassured me during my translation of *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory* (1991) by Marie-Laure Ryan into Japanese (published in 2006), as theoretical terms are generally easy to translate into modern Japanese, which has a considerable capacity for word formation. However, this ease of translation is limited only to the aspect of converting English terms into "modern" Japanese words. Because the Japanese language owes its capacity for coining words to Chinese characters, or *seme*s, it is difficult for a translator to convert theoretical and logical speculations, despite their universality, into Japanese modes of thought.

## 2. The lack of abstract and generic notions in native Japanese vocabulary

The original Japanese language had no written form. Early speakers of the language borrowed the writing system from Chinese, a completely different language. The Japonic language family is often regarded by linguists as an isolated group of dialects (Japanese-Ryukyuan languages), whereas Chinese belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language family. Phonetically, the former is a typical moraic language with a simple

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<sup>1</sup> "The [psycho]analyst must always choose [between story and discourse] which will be treated as the given and which as the product. Yet either choice leads to a narratology that misses some of the curious complexity of narratives and fails to account for much of their impact." (Culler 1981: 186). Marie-Laure Ryan criticized this idea as follows: "This confusion reduces language from a triple relation between signifier, signified, and referent to a binary relation between sign and referent." (Ryan 1991: 264)

<sup>2</sup> "Each reader, living at a different time and space in a constantly changing world far from the absolute, cannot be one with the implicit reader. I think this is the reason why it is a pleasure to read literary works and why new interpretations spring forth [...]. [Todorov's] classification has no foundation other than reader response, so it should be controversial" (Hara 1995: 120-123, translation mine).

Scholars can easily find in Todorov's *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* a simple disproof to this reproach: "It must be noted that we have in mind no actual reader, but the role of the reader implicit in the text (just as the narrator's function is implicit in the text)" (Todorov [1970] 1975: 31).

<sup>3</sup> "[...] I pause here to cast off, with amiable simplicity, the theory of fantasy set forth by Todorov. We do not hesitate between trope and the uncanny in reading Hoffmann of David Lindsay or Lewis Carroll or *The Tin Drum*, and indeed we can say that here the reader who hesitates is lost and has lost that moment which is the agonistic encounter of deep, strong reading." (Bloom 1982: 205)

pitch accent whereas the latter, a representative Sino-Tibetan language, is characterized by its contour tones. On the basis of the classical grammatical typology created by August Schleicher, these two languages can be classified as agglutinative and isolating languages, respectively.

Translators experience many difficulties in transplanting literary theory into Japanese because the native Japanese lexicon traditionally had few vocabulary words, abstract notions and generic terms: without Chinese, the Japanese lexical repertoire could not create new words by coining *seme*s. Scholars have reported that earlier versions of the Japanese language included only five or six abstract concepts such as honor, pride and shame (cf. Tōdō 1969: 242). Additionally, although Japanese contains words referring to rain or snow, its speakers had to borrow Chinese expressions to express a general idea such as weather (cf. Takashima 2001: 23–27). As the linguist ŌNO Susumu states, “Even now, in general, most of our abstract nouns rely on Sino-Japanese vocabulary” ([1967] 2006: 102).

A thousand years ago, Japanese writing had two main styles. *Kambun*, or composition in Chinese, can be found in Chinese poetry created by Japanese male poets, public documents by officers and scholarly treatises by priests. There was also *wabun*, or composition written predominately using the native Japanese vocabulary (*yamato-kotoba*); it is understood among scholars that *wabun* reflects the oral features of Japanese at that time. We find *wabun* in Japanese poetry by male and female authors and also in prose by female authors including personal essays such as *The Pillow Book* by Imperial Court gentlewoman Sei Shōnagon and fictional narrative texts such as *The Tale of Genji*, which was written by lady-in-waiting Murasaki Shikibu in the early eleventh century.

These two styles resulted in the creation of a third, a hybrid Sinicized style of Japanese syntax and mixed Sino-Japanese vocabulary (*wakan konkō bun*), which was a learned and literary style mainly used by male intellectuals. Sinicized style and native style corresponded approximately to two clusters of intellectuals, male and female. These two styles became diversified, as their users produced many stylistic variations that then fused. If women only rarely had the opportunity to learn Sinicized vocabulary, this happened simply because they lacked had no need to write documents for public use.

| Vocabulary          | Chinese / Sino-Japanese       | Native Japanese  |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Main writing system | (Mainly)<br>Chinese logograms | Japanese syllabograms*<br>created<br>from Chinese characters |
| Feature             | Usually represented           | Almost entirely limited to                                   |



|                  |   |  |
|------------------|---|--|
|                  | abstract / generic notions; static                    | concrete and individual subjects; rich in onomatopoeia                     |
| Style            | Chinese / hybrid style                                | Native / hybrid style  |
| Purpose of style | Chinese poetry, Public documents, scholarly treatises | <i>Waka</i> poetry, letters, essays, narrative texts ( <i>monogatari</i> ) |
| Users            | Men   | Women (and men, in poetry)   |
| Connotation      | Written, public, scholarly                            | Oral, private, secular   |

Table 1. Two sources of Japanese vocabulary and two corresponding styles of written language from the Heian Period (late eighth century to late twelfth century)

\* A syllabogram is a letter representing a syllables or a mora, which consists of a consonant sound (optional) followed by a vowel sound. A set of syllabograms compose a writing system called “syllabary.”

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, which marked the starting point of the modernization in Japan, Japanese intellectuals created hundreds of words using Chinese semes. This was necessary for the translation of ideas such as “comedy,” “fine arts,” “theory,” “thought,” “science,” “culture” and “civilization” – ideas that these thinkers encountered in Western texts. These new Chinese words, coined in Japan, were re-imported into modern Chinese vocabulary.

Since that time, most of the terms used in Western humanities texts have been translated into Japanese by coining Sino-Japanese semes. For example, the translation of the term *sociology* is composed of a combination of the terms “society” and “study”; *aesthetics*, “beauty” and “study”; *atheism*, “none,” “God,” and “discussion” or “theory”; *naturalism*, “nature” and “principle” or “doctrine.” These ideas introduced into Japan were all abstract; as a result, the Japanese language necessarily continued to rely on Sino-Japanese semes. Ever since that time, most of the terms used in Western humanities texts have been translated by coining Chinese semes.

|               |               |                     |
|---------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 社会            | + 学           | = 社会学               |
| <i>shakai</i> | + <i>gaku</i> | = <i>shakaigaku</i> |
| society       | + study       | = sociology         |
| 美             | + 学           | = 美学                |
| <i>bi</i>     | + <i>gaku</i> | = <i>bigaku</i>     |

|           |               |                            |                      |
|-----------|---------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
|           | beauty        | + study                    | = aesthetics         |
| 無         | + 神           | + 論                        | = 無神論                |
| <i>mu</i> | + <i>shin</i> | + <i>ron</i>               | = <i>mushinron</i>   |
| none      | + God         | + discussion<br>or theory  | = atheism            |
|           | 自然            | + 主義                       | = 自然主義               |
|           | <i>shizen</i> | + <i>shugi</i>             | = <i>shizenshugi</i> |
|           | nature        | + principle<br>or doctrine | = naturalism         |

Table 2. Examples of abstract notions expressed in Japanese by coining Chinese semes

Because the words shown in Table 2 represent fundamental notions for Westerners, it might surprise them that scholars of the Japanese language can sometimes identify when and by whom these words were created. The word *shakai*, meaning “society,” is attributed to an 1875 newspaper column written by journalist and politician FUKUCHI Gen’ichirō (1841–1906), and *tetsugaku*, meaning “philosophy,” to a 1874 treatise by scholar-bureaucrat NISHI Amane (1829–1897). As pointed out by NAKAMURA Hajime, a scholar of the Vedic and Buddhist scriptures, Japan had, in the 1870s, no independent disciplinary subject or domain that corresponded to Western philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

Japanese lexis rely on Chinese semes to represent abstract and generic notions. Many Japanese people, including intellectuals, find these concepts, at root, to be somewhat unfamiliar. Their interest continues to be concrete, individual objects which can be handled with native *yamato kotoba* and by native syntax without the need for Chinese semes.

### 3. *Monogatari*: “narrative” in native Japanese vocabulary

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<sup>1</sup> “An equivalent for ‘philosophy’ in the modern philosophical sense was likely not to exist in Far Eastern countries. When Japanese intellectuals finally found modern Western philosophy, what is called philosophy appeared to them to be somehow novel. They were astonished. NISHI [...], who tried to introduce Western philosophy to Japan, created a new word, 哲学 *tetsugaku*, to represent philosophy and used it in his work *Hyakuitsu Shinron* (1874).

“Additionally, of course, Japanese intellectuals had previously pursued philosophical thinking. However, there had been no independent disciplinary subject or domain in Japan named philosophy. [...].

“This neologism was introduced into Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and overseas Chinese people. The word is now widely and generally used among these groups. This fact means that there is a certain unfamiliarity with philosophy among Far Eastern intellectuals and a lack in the past Eastern world of what is called philosophy in the modern West.” (Nakamura [1987] 2009: 435–436, translation mine). For detailed discussion, see *ibid.* chap. 1, section 3.

As I mentioned earlier, the native Japanese composition, style and vocabulary during the Heian period were rendered using a *hiragana* syllabary (set of syllabograms) that originally gained popularity among court gentlewomen in writing personal communications and Japanese poetry. Men also used the native Japanese style in private modes of communication and in composing *waka* poetry. However, they sometimes wrote prose using this female style, as in *Tosa Nikki* (*Tosa Diary*, ca. 935) by KI no Tsurayuki.

Another domain of language was written in the native Japanese style and vocabulary during the Heian period, namely, the fictional narrative literary genre *monogatari* (“tale”).<sup>1</sup> This genre, which arose during that period, is understood by scholars to retain aspects of the oral tradition, as demonstrated by the fact that texts were always written in a native Japanese style. Works of literature written in this style were disguised as records of oral storytelling and were recited by court gentlewomen to other gentlewomen and to princesses.<sup>2</sup> Surviving examples of this genre have primitive characteristics and generally more closely resemble tales than novels. However, a few exceptions are more voluminous and have a reasonably complex structure such as *The Tale of Genji*<sup>3</sup> (*Genji Monogatari*), which includes strikingly modern psychological descriptions, and *Hamamatsu Chūnagon Monogatari* (*The Tales of Hamamatsu Chūnagon*), a paranormal romance on the theme of reincarnation. In any case, *monogatari* is a term that refers to a genre written mainly in native Japanese vocabulary; the term itself was derived from native Japanese vocabulary. However, this word also refers not only to a certain literary genre of Japanese classical literature but also to narratives in general.

Hence the term *monogatari* has two meanings in literary studies in Japan. First, it refers to a group of concrete works in Japanese classical literature: this meaning is historically and geographically limited, similarly to genres such as Menippean satire, *chanson de geste*, penny dreadfuls, *Neue Sachlichkeit* theater and slash fiction. The other

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<sup>1</sup> Examples include *Taketori Monogatari* (*The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*) and *Ise Monogatari* (*The Tales of Ise*) in the mid-tenth century, *Utsubo Monogatari* (*The Tale of the Hollow Tree*) and *Ochikubo Monogatari* (*The Tale of Ochikubo*) in the late tenth century, *Genji Monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*) in the early eleventh century, *Eiga Monogatari* (*Story of Splendor*) and *Hamamatsu Chūnagon Monogatari* (*The Tales of Hamamatsu Chūnagon*) in the eleventh century, and *Torikaebaya Monogatari* (*The Changelings*) in the twelfth century.

<sup>2</sup> All the examples in the former note, other than *The Tale of Genji*, which was written by court gentlewoman, Murasaki Shikibu, are anonymous; it is difficult to determine the authors' sex.

<sup>3</sup> If the term “novel” is defined simply as a fictional narrative written in prose, *The Tale of Genji* is not the world's first novel, because scholars could never ignore the works of Gaius Petronius Arbiter (Petronius) and Longus, analyzed by Mikhail Bakhtin, Erich Auerbach and Northrop Frye, are eight or nine centuries older. However, conceivably, scholars may call *The Tale of Genji* the oldest example of a literary work that gives narrative fiction a modern twist, or at least a certain modern feature, namely, psychological descriptions of characters.

meaning of *monogatari* refers to narratives in general, literary or otherwise, in any language.

The native Japanese word *monogatari* is primarily a continuative form of verb *monogataru* (to narrate) which is turned into a common noun that can be translated as “narrative.” The term *monogatari* can be applied to the narrative act as well as to narrative text and narrative content. Hence it has a three-fold meaning, parallel with the meaning of the French word *récit* as analyzed in *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* by Gérard Genette (Genette [1972] 1983: 25–26).

The term *monogatari* is a native Japanese word composed of the words *mono* (thing) and *katari* (narration). The latter form is also a continuative form of the verb *kataru* (to narrate, to relate). ŌNO Susumu delineates four aspects of the verb *kataru* in the Heian era:

- 1) to confide one’s secret or inner matters;
- 2) to inform listeners of states of being or inside information that they do not know;
- 3) to recount the development of an event in chronological order;
- 4) to make a fictitious speech or to deceive. (cf. Ōno [2001] 2006: 54–56)

The fourth aspect, “to make a fictitious speech or to deceive,” speaks to the affinity between the notions of narrative and fiction, with the latter concept being akin to the Latin word *ingere*, meaning “to form or to forge.” This aspect, from an etymological viewpoint, leads us to seek *kataru*’s root in another verb, *katadoru* (to make something in the shape of something else, to model on something, to represent visually).<sup>1</sup>

物語論 [*monogatariiron*], a Japanese word referring to narratology, is a portmanteau word composed of a native Japanese word *monogatari* (narrative) and a Chinese seme *ron* (theory, doctrine). This was a highly unusual case in which native Japanese vocabulary is used in an academic domain. In the Japanese way of thinking, the notion of narrative is concrete and familiar.

#### 4. The process of transplanting of theoretical terms and systems into Japanese

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<sup>1</sup> Referring to the idea of the “narrative sentence,” put forth by Arthur Danto, the philosopher NOE Keiichi defines *katari* (narration) as an act of fashioning discourse in the shape of private experiences to render it common (cf. Noe [1990] 2006: 80–81). Another philosopher, SAKABE Megumi ([1990] 2008), compares a pair of verbs, *hanasu* (to speak) and *kataru* (to narrate), with two groups of tenses in some European languages (*besprechenden Tempora* and *erzählenden Tempora*, in Harald Weinrich’s classification).

The process of translating and transplanting Western terms has been far from simple and has encountered many obstacles. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Western knowledge contained many concepts that were unprecedented in Japanese intellectual life at that time. These concepts generally fell into two categories: the systematic and theoretical pursuit of sociological and scientific principles (which, as pointed out above, came in the absence of philosophy as a discipline in Japan) and historical positivism.

The modern institutional basis for the study of literature in Japan was set out by the scholar HAGA Yaichi (1867–1927), who in 1899, studied in Berlin. There, he encountered German philology, which was then under the influence of historicism in the line of Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886) and Johann Gustav Droysen (1808–1884). Haga understood positivism simply to be a sweeping dismissal of theoretical speculation. Such an understanding, or misunderstanding, was essentially inevitable for a scholar brought up in circumstances in which notions such as theory and philosophy were new. As pointed out by KONISHI Jin'ichi in *Introduction to the Study of Japanese Literature*:

Academic treasures, for Haga, [resulted from] the rigid process of grasping and proving individual facts and the method used to support this process. This is an inevitable choice for a man taking the first step toward a modern study of Japanese literature. [...]

The problem lies in the fact that, ever since, [Japanese] scholars have studied *only individual facts*. We should not be able to blame von Ranke and Droysen for the throngs of [Japanese] scholars who could not criticize Marxist extension into the humanities and, especially after World War II, who patched up the situation, garnishing their discourse with Marxist jargon. (Konishi 2009: 450–451, translation mine)

Even up to now, the Japanese academic climate has maintained this stance deplored by Konishi: in literary study in Japan, scholars have been interested almost exclusively in subjects, or what to study, but scarcely interested in methods, or how to study. The goal of study is almost entirely limited to particular individual facts about singular, often famous, writers. This tendency restrains practitioners of adjacent academic domains from pursuing necessary interdisciplinary interactions.

Currently in Japan, when pupils study the English language in junior high school, they encounter grammatical concepts such as *mokutekigo* (object) and *hogo* (predicative complement). After six years, a student who starts to learn French, for

instance, in the university setting discovers that *hogo*, in French grammar books, means not the predicative complement but the object argument of a verbal predicate – what they learned to call *mokutekigo* in English grammar. Pioneers of French studies in Japan translated this word from the French term *complément (d’objet)*. The French equivalent of the predicative complement in English is known in Japanese as *zokushi*, which refers to the French term *attribut*.

| English grammar textbooks                                      |   | French grammar textbooks  |
|--|---|---|
| 目的語 <i>mokutekigo</i><br>(translation of “object”)             | = | (目的) 補語 ( <i>mokuteki hogo</i> )<br>(translation of<br>“ <i>complément [d’objet]</i> ”) |
| 補語 <i>hogo</i><br>(translation of<br>“predicative complement”) | = | 属詞 <i>zokushi</i><br>(translation of “ <i>attribut</i> ”)                               |
| Sino-Anglicized equivalent                                     |   | Sino-Gallicized equivalent  |

Table 3. Japanese translations of basic terms in English and French grammar textbooks

In other words, in Japan, pioneers of the study of the English and French languages who translated these terms from those languages into Japanese made up two different clusters that used different ways of writing and thinking, just like the clusters of male and female intellectuals in court in the Heian period. They only translated “what English calls ‘object’” and “what French calls *complément d’objet*” and thought nothing about the equivalence (or lack thereof) between translated terms.

The conjugation of verbs in the first-, second-, and third-person forms has no equivalent in the Japanese language. As a result, in Japanese translations of Western texts, it is difficult (and sometimes almost impossible) to grammatically distinguish the nuances of free indirect speech that represents characters’ speech or thoughts. Many young Japanese students who encounter narratology and textual linguistics for the first time are confused by this grammatical feature.

The term “free indirect speech” has a word-for-word translation in Japanese, namely, *jiyū kansetsu wahō*. This term has been used almost exclusively for the past three decades. Until the early 1980s, however, three equivalents were employed in Japan. First, scholars studying French translated this term as *jiyū kansetsu wahō* because they followed the French version, *discours (or style) indirect libre*. Secondly, Germanists in Japan preferred to translate this phrase as *taiken wahō*, which is surely a translation of

the German term *erlebte Rede*. Third, Anglicists were inclined to translate the phrase as *byōshutsu wahō*. *Byōshutsu* is a word created from a forcible Sino-Japanese reading of a native Japanese verb *egakidasu*, meaning “to paint out, to delineate.” This process results in a pseudo-Sino-Japanese word created in a deplorably awkward way. As a consequence, Anglicists adopted the concept put forth by Otto Jespersen of “represented speech.”

There is also a fourth translation of “free indirect speech,” namely, *chūkan wahō*, meaning “intermediate narration.” This term is sometimes used as an equivalent of free indirect speech.<sup>1</sup> In general, however, the term also includes free direct narration (cf. Yasogi 1991: 89–90) by which a character's utterances and thoughts are presented verbatim, with no quotation marks.

|          |  |                               |                                  |                                |
|----------|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Japanese | 自由間接話法*<br><i>jiyū kansetsu wahō</i>             | 体験話法**<br><i>taiken wahō</i>  | 描出話法***<br><i>byōshutsu wahō</i> | 中間話法****<br><i>chūkan wahō</i> |
| Original | <i>discours (style)</i><br><i>indirect libre</i> | <i>erlebte</i><br><i>Rede</i> | represented<br>speech            | intermediate<br>narration      |

Table 4. Four Japanese equivalents for the expression “free indirect speech”

\* *jiyū* = free, *kansetsu* = indirect, *wahō* = way of discourse

\*\* *taiken* = experience

\*\*\* *byōshutsu* = to paint out, to delineate

\*\*\*\* *chūkan* = medium

During the Heian period, intellectual terms were Sinicized. In the twentieth century, the same term could be Sino-Teutonized, Sino-Anglicized or Sino-Gallicized, based on which of the three different clusters the translator identifies with.

Moreover, translating Western texts into Japanese requires a translator to repeatedly choose whether to search for literally equivalent terms or concepts; to combine existing Chinese characters as seems most appropriate; or to phonetically transcribe, transliterate, or trans-vocalize a foreign term into the Japanese syllabary. Some Japanese translators refer to narratology as *monogatariiron*, which involves combining

<sup>1</sup> “Intermediate speech that is neither direct nor indirect has varied names, such as *byōshutsu wahō*, *jiyū kansetsu wahō*, *chūkan wahō*, and *taiken wahō*. If we use these terms, we should keep a clear explanation in mind, in consideration for readers of varied backgrounds.” (Noda 2002: 1)

Chinese ideograms; others call it *naratorojī*, simply trans-vocalizing the English word into the Japanese syllabary.

In the Japanese context, each of these options may affect the nuance of the text in significantly different ways. In any case, abstract notions, always translated by Chinese senses, are sometimes still somewhat unfamiliar to the Japanese mentality.

As a result, more than one equivalent of the same Western concept can be found in Japanese. Has this situation made academic discussions confusing? Without mentioning the case of linguistics, it seems that there has been little confusion in the study of literature: *this* is the central problem of Japanese academic activities.

Why could three or four equivalents coexist for such a long time in literary academic parlance in Japan? Because there was little confusion in academic discussions. Why was there little confusion in these discussions? Because initially there were few discussions among specialists of different domains in literary research in Japan. Little interdisciplinary discussion resulted in little confusion; as a result, there was no unification of terminology.

In the Japanese academic context, literary theory is not yet considered a legitimate territory of study.<sup>1</sup> In Japan, English literature, French literature and Japanese literature are considered full-fledged domains, but literary theory is not: it has no congresses and no academic society. There are few classes devoted to literary theory in universities and no departments dedicated to this area of study. Literature students in Japan mostly consider theory to be a simple apparatus for studying individual people of letters; they scarcely reflect on theory itself.

## 5. Conclusion

Theoretical approaches to verbal phenomena are still novel in literary study in Japan, where the interest is typically in concrete and individual, biographical and antiquarian matters rather than in systematic, abstract or general questions. Marcel

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<sup>1</sup> According to an unwritten academic rule, a Proust specialist can talk about Proust's free indirect speech, a Joyce specialist can talk about Joyce's free indirect speech, and a specialist of Mishima can talk about Mishima's free indirect speech, even if the Japanese language does not include the concept of free indirect speech. Any specialist of free indirect speech in literature in general cannot exist without the disguise of specialty in the works of a certain writer. A number of years ago, at a Japanese university, I gave a presentation devoted to proper names in fiction (Iwamatsu 1999: 62–72), quoting Umberto Eco, Saul A. Kripke, and Félix Martínez-Bonati; I also presented examples from Raymond Queneau, Jacques Roubaud, Renaud Camus, Patrick Modiano, Alejo Carpentier, Carlos Fuentes, and Ursula K. LeGuin. After my presentation, an audience member asked me, without irony, in which author I *really* specialize.



Proust, James Joyce and MISHIMA Yukio are viewed as concrete notions, such as snow or rain, in native Japanese vocabulary. By contrast, abstract notions such as free indirect speech, literary genre, authorship, diegetic levels, point of view, speech act theory and fictionality are still somewhat unfamiliar to most native speakers of Japanese.

As a consequence, words themselves can be translated but their usage can be scarcely transplanted. In the Japanese academic climate, which treats what to study (field and object) as more important than how to study (discipline and method), scholars refer to theory not in the general sense but rather to Marxist, psychoanalytic, gender or other types of theories which are sets of concrete questions designed to work out concrete answers. This contrasts with narratology, which is a system made up of a set of abstract terms and notions to inspire scholars to *discover unexpected questions*.

Needless to say, all the phenomena that I have described above cannot necessarily be directly linked only to the lack of abstract nouns in the original Japanese language. However, literary study in Japan is still haunted by its own historicism and tends to bury itself in its focus on concrete objects along the lines of topics such as “life and work” or “life and manuscripts.”

In conclusion, the Japanese translation of theoretical terms inevitably entails problems in transplantation. I find this conundrum interesting in the situation of the humanities in Japan: one can translate terms but not their usage, which belongs to the users’ linguistic habitus.

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## **0. Introduction**

This study deals with the problem of translating narratological terminology into Turkish, and more specifically the difficulties encountered in translating Manfred Jahn's online *Narratology: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative* into Turkish (*Anlatıbilim: Anlatı Teorisi El Kitabı*, published by Dergâh Publishing in 2012). As narratology is not yet established in Turkey, there are few specialized texts in the field, and a particular problem is that we don't have any settled narratological terminology in Turkish.

In the first part of my study, I will mention a number of books on narrative theory translated into Turkish in order to show the different perspectives and discrepancies in terms of translation strategies and terminology. In the second and main part, I will confine myself to the terminological difficulties encountered when translating narrative theory into Turkish and try to explain how I dealt with these obstacles in my translation of Jahn's guide to the theory of narrative, which provides both a remarkable introduction to the subject in question and a rich source for terminology.

Modern Turkish is not a well-developed language when it comes to terminology, and as a Turcologist my approach to translating narrative terminology into Turkish is mainly based on the tradition and terminological system of Ottoman Turkish and rhetoric (*belâgat*). Terminology drawn from this system sounds more natural to the Turkish ear than neologisms specially created by translators who lack knowledge and competence in narrative theory and in the history of the Turkish language.

## **1. Narratology Studies in Turkey**

I would like to begin by stating that I am not an expert in translation and that all the translation I have done as a Turcologist serves the purpose of establishing narratology in Turkey, ensuring generalization of narratology and, above all, establishing a sound terminology in this area. Unfortunately, in Turkey the number of studies focusing on narrative theory are few in number. Almost all of these studies are translated works. The following is an incomplete list of books of narratological interest translated into Turkish:

- 1982 Forster, *Roman Sanatı (Aspects of the Novel, 1927)*
- 1982 Wellek and Warren, *Edebiyat Teorisi (Theory of Literature, 1949)*
- 1985 Propp, *Masalın Biçimbilimi (Morphology of the Folktale, 1928)*
- 1988 Barthes, *Anlatıların Yapısal Çözümlemesine Giriş (L'analyse structurale du récit, 1966)*
- 1997 Stanzel, *Roman Biçimleri (Typische Formen des Romans, 1987)*
- 2002 Todorov, *Poetikaya Giriş (Introduction to Poetics, 1981)*
- 2002 Onega and García Landa, *Anlatıbilime Giriş (Narratology, introductory chapter, 1996)*
- 2009 Chatman, *Öykü ve Söylem: Filmede ve Kurmacada Anlatı Yapısı (Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film, 1978)*
- 2011 Genette, *Anlatının Söylemi (Discours du récit. Essai de méthode, 1972)*
- 2012 Booth, *Kurmacanın Retoriği (The Rhetoric of Fiction, 1961)*
- 2012 Jahn, *Anlatıbilim: Anlatı Teorisi El Kitabı (Narratology: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative, 2005)*

Among these books, I would like to mention just three here. The first is the introductory chapter of *Narratology: An Introduction*, edited by Susana Onega and José Ángel García Landa. Here, one might ask why only the introduction of such a comprehensive work, which would be really worthwhile if translated, was translated and published. The Turkish translators of the book explain that this is due to the insufficiency of narratological terms and concepts in Turkey. This small book, translated by two outstanding Turkish translators and published in 2002, was an important step for introducing narratology to the world of Turkish scholarship, but unfortunately it suffers from a number of terminology-related issues, which complicates the understanding of the work. When Turkish equivalents of narratological terms are given in this book, they include neologisms that evoke hardly anything in the minds of Turkish readers. These terms are mostly invented instead of being the more logical and the partially settled Turkish equivalents. For example, rather than a purely Turkish term as an equivalent to Eng. *literary pragmatics*, Tur. *yazın uygulayimbilimi* is proposed. As a term corresponding to Eng. *literary*, the Turkish expression *yazın* is used, derived from the Turkish verb *yazmak* (to write), thus bringing to mind “written works.” It is difficult to understand why the term of Arabic origin, *edebiyat*, is not used, a word which is more familiar to Turkish readers and closer to the English meaning than *yazın*, a term dating from the time of the Turkish language simplification movement. Moreover, preference for Tur. *uygulayimbilim* over Eng. *pragmatics*, which is largely equivalent to *pragmatik* or *edimbilim* in Turkish, makes an already quite distressed reading process even more difficult for readers interested in the subject. It seems there is no compromise, even on the most basic and frequently used terms. Moreover, proposing new equivalents

for settled terms in Turkish confronts readers with something of a riddle. I also think the pure Turkish equivalents proposed by the translators for Genette's "homodiégétique" (Tur. özöyküsel) and "hétérodiégétique" (Tur. yadöyküsel) do not mean much in the minds of Turkish readers. On this point, my preference is to leave Genette's terms as they are and explain their meaning in parentheses or in a footnote.

The second example is the Turkish translation based on the English translation of Gérard Genette's *Discours du récit. Essai de méthode*. This long overdue Turkish translation of Genette's classic study (published in 2011) also suffers from certain terminology related problems although it does have the quality of being translated into clear Turkish. Even so, this is not a piece of light reading for Turkish readers who do not already have a background in narratology. The difficulties with terminology in this translation result mostly from the translator's insufficient knowledge of narratology so that most of the technical terms and expressions are transposed into Turkish without adequate comprehension of the concepts concerned. By translating from the English edition of the book, the proposed equivalent for *narrating act*, easily translated as *anlatılama edimi*, reveals the gravity of the situation. It is not possible to understand why the expression which should have been translated as *anlatma eylemi* is suggested as the equivalent of "anlatılama edimi" instead. In fact, "narrating" here has a clear and distinct equivalent in Turkish: "anlatma." The term *anlatılama* used here is completely invented by the translator and has no usage in Turkish.

In the end, the Turkish reader will need to refer to the original of the book in order to grasp the meaning of this and many other terms. In my opinion, it would be a much more rewarding for the Turkish reader who knows French to read the book in the original or, failing that, to read the English translation.

Wayne Booth's groundbreaking work, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, is another remarkable book which has recently been translated into Turkish. Published in 2012, this book has enjoyed positive feedback in general and is written in more understandable Turkish compared to other translated works relating to the subject. It is to be observed that the translator of the book is rigorous regarding the terminology.

*Vüs'at O. Bener'in Yapıtlarına Anlatıbilimsel Bir Yaklaşım (A Narratological Approach to the Works of Vüs'at O. Bener)* written by Reyhan Tutumlu, PhD in Turkish Literature, and published in 2010, is the only copyrighted work published in Turkish that employs narratology. Although the title of the book promises an analysis of fictions written by Vüs'at O. Bener, one of the most important writers of modern Turkish Literature, using a narratological approach, the book does not offer much in the way

of narratology. The bibliography mentions only two works in narratology, one by Genette, the other by Todorov, as well as Turkish translations of articles written by Käte Hamburger and Boris Tomaševskij. Moreover, the contents reveal that the analysis is rather thematic and superficial, making little use of narratology. Bener's detailed biography and works are examined one by one. Even though it includes appropriate information regarding the relations between the writer's life and works, the researcher does not fulfill what she promised in the title of the book. As for narratological analysis, there are only superficial identifications such as "internal analepsis is used in x story of the writer"; "in x narrative internal monologue is employed"; "in x novel different narrative techniques are used together." A number of Turkish equivalents proposed by Dr. Tutumlu for some of Genette's terms are not quite appropriate. As an example Tur. *gerileme* is suggested as an equivalent of "analepsis," which risks evoking the wrong connotations. The word *gerileme* means "decline, regression, etc." in Turkish and does not correspond to what is meant by the term of analepsis at all. I believe it is futile to try to find Turkish equivalents for terms such as analepsis, prolepsis, metalepsis, etc.

As can be seen, Turkey has not yet reached the desired level of narratological awareness. A comprehensive study has not been made, and above all there is no generally recognized terminology. Unfortunately, Turcologists, and particularly modern Turkish literature researchers focusing mainly on Turkish literary history and thematic analysis, have yet to integrate this discipline into their methodology. This is due to the fact that few speak a foreign language and most are biased against literary theory generally. Vague language and terminology used in the translations give cause for most of my colleagues to hesitate about narratology. Most of the few Turcologists who speak foreign languages such as English, French, German and other philologists prefer to keep their distance from narratology, since they have access to resources written in foreign languages. But most importantly, they are aware of the difficulties in introducing narratology into Turkish scholarship.

## **2. Problems with Terminology in Translating Narratological Terms and Concepts into Turkish**

After briefly commenting on narratology studies in Turkey, I would like to speak about the source of the problem with terminology, which seems to be the obstacle preventing the translation of narrative theory into Turkish. I will then speak about my approach to overcoming the problem. Finally, I will focus on the terminological difficulties encountered when translating narrative theory into Turkish and try to explain how I dealt with these obstacles in my translation of Jahn's guide to the theory of narrative.

**2.1.** As is well known, the Turks converted to Islam in the tenth century and started to learn Arabic and Persian and to translate works, mainly of a religious nature, into Turkish. The Ottoman Empire, founded in the thirteenth century, reinforced the influence of Arabic and Persian on the Turkish language, and although Turkish was the common language used in daily life, Arabic was the language of science and Persian the language of literature. Multilingualism was inherent in a multinational empire, and a Turkish language called “Ottoman Turkish,” a mixture of Arabic-Persian-Turkish, emerged by adapting the Arabic alphabet to Turkish. The syntax and verbs in this mixed language were completely Turkish; however, almost every other element was Arabic and Persian. Turkish language and Islam scholars created systematic terminologies: each discipline created its own terminology, just as in the modern West, and the terms had precise definitions.

In short, the Ottomans had a long established scientific tradition based on the Turkish-Islam civilization and a terminology based on this tradition. Now the question is: Why does the Turkish world of science suffer from problems with terminology today? I would like to answer this question briefly.

In the seventeenth century, a period of stagnation and regression started the Ottoman Empire. The Empire was alienated from the scientific thought and could not keep up with the developments of the Western world. Remedies were sought for overcoming this situation of which *Tanzimat*, the Political Reforms in the nineteenth century, were the most important, particularly with regard to terminology. The trend toward abandoning earlier concepts and Westernization resulted in the fragmentation of Turkish terminology and the random use of terms imported from various countries. The trend got even worse with the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. At this time, the language simplification movement got underway as a result of the “Turkism” movement based on the idea of building the “Turkish” nation. The goal was to reintroduce old and outdated words derived from Central Asia, and a number of words and terms were made up. Great admiration of the French language emerged in the Political Reforms era and was also dominant in this period. Ironically, the Turkish language embraced French, Italian and, after the 1950s, English terminologies while the goal was to break free from the lexicon based on Arabic and Persian and to achieve a “pure” Turkish language.

It is a fact that the reformation/simplification of a language is incompatible with creating a terminology in a language. A possible reconciliation of these two opposing trends was prevented back then because of the insufficient knowledge of Turkish intellectuals about the qualities of the language. The Turkish world of science, which had abandoned scientific and rational ideas, suddenly denied its ties with the past,

but also failed to fully adapt to the new trends and was thus caught in the “middle” or on the “threshold,” so to speak, between terminologies with differing backgrounds, an ambiguity that still exists today.<sup>1</sup> The terminology problem stands out particularly in the translations of works in disciplines that have recently emerged in the Western world.

In Turkey today, there are two dominant trends with regard to terminology. The first trend insists that all terms should be Turkish words. The second trend argues that generally accepted Turkish terms should be used as well as Arabic and Persian words which have become integral parts of our language and culture. Turkish intellectuals separated into two groups, one supporting the new and the other supporting the old, and this has caused conflicting tendencies in our scientific and cultural lives. It can be observed that we have not reached on a consensus on grammar terms such as “adjective” or “adverb,” and this confuses the world of education and, above all, students. Although there are never-ending discussions on this subject, we have yet to reach a consensus. The solution would be to set aside emotional and ideologically motivated discussions and to start adopting the principles of lexicology, lexicography and scientifically based terminology along with their wide range of developing sub-branches at an academic level (cf. Filizok 2010).

As for the approach I have adopted for translating narratological terminology, I see no harm in using Arabic and Persian words from traditional Turkish culture. I disagree with those who fear that this would bring back old-fashioned and narrow-minded scholarship failing to meet scientific standards. In this connection I would like to mention certain proposals by Rıza Filizok, Professor of Modern Turkish Literature at Ege University in Izmir, but that have not been taken up by any researchers in Turkey to date. In his research, Professor Filizok argues that there are strong connections between a number of theories and techniques being developed in the Western world in the areas of linguistics, semiotics, semantics, pragmatics, etc. and theories and techniques developed in the Turkish-Islam tradition, disciplines such as logic, Islamic law and rhetoric (cf. Filizok 2010). It can be argued that the rhetorical tradition of the Ottomans bears a number of similarities to contemporary communication theory, enunciation theory and several branches in the area of pragmatics such as speech act theory, the Gricean cooperative principle, relevance theory, etc.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed discussion, see Paker (2002.)

<sup>2</sup> For details and examples, see Filizok (2010.)



There are two important books to be mentioned in this regard. One is Ahmet Cevdet Paşa's work entitled *Belâgat-ı Osmaniyye* [Ottoman Rhetoric], published in 1881.<sup>1</sup> This work sets out the *belâgat* (rhetoric) rules of Ottoman Turkish based on the classification worked out by the Arab grammarians which is acknowledged, even today, as the first book of Turkish rhetoric. Although Ferrard found this valuable work of Ahmet Cevdet Paşa unsatisfactory and inadequate in many ways in his doctoral thesis, entitled *Ottoman Contributions to Islamic Rhetoric* (Ferrard 1979: 77), remarkable results are obtained when we examine the work in the light of current theories of Western origin. For example, this work presents a model that closely resembles Roman Jakobson's theory of verbal communication, with every component of the model explained and illustrated drawing on examples commented on in great detail. Moreover, speech act theory, which, with its locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, forms one of the basic elements of pragmatics, is explained by Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, accompanied with detailed analyses of examples. The terminology used in the work is based on Arab rhetoric and is extremely systematic while the examples discussed are completely Turkish.

The other important work, by Recaizade Mahmut Ekrem, is *Talim-i Edebiyat* (*Literature Course*), published in 1882.<sup>2</sup> This theoretical book seeks to blend modern literary criticism with traditional Ottoman rhetoric and represents an important milestone in the development of modern Turkish rhetoric and poetics for a literary terminology.<sup>3</sup> As Hakan Sazyek pointed out, the ideas set forth in the epilogue of Ekrem's book are especially notable. Another connection to be made with modern theory is Grice's cooperative principle. Ekrem studies examples in detail in terms that are close to Grice's four maxims. The terminology employed throughout the book brings out even the slightest nuances of expression.

If Turkish intellectuals working in the human sciences were to take these sources into consideration, they would have a better understanding of the principles of modern theories and find a rich pool of ideas for developing such theories. Unfortunately, Turkish philologists, cut off from traditional Turkish culture, acknowledge only Western theories and fail to see this connection. By reassessing the older resources in the light of modern sciences, they could develop a substantially improved methodology, connecting creative scientific studies with internationally acknowledged concepts and standards. Achieving this goal would be facilitated by

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<sup>1</sup> The original version of the book employs the Ottoman Turkish alphabet; for the Latin alphabet and modern Turkish version, see Ahmet Cevdet Paşa ([1881] 2000.)

<sup>2</sup> The original version of the book employs the Ottoman Turkish alphabet; for the Latin alphabet and modern Turkish version, see Recaizade Mahmut Ekrem ([1882] 2012.)

<sup>3</sup> For a comprehensive assessment on Recaizade Mahmud Ekrem's *Talim-i Edebiyat* and its contribution to Ottoman literary criticism, see Ferrard (1979.)

the creation of a properly Turkish terminology, making it possible to link modern scientific concepts to established but somewhat forgotten Turkish intellectual traditions (cf. Filizok 2010). It is within the scope of such a development that Turkish narratologists will be able to find a fruitful interface with international research.

**2.2.** To return now to the question of translating narratological terminology into Turkish, I find it preferable to employ expressions coming from two sources – a lexicon derived from traditional Turkish culture and terms reintroduced during the era of language simplification that do not grate the ears – rather than to make up new words. While translating Manfred Jahn’s online publication *Narratology: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative* into Turkish, I chose to use Turkish pronunciation for certain words that cannot be directly translated into Turkish or that require a minimum of two to three words for translation such as *achrony*, *anachrony*, *figural*, *metalepsis*, *paralepsis*, *paralipsis*, *syllipsis*, etc., giving possible Turkish meanings in parentheses. I especially took into consideration the audience. I sought to preserve the scientific level of the source text while at the same time translating the “meaning” so as to avoid a word-by-word translation and ensure the readability of the text.

The most difficult part arose out of the discrepancies due to the fact that English and Turkish belong to completely different language families. Turkish is a typical example of the so-called agglutinative languages with SOV (Subject-Object-Verb) sentence structure and is characterized by a relatively clear-cut morphology. One of the main features of Turkish is its single-word constructions with as many as fourteen suffixes and postclitics expressing structural meanings which, in English, are usually marked syntactically (cf. Sebüktekin 1971: 18). The “anglocentric textual excerpts” referenced by Manfred Jahn for illustrating narrative techniques and devices were the most problematic parts. For instance, the grammatical determination of the narrator’s gender through the use of masculine or feminine pronouns does not mean much for the Turkish readers for the simple reason there is no masculine-feminine distinction in the Turkish language, a single pronoun being used for both genders. Moreover, the familiarizing function of the article ‘the’, one of the four elements discussed under figural narratives, does not exist in Turkish. As a result, the excerpt from Hemingway’s novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls* unfortunately does not make sense for Turkish readers (cf. Jahn 2012: 77). I generally used footnotes to explain this and other such issues I came across during the translation. For other problematic issues I adopted a functional approach and tried to use Turkish expressions giving the intended meaning rather than translating or describing passages word-by-word. Among the other grammatical discrepancies between English and Turkish are the following: complex and compound sentences, which are common in English, are rare in Turkish; the passive voice is used very little; there is

no independent verb in Turkish meaning “to be”; some frequently used coordinate clauses in Indo-European languages are used only rarely in Turkish – all of this and more posing a variety of obstacles for the translator. As a result, I was led at certain points to elucidate the meaning of the source text by providing commentaries in parentheses or in footnotes.

Translation is inevitably characterized by an element of interpretation. Yet when it comes to terminology, interpretation is open to fewer options. This is true especially when concepts in the source language lack corresponding concepts in the target language, thus placing particular restrictions on interpretation. This is the case for example with “narrativehood,” “narrativeness” and “narrativity” – terms that have no appropriate equivalent in Turkish, where there is only one word to serve for all three of those terms: “anlatisallık.” The reason for this is that the Turkish suffix “-lık” must stand in place of the three English suffixes ‘-hood’, ‘-ness’ and ‘-ity’.

The first and most important problem of translating narrative theory into Turkish is finding adequate equivalents for terminology. The second problem is encountered with the translation of literary works used to illustrate theoretical concepts. The grammatical and lexical structures of Turkish differ considerably from those of the Indo-European languages, and this has an inevitable impact on Turkish narrative theory. The best path to ending the confusion of terms or “word schizophrenia” affecting each branch of scholarship in Turkey is to draw on the terminological resources of Turkish-Islamic scholarship extending back nearly a thousand years, and to take this into consideration for the formation of a modern terminology for narratology.

### **3. Conclusion**

Terminology studies require a particular effort by individual scholars, but at the same time it is an area that is dependent on institutional backing and collaborative programs. Work in the area of terminology requires high levels of expertise and should be carried out systematically. Serious work will be necessary to overcome the difficulties encountered in creating a consistent terminology, the biggest obstacle to the development of narratology in Turkey. Translating basic works and dictionaries on narratology into Turkish in order to establish the relevant terminology constitutes a fundamental step toward integrating narrative theory into Turkish scholarship.

In conclusion, I believe that the efforts devoted to establishing a Turkish narratology, illustrated with studies in the Turkish narrative tradition and making use of ancient

Turkish-Islam science, philosophy, logic and terminology, would contribute to narratology as a global discipline.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> As Shen states, “narratives in non-Western cultures may have various features closely associated with language peculiarities that defy accommodation to a more or less universal narrative poetics. Revealing these features may help us to see more clearly the characteristics of narrative traditions in different cultures.” (Shen 2011: 17) If narratology is to be established in Turkey, the aspects which are idiosyncratic and different from the narrative traditions of other cultures would come into focus. In this context, Shen’s contribution to narratology in China can serve as an inspiration for Turkish researchers who are interested in the subject.