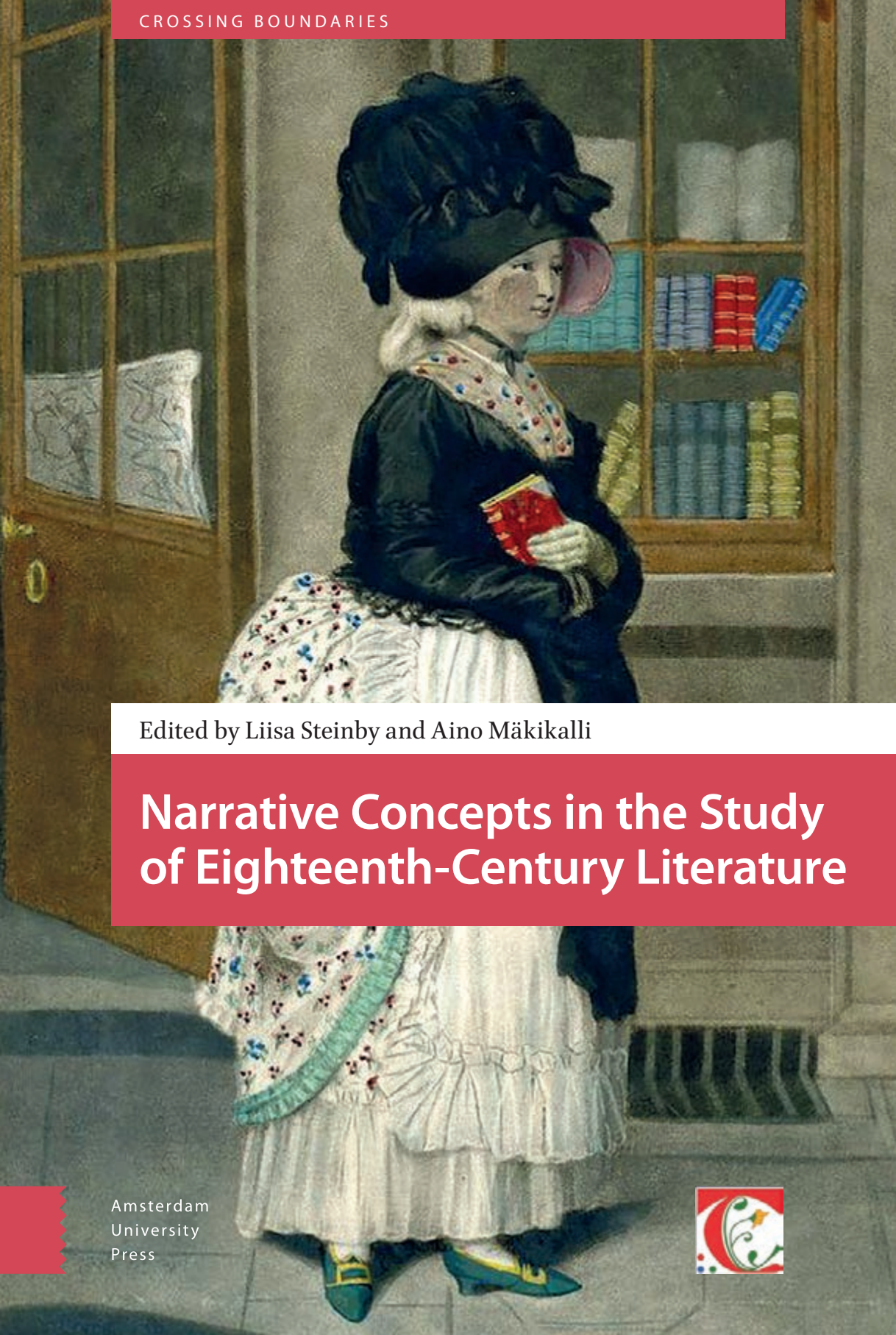Edited by Liisa Steinby and Aino Mäkikalli

Narrative Concepts in the Study of Eighteenth-Century Literature

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Narrative Concepts in the Study of Eighteenth-Century Literature

Edited by
Liisa Steinby and Aino Mäkikalli

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations

Introduction

The Place of Narratology in the Historical Study of
Eighteenth-Century Literature

Liisa Steinby and Aino Mäkikalli

> Definierbar ist nur das, was keine Geschichte hat. (Nietzsche)[1]

Narratological concepts, such as focalization, perspective, implied author,
the distinction between story and discourse, and even homo- and het-
erodiegetic narration, today belong to the toolkit of scholars of literature,
including those who do not consider themselves narratologists. Since
literary analysis almost always also encompasses formal aspects of works,
narratological concepts concerning the structure and forms of a narrative
are taken by many as a 'natural' choice. Narratologists did not originally
see their work as 'a handmaiden to interpretation'; their theoretically-based
taxonomic description of narrative was separated from interpretation,
which always also has to do with the content of the narrative (Herman,
2008, p. 30). However, while there are those, even today, who want to keep
narratology 'uncontaminated' by other approaches (see, e.g., Kindt, 2009),
most narratologists now welcome attempts to combine narratological con-
ceptualization with a whole range of different approaches in contemporary
literary scholarship (see, e.g., Nünning, 2009). We can therefore speak of a
rapprochement between the narratological analysis of narrative forms and
various approaches which stress cultural and historical contextualization
in interpretations of literature.

This *rapprochement*, however, is not unproblematic, and there still exists
a clear split between the narratological study of literature and the study of
literary history, i.e. the historically and contextually interpretative study
of literature. Scholars of literary history continue in their research to make
use primarily of other conceptualizations than the narratological. Given
the present heightened awareness of the historicity of all cultural phenom-
ena, literary scholars more and more widely regard all literary research
as historical, in the sense of taking into account the specific character of
the literature of a certain period and its particular social, cultural, and

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1 'Only something which has no history is capable of being defined'.

historical circumstances, which in turn naturally leads to conceptualizations of a historical character. In contrast, narratological concepts were originally conceived of as ahistorical, universally valid classifications of the phenomena of narrative discourse (cf., e.g., Fludernik, 2009, pp. 9, 110), and they have remained so very much down to today; only recently has the possibility been raised among narratologists of taking the historical dimension into account in narratological research (cf. especially Fludernik, 1996; 2003). How these different conceptualizations – historical and content-specific on the one hand, formal and ahistorical on the other – interact in the historical study of literature is a widely unexplored area. In practical historical research, the different nature and source of conceptualizations is mostly not reflected upon, and though present-day 'postclassical' narratology proclaims itself open to other approaches, encompassing content and context, this still has the character of a programme rather than a *fait accompli.*

In the title of the present volume, 'narrative concepts' refers, first of all, to the (basically ahistorical) concepts of narratology, and what is at issue is their use in, and compatibility with, the historical study of eighteenth-century literature; but the notion also leaves place for conceptualizations of a more historical character, and inquires into their relationship with narratological ones. The authors, while demonstrating how some central concepts function in practice, are concerned in particular with the meta-level question of concept use and formation. The study of eighteenth-century literature is, in the opinion of the editors, particularly well-suited to this kind of self-reflection, in that – as for example Monika Fludernik has observed – the original narratological categories, as established in the work of Gérard Genette, Franz K. Stanzel, and their followers, though universally oriented, were derived above all from the eighteenth- to early twentieth-century novel (e.g., Alber and Fludernik, 2010, p. 8). This means that the problems we encounter in the study of eighteenth-century narrative literature clearly do not follow from the need to expand the range of a theory beyond its original primary scope, but that we need to deal with the even more fundamental issue of the compatibility of narratological conceptualizations with the historical study of literature.

In this Introduction, we first follow the development of narratology from its early, structuralist phase to the modern, 'postclassical' phase, which promises an opening up not only to historical literary research but also to many adjacent fields – including some, such as cognitive science, that are traditionally considered remote from literary scholarship. This is followed by some observations on practices of concept formation in

the historical study of literature and in narratology – a field of study which, despite the greatly enhanced theoretical self-awareness of literary scholarship in general, has remained underdeveloped, or even more or less ignored. In the concluding section of the Introduction, the problem of compatibility is first considered in the light of one excellent recent example of historical research, followed by a brief survey of the articles in the present volume.

Developments in Narratology: From Structuralist Approaches to 'Diachronic', 'Cultural' and 'Contextual' Ones

Structuralist narratology, today called 'classical', was inspired by the same zeal to raise the 'scientific' status of literary scholarship that fuelled the work of the Russian Formalists. 'Classical', structuralist narratology was built in analogy with structural linguistics, for which the object of research was the structure of language which enables speech. As Jonathan Culler explains in the foreword to Tzvetan Todorov's *Poetics of Prose* (orig. *La poétique de la prose*, 1971), the aim of structuralist poetics is not the interpretation of individual works but discovering 'the structures and conventions of literary discourse which enable them [the works] to have the meanings they do'; in this, poetics is following the example of structural linguistics, which aims at making explicit the rules and conventions of a language (Culler, 1977, p. 8). In describing his scientific method, Todorov, a pioneer of structuralist poetics, stresses that it is the general characteristics of literary discourse that structuralist poetics deals with; however, he goes even further, claiming that it is the possible, not the actual literary forms that are the subject of poetics: 'Poetics will have to study not the already existing literary forms but, starting from them, a sum of possible forms: what literature *can* be rather than what it *is*' (ibid., p. 33; emphasis in the original). Defining the possible rather than the empirically observable forms of literature implies a method that is not purely empirical but deductive. Todorov explains this as follows: '[S]cientific method proceeds rather by deduction. We actually deal with a relatively limited number of cases, from them we deduce a general hypothesis, and we verify this hypothesis by other cases, correcting (or rejecting) it as need be. [...] it is not the quantity of observations, but the logical coherence of a theory that finally matters' (Todorov, 1987, p. 4). The method includes the deduction of categories from theoretical premises, rather than creating categories on the basis of a historical analysis of literature. This is exemplified by Todorov's distinction between historical

literary genres and theoretical ones: 'historical genres are the result of an observation of literary phenomena; theoretical genres are deduced from a theory of literature' (ibid., p. 21). He clearly prefers the latter.

The question of the nature and role of 'deduction' in the method of structuralist poetics is an area which has scarcely been examined, and indeed concept formation in structuralist poetics and narratology as a whole is a neglected subject of study. No attention has been paid to the important fact that theory-building in structuralist narratology (and poetics) lacked the solid method of hypothesis verification that was available in structuralist phonology – the pilot and paragon of a structuralist science (cf. Dosse, 1997, pp. 54, 174) – i.e. the commutation test.[2] Consequently, no clear criteria were established for considering something a 'theory', rather than merely a bundle of (more or less original) general claims or ideas. This might have led to a chaotic plenitude of competing 'theories'; what actually happened, however, was that one particular theory became the core of the structuralist – and, as we will see, even later – narratology for decades to come: Gérard Genette's *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (orig. 'Discours du récit' in *Figures III*, 1972). This is not because its theoretical foundation, allegedly lying in the 'grammar of verbs' (cf. Genette, 1980, p. 30), was any more solid than that of other, competing theories (such as that of Roland Barthes), but because Genette's definitions of the concepts were exceptionally clear and because he succeeded in systematizing certain main concepts in the prevalent traditions of research on different forms of narration (cf. Culler, 1980, p. 7; Steinby, 2016). Although several of Genette's concepts, particularly focalization, voice, person, the status of the narrator, and the story-discourse distinction (cf. Alber and Fludernik, 2010, p. 13), have been the subject of extensive critical discussion, it is his conceptualization – with some additions, such as Wayne Booth's 'implied author' – that forms the hard core not only of 'classical' narratology but also of more recent applications of narratology in other approaches to literary research.[3]

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2   In phonology, the existence of a phoneme in a language is proved by the commutation test, in which a native speaker of the language is asked to decide whether the difference between two sounds is functionally meaningful or not, i.e., whether the difference in sound produces a difference in meaning (cf. Trubetzkoy, 1971, pp. 31-33). The commutation test is the means for empirically testing the validity of theoretical hypotheses.

3   There are, of course, claims that the classical concepts can and should be replaced by new ones; Monika Fludernik, for example, suggests that in her 'natural' narratology, 'the cherished distinctions of classic narratology can be dispensed with or reconceptualized with great facility' (Fludernik, 1996, p. 347). Such reconceptualization, however, does not take place here.

The lucidity of Genette's definitions, and his presentation of a taxonomic system of categories of narrative discourse, commonly viewed as the merits of his narratology, also define its limits. The definitions are of the type "'prolepsis' is a leap forward in time in narration' (cf. Genette, 1980, p. 40), in which the concept is exhaustively defined by specifying the defining criteria: nothing needs to be, or can be, added to it. The concepts are universally applicable: independently of content, context, or century, 'prolepsis' always refers to a narrative leap forward in time, and nothing but that. Genette's taxonomy provides the scholar with a great number of such clear, exhaustively defined, universal categories dealing with the formal traits of narrative discourse. The kind of empirical research that such a taxonomy allows consists of identifying in a particular text some of the traits as presented in Genette's categories; obviously, the categories are not negotiable. As the categories are derived from a more fundamental theoretical basis – in Genette's case, the grammar of verbs – it of course is impossible for them to be affected by empirical research. However, some later narratologists, such as Monika Fludernik, have suggested that the empirical study of literature can be used to contest certain existing narratological categories, or even to renew or add something to them (cf. Fludernik, 1996; 2003) – which means conceding that not everything can be derived from a theoretical basis.

The strength of Genette's narratology is also its weakness: it can be used to identify accurately some traits of the formal structure of narrative, but for nothing but that. Questions of content, context, and reading experience, in other words essential aspects of literature, are excluded from narratological study. It is true that these aspects cannot be captured in any such concise, exhaustive definitions as those Genette offers us for the formal aspects of narrative. The reluctance of narratologists – old and new – to use concepts which cannot be expressed in the form of concise and exhaustive definitions is exemplified by James Phelan's discontent with the 'mimetic component' of literary characters, which entails some 'messy problems': 'this talk about characters as plausible or possible persons presupposes that we know what a person is. But the nature of the human subject is of course a highly contested issue among contemporary thinkers' (Phelan, 1989, p. 11). Concepts that concern content-related, historical, and contextual aspects of literature, and that cannot be simply defined, are deplored because of their lack of 'scientificity' and are therefore preferably avoided. This being the case, scientificity in narratological research is achieved at the cost of excluding many or most of the questions relevant to the study of literature (cf. Bal, 1990).

The development of narratology following its structuralist phase (cf. e.g. Herman, 2008) can be described from (at least) three different angles. First of all, there is the 'internal' development of narratology; according to several leading contemporary narratologists, such as David Herman and Monika Fludernik, where classical narratology was modelled upon structural linguistics, the present-day understanding of narrative tends to seek its theoretical foundation in cognitive linguistics and cognitive science more generally (cf. Herman, 2008; Fludernik, 2008). The development of narratology can be outlined as following that of linguistics: the era of structuralism was followed by Noam Chomsky's 'generative grammar', inviting narratologists to study and identify correspondences between the deep and surface structure of literary texts. This was succeeded by text linguistics, i.e. the study of units of utterance transcending the sentence – which of course has a natural affinity to the research of literary texts. In the next phase, linguistic pragmatics examined the different practices and functions of language use; it is to this phase of linguistics to which Fludernik, in addition to cognitive linguistics, anchors her own 'natural' narratology (cf. Fludernik, 1996, e.g., p. xi). Finally, in cognitive linguistics, language use is considered as a human cognitive process determined by general modes of human cognition, such as particular schemata – frames and scripts – for organizing and interpreting information (cf. e.g. Alber and Fludernik, 2010, p. 11). In what is called cognitive narratology, there are at least two different approaches to the study of literature: while Fludernik, despite basing her model on colloquial ('natural') narrative, is primarily interested in reconceptualizing traditional, or classical structuralist, notions of literary study on the basis of her pragmatist-cognitivist approach, such scholars as Herman, Lisa Zunshine, and Alan Palmer are obviously primarily interested in general cognitive problems, and in using literature as a resource in this research.[4] Cognitive narratology, which takes narrative in general as its object of study, is then regarded as one of the disciplines of cognitive sciences (cf. Palmer, 2010, p. 6) – one that, among other things, can teach us how we 'read' the human mind (Zunshine, 2006). However divergent these two directions in cognitive narratology are, and however far they may be from structuralist narratology, they share the view that

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4   According to Herman, 'the project of integrating narrative theory and the cognitive sciences can be seen as an effort to understand how people weave tapestries of story by relying on abilities they possess as simultaneously language-using, thinking, and social beings' (Herman, 2003, p. 11). He describes his own work as an exploration of 'the nature of narrative as a basic cognitive endowment' (ibid., p. 19).

the aim of research is to uncover the universal, constitutive principles which enable particular acts of mind, utterances, or (literary) texts, rather than investigating those particular utterances, texts or works. By so doing, cognitive narratologies revivify the prospect of reaching a new level of scientificity in the study of literature.[5]

This story of the development of narratology, as following in the footsteps of linguistics, nevertheless gives a somewhat too smooth picture of the actual course of events; it disregards the fact that at some point in the 1980s, narratology, as the strict science of narrative it claimed to be, was proclaimed as good as dead (cf., e.g., Herman, 1999, p. 2), and several of its important proponents, such as Slomith Rimmon-Kenan and Mieke Bal, had turned to something else. The recovery, however, followed sooner and from a different direction than expected: from the theory of historiography, where Hayden White had already claimed in 1973 that historians present the results of their research in a narrative form that does not derive from the subject of study but from certain primordial, mythic narrative structures (cf. White, 1973). Questions as to the (alleged) presence, functions, and specific forms of narrativity in historiography have not ceased to concern historians since then; but with what became known as 'narrative turn', narrative was soon recognized as a ubiquitous form of human sense-making practices, and the debate concerning narrative and its functions began to flourish in a great variety of disciplines and fields of study, including sociology, folkloristics, and the study of biography and autobiography. This sudden interest in narrative, as a form of making sense of human experience, certainly diverged from the structuralist narratologist's interest in the formal traits of narrative discourse, separate from the narrated contents, but despite this the new interest in narrative has revivified narratological study, which has expanded to a previously unimaginable degree. In contemporary research on narrative, aims and interests converge: cognitive narratologists, relying on the scientific basis of brain research, cognitive psychology and even artificial intelligence, are concerned with the same phenomenon of narrative as a mode of human cognition which, in more concrete form, preoccupies various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences.[6]

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5   Cf. Fludernik (2008, p. 51): 'The cognitivist paradigm shift could thus pave the way for a much closer companionship of narratology with the empirical sciences and, perhaps, come a long way towards fulfilling narratology's original aspirations towards a scientific image'.

6   In the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, for example, 'narrative' is defined, drawing on David Herman, as 'a fundamental way of organizing human experience and a tool for constructing models of reality' (Ryan, 2005, p. 345).

Yet another angle from which the development of narratology can be viewed is the perspective of the historical study of literature. The opening up of narratology to questions of human cognition and significance also includes new attempts to create a 'diachronic', 'historical', 'cultural', or 'contextual' narratology. These narratologies are advocated primarily by German scholars – not surprisingly, since in Germany the historical orientation in literary and humanist research is traditionally very strong. Of the narratologists speaking for these new tendencies, the most prominent are Monika Fludernik and Ansgar Nünning. We can take a closer look at some of their writings, to find out what these new narratologies are about. In so doing, we look particularly closely at the question of concept formation.

In a much cited article from 2003, Fludernik deplores 'the depth of neglect of diachronic concerns that is prevalent in narratology', but she is convinced that 'a major breakthrough' of 'diachronic narratology' is imminent (Fludernik, 2003, pp. 332, 334). In her *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* from 1996, she presents a theory of narrative based on cognitive linguistics and linguistic pragmatism,[7] defining narrative, or rather narrativity, as 'experientiality' (Fludernik, 1996, p. 26), which she understands in terms of representation of personal, emotional, 'inner' experience.[8] Towards the end of her study, however, she stresses that her 'Natural Narratology is [...] neither a purely theoretical nor a purely synchronic enterprise. Although I have just sketched a synchronic analysis of narrativization, historical or diachronic factors need to be incorporated into the theory as well' (Ibid., p. 313). 'Synchronic' and 'diachronic' are, of course, concepts borrowed from structuralist linguistics. Fludernik's use of the notions in narratology is similar to David Herman's, according to whom a synchronic study 'seek[s] to capture the state of [...] the narrative system at a specific phase of its emergence', while diachronic study traces the 'historical development of the system in question' (Herman, 2011, p. 23). In these definitions, the concept of 'system' holds the core position: the historical changes that are observed are changes in some aspects of the system. The perspective in

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7   Fludernik, 1996, p. x: 'Towards a "Natural" Narratology proposes to redefine narrativity in terms of cognitive ("natural") parameters, moving beyond formal narratology into the realm of pragmatics, reception theory and constructivism'.

8   According to Fludernik, a historical narrative typically lacks this kind of experienciality and 'therefore only qualifies as zero-degree of narrativity'. Nevertheless, she will continue 'to refer to such texts of zero-degree narrativity as "narratives" because common parlance prescribes this usage. There also is some precedent for similar terminological hassles', and she believes that 'the embarrassments of terminological awkwardness are more than outweighed by the advantages of my re-evaluation of narrative properties' (ibid., p. 328f.).

both synchronic and diachronic study is system-immanent: no contextual factors that might explain the changes in the state of the system are taken into consideration. In our view, this trait of system-immanence is what distinguishes a synchronic study from a historical study proper, which concludes explaining circumstantial factors. Moreover, upon closer inspection it turns out that diachronic study does not reveal *new* traits in a system, but rather corroborates that certain traits defined in the theory are present or absent in narrative literature at a certain historical moment. For example, Fludernik suggests that we should ask when *erlebte Rede* ('free indirect discourse') emerged in narrative literature (cf. Fludernik, 2006, p. 127). This kind of historical inquiry into the emergence, or more generally into the presence or absence, of certain given traits does not shake the theoretical foundation of the system: the concepts are not themselves derived from history, but are conceived as universal and theoretically founded. Fludernik remarks that while Genette's typology is 'self-avowedly synchronic', these categories could easily be applied 'to the history of the novel, mapping out a diagram to show which combinations of narratological parameters were current in which successive historical periods' (ibid., p. 331) – and this is very much how she understands the diachronic dimension of her 'Natural' Narratology. She proposes for both that 'one could produce diagrams that would represent in visual fashion how a number of narrative parameters cluster in individual works and how these clusters remain constant or shift their emphases and combinations on a diachronic plane' (ibid.).

Variation in the distribution of the paradigmatic possibilities inherent in the theory is how Fludernik (in this phase, at least) understands historical, or diachronic, research; and she shares this understanding with Herman.[9] Fludernik suggests a diagrammatic representation of the distribution, and Herman comes very close to this in recommending quantitative methods to test 'the patterns of constancy and change' in diachronic research (Herman, 2011, p. 25). In this kind of diachronic research, change is thus nothing but the redistribution of certain universal options, i.e., of the paradigmatic possibilities present in the ahistorical, universal theory, and changes are not contextualized in the historical world in which they take place. It is therefore well-founded to say, as Astrid Erll and Simone Roggendorf do, that Fludernik (at least in this phase) takes historical (or rather 'diachronic')

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9   Herman writes of research into fictional mind representation that 'A diachronic perspective focuses on the evolution, or *changing distribution*, of the strategies for mind representation' (Herman, 2011, pp. 23-24; emphasis added).

change into account – albeit only in this distributional sense – but does not contextualize it.[10]

In her textbook, *An Introduction to Narratology* (orig., *Einführung in die Erzähltheorie,* 2006) from 2009, Fludernik writes that 'narratology's most prominent feature is its implicit universal validity' (Fludernik, 2009, p. 9). The claim is rephrased in weakened form when she says that 'narrative theory has, for the most part, concerned itself with the universal structures found in narrative. Typologies have been devised which include and classify *every conceivable kind of narrative*' (ibid., p. 110; emphasis added). Particularly in German narratology, however, there is also the diachronic approach to the study of narrative, which 'trace[s] developments in narrative forms and functions through the centuries' (ibid., p. 110). The role assigned to such research has widened somewhat compared to *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology:*

> Historical analyses are relevant because they provide additional information about how specific narrative techniques originated and when they came to predominate or fell out of favour [i.e. the distributional model]. But this is not all. Such analyses can sometimes lead to a significant revision or modification of the theoretical, especially the typological, bases of narrative theory (ibid., p. 111).

Thus, it is suggested that diachronic research may affect theoretical concepts themselves. It is not that theoretical concepts are formed primarily on the basis of historical materials, but that historical findings can modify theoretically based concepts – or at least typological categories, which we should probably understand as clusters of narrative traits (cf. Fludernik, 1996, p. 331). Purely historical concepts still appear problematic from a narratological point of view: 'One could argue, for instance, that certain accepted notions in narratology are only valid for certain periods. If this is so, can one still justifiably regard these categories as universals, or are they only special features which may come into play in particular historical periods?' (Fludernik, 2009, p. 115) Apparently, historical concepts which lack universal validity are not considered as possible parts of a narratological theory.

In their Introduction to *Postclassical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses* (2010), Monika Fludernik and Jan Alber distinguish between two phases

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10   'Fludernik historisiert, ohne zu kontextualisieren' ['Fludernik historicizes but does not contextualize']; Erll und Roggendorf, 2002, p. 96.

of postclassical narratology, the first of which is characterized as a phase of 'multiplicities', 'interdisciplinarities', and 'transmedialities' (Alber and Fludernik, 2010, p. 5). They accept Ansgar Nünning's view that narratology has proceeded 'from descriptive to interpretative and evaluative paradigms' and 'from universalism to particularism (which is equivalent to contextualism)', and quote him saying that postclassical narratology seems 'to move toward a grand contextual, historical, pragmatic and reader-oriented effort'; the issue is 'to recontextualize the classical paradigm and to enrich narrative theory with ideas developed after its structuralist phase' (ibid., p. 6). There now exist feminist, postcolonial, and other content-specific narratologies; 'narratologists have tried to argue that the categories of narratology need to be modified or extended in order to accommodate the concerns of race, power, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation'. However, just like 'classical' narratologists, Alber and Fludernik do not believe that there is any 'natural' connection between narratological traits and ideological concepts like these: 'Narrative devices by themselves do not carry any ideological freight; often they are neutral modes of focusing attention that only acquire normative or critical meanings in their various contexts of use' (ibid., p. 8). Nevertheless, Fludernik's cognitivist basis allows her to open up narratological concepts to content-dependence and contextual determination. While 'structuralist narratology did not pay much attention to the referential or world-creating dimension of narratives', cognitive narratologists (like herself) 'show that the recipient uses his or her world knowledge to project fictional worlds, and this knowledge is stored in cognitive schemata called frames and scripts' (ibid., p. 11). Frames and scripts are a formative apparatus for dealing with information, but there is variation in which particular frames or scripts are used in a particular historical and/or cultural situation and for a certain genre or literary tradition. That is to say, some of the main concepts of the cognitive model of narration – frame and script – include the possibility of historical, cultural, and contextual change.[11] Fludernik and Alber can therefore claim that 'all narratology nowadays is *context-sensitive*' (ibid., p. 22). (Though still primarily 'diachronic' in its approach, we may observe traces of contextualization in Fludernik's paper in the present volume).

What Alber and Fludernik are suggesting is that postclassical narratology, after a somewhat turbulent initial phase, has now arrived at a second

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11   'Cognitive narratology can thus be argued to affect the status of categories of narratological analysis; it shifts the emphasis from an essentialist, universal, and static understanding of narratological concepts to seeing them as fluid, context-determined, prototypical, and recipient-constituted'. Ibid., p. 12.

phase, in which consolidation is taking place, and they obviously believe that this is happening under the roof of cognitive theory (ibid., pp. 15, 22). Yet they admit that a process of further diversification is still ongoing, a process in which ever new postclassical narratologies are proclaimed to have been established by combining different approaches. Even the articles in the volume edited by them 'all combine and creatively blend different approaches', to achieve 'a synthesis that looks different in every individual essay but is a synthesis nevertheless' (ibid., p. 23) – a statement that rather signals the prolific imagination of the new narratologists than corroborates the idea that a consolidated state has been achieved in contemporary narratological theory.

Among the 'postclassical' narratologists, Ansgar Nünning has most emphatically proclaimed the coming of a new, contextual, historical, and/ or cultural narratology. In an article from 2002 written together with Vera Nünning, he claims that narratology is now open to approaches and fields that were previously excluded from it, such as 'the dimensions of history and the historical variability of narrative forms, aesthetics, ethics, ideology, interpretation and eventually the socio-cultural dimension'.[12] The authors admit that narrative theory is not yet complete: some questions are still unanswered, and some have not yet even been asked (ibid., p. 29) – which suggests that narrative theory in its traditional, structuralist form is nevertheless considered to have succeeded in defining most of the relevant features in a narrative text.[13] In another article from 2003, Ansgar Nünning maintains that 'formalist analysis of narrative [...] is no longer the main focus, narrative theorists have begun to turn their attention to "cultural analysis"', referring to Mieke Bal, who had asked narratologists to place their analytic tools at the service of 'other concerns considered more vital for cultural studies' (cf. Bal, 1990, p. 729; Nünning, 2003, p. 240), i.e., to combine the formal analysis of narratives with some aspects of content or ideology. Nünning quotes Herman in his appraisal that the transformation from a classical, structuralist narratology to the contemporary, postclassical one 'can be described as a shift from text-centered and formal models to models that are jointly formal and functional – models attentive both to the text and to the context of stories' (ibid., p. 243);[14] 'functional' here of

12   'die Dimensionen der Geschichte und der historischen Variabilität von Erzählformen, die Ästhetik, der Ethik, der Ideologie, der Interpretation und schließlich die soziokulturelle Dimension'; Nünning and Nünning, 2002, p. 20.

13   There may be some discrepancy here, since the authors also contend that narrative forms are not constant but mediate views and collective ideas of their time of origin (ibid., p. 29).

14   The quotation is from Herman, 1999, p. 16.

course refers to taking into account the various functions of formal traits in a narrative text. Nünning's overall estimation of the present state of narratology, however, is more diffuse, and in fact questions the very idea of a completely new narratology: he remarks that 'there are currently more self-styled narratologies under the sun than ever before' (ibid., p. 247), but that ultimately, 'most of the approaches in question are either mere applications of narratological concepts, i.e. narratological criticism, […] or so far removed from narratological research goals and methodological premises as to be virtually incompatible with narratology' (ibid., p. 260).

In his next article on the same topic, in which Nünning hopes to be able to proffer 'some conceptual and methodological premises for a context-sensitive and cultural approach to narratives that is still rooted in narratology', he seems to think along the same line: that the novelty of the new narratology consists of putting the analytical tools provided by (classical) narratology 'to the service of a cultural analysis of narrative fictions' (Nünning, 2004, p. 356). He emphasises that 'it *does* make a difference whether we can establish a consensus about textual features or not, and it is the descriptive toolkit of narratology that provides us with the terminological categories needed as the basis for rational argument'; he sees the task of cultural narratology in exploring 'the ways in which the formal properties of novels reflect, and influence, the unspoken mental assumptions and cultural issues of a given period' (ibid., p. 358; emphasis in the original). In an article from 2009, Nünning contends that there are a lot of new, contextualist, historical, and cultural narratologies, in which, however, the narratologists 'always seem to be moving towards new destinations, but apparently they hardly ever get there' (Nünning, 2009, p. 49). This means that new narratologies exist rather in the form of programmes than of finished achievements, and in his view 'narratology and context-sensitive interpretations of narratives still seem oceans apart' (ibid., p. 56). In yet another article from 2013, Nünning repeats the claim that contextual narratology has so far produced only works entitled 'towards…' (Nünning, 2013, p. 26). He also contends that the existing cultural narratology (*kulturwissenschaftliche Narratologie*) comprises the application of the analytical categories of narratology to historically and culturally variable forms and functions of narration, and the augmentation of the analytical toolbox by concepts which make narratology compatible with the questions and interests of cultural studies (ibid., p. 27). He speaks of closing the gap between formalist and content analysis as a semanticization of narrative forms (ibid., p. 29; cf. also Nünning, 2009, p. 64). In his view, what is needed first of all is a system of narratological categories for the context-oriented study of narrative and for a narrativistically oriented

cultural studies (Nünning, 2013, p. 46). In this view – that the creation of a new narratology has to start by establishing the most general categories, which are defined in a highly abstract, theoretical discourse[15] – Nünning is following the opposite route compared to historians of literature, who start with the investigation of the concrete and proceed from there to abstract concepts.

On the basis of Fludernik's and Nünning's reviews of postclassical narratologies, it remains an open question how far, and in what ways, literary historical research can be combined with narratological conceptualizations, either in narratology's classical form or in some new, postclassical one. However, the genuine interest of both Fludernik's 'diachronic' approach and Nünning's 'cultural narratology' (*kulturwissenschaftliche Narratologie*) for the historical dimension of literature is unquestionable. This cannot be said of postclassical narratology as a whole, in particular of the work done in the United States. Insofar as the aim of American cognitive narratologists continues to be the elucidation of literary phenomena, rather than, on the contrary, using literature as materials in the study of human cognitive mechanisms,[16] 'theory' is very much favoured and 'mere' interpretation of literary works is criticized. We put 'theory' in inverted commas, since 'theory' is here often used quite loosely to refer to any general ideas concerning a topic, rather than a systematic presentation of the most basic, abstract concepts organizing and explaining a field.[17] The new custom of presenting various 'theoretical' ideas and testing them with examples from literature has been praised, among others, by James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz, who have coined the term 'theorypractice' to refer to it (cf. Phelan and Rabinowitz, 2008, pp. 2, 5). They claim that 'the continuous production

15   An example: 'Zu den wichtigsten "lebensweltlichen Funktionen, die dem Erzählen zugeschrieben werden", zählen die "Episodenbildung", die Kohärenzstiftung, die "Geschehensintegration" und die Sinnbildung, die vor allem darin besteht, "Handlungen, Ereignissen und Geschehnissen Bedeutung zu verleihen"' (Ibid., p. 41). ['Among the most important "lived-world functions assigned to narrating" are counted "episode-building", creation of coherence, "integration of events" and creation of meaning, which consists primarily of "assigning meaning to acts, events and incidents"'.] Expressions in inverted commas are quotations from theoreticians given in the footnotes.

16   According to Herman, the aim in cognitivist research is 'to explore the nature of narrative as a basic cognitive endowment' (Herman, 2003, p. 19); or (quoting Mark Turner), 'the study of language and of literature as expressions of our conceptual apparatus' (Herman, 2010, p. 137).

17   One example of the loose, non-traditional use of 'theory' is Lisa Zunshine's concept of an innate 'Theory of Mind' (Zunshine 2006), an instance from which the 'readers of fictional narratives recruit [...] to link what characters say and do to inferences about underlying mental states' (Herman, 2012, p. 126). Here 'theory' is used to refer to a (supposed) innate disposition in the human mind, which contradicts of course the traditional understanding of theory.

of such [interpretative, non-theoretical] essays is less and less profitable'
and that 'untheorized interpretation can make only a minor contribution
to contemporary narrative studies' (Phelan and Rabinowitz, 1994, p. 7).
However, seeing interpretative and historical research of literature as lack-
ing in any theory is incorrect; theoretical questions and concepts play an
important role in interpretative and historical research too, even though
these concepts may not be universal but content-specific and valid for a
particular period only.

Theoretical Concepts in the Historical Study of literature

Reflections over the formation of concepts and their use in the historical
study of literature are rare; this is certainly an under-researched area of
literary studies. What can be done in this Introduction is of course not to
fill the gap, but merely to suggest some obvious aspects of the issue, the
goal being to identify important differences between concept formation in
narratology and literary history.

The theoretical concepts used in historical literary research are of various
ages and origins. Some concepts are of very ancient origin, such as those
of the literary genres of tragedy, comedy, and epic. This, of course, does
not mean that these concepts have remained the same over centuries and
millennia; we know that 'tragedy' in ancient Greece meant something other
than in Elizabethan England or in eighteenth-century neoclassicism. This is
something of which the modern scholar of literary history is well aware[18] – in
contrast to authors from many earlier periods. The concepts of classical
poetics, the tradition of which reaches from Aristotle to mid-eighteenth-
century neoclassicism, were meant to be universally valid. We now know,
of course, that they were not: even when the word designating a concept
remained the same (e.g. 'tragedy'), the content of the concept changed
in the course of time. Concepts of genre, like other concepts of classical
poetics, were not originally conceived of as tools for literary scholarship,
but as rules to be followed by the authors of literary works. The nature of,
for example, eighteenth-century tragedy is thus a question related both to
the theoretical debate and to the tragedies produced and performed in that
period. The two things are connected, but not identical.

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18   For the literary historian, it is clear that genre concepts, though theoretical constructions,
are historical formations developed in close connection with literature itself, and cannot be
'deduced' from any ahistorical theory, as Todorov was suggesting; cf. e.g. McKeon, 2002, p. 1.

Problems with theoretical concepts in literary history are to considerable extent similar to those involved in more general conceptual history (*Begriffsgeschichte*) which Reinhart Koselleck illustrates with examples from social history (cf. Koselleck, 2005). A literary historian, too, must beware of 'a careless transfer to the past modern, context determined expressions' (ibid., p. 81). The historian must also be critical of a 'history of ideas' which treats ideas 'as constants, assuming different historical forms but of themselves fundamentally unchanging' (ibid.); and he or she should keep in mind that 'the fact that a word has remained in constant use is not in itself sufficient indication of stability in its substantial meaning' (ibid., p. 82). Some concepts change more, others less; in poetics, the most technical concepts, such as 'iambus', tend to change less than broader, more comprehensive ones, such as the genre concepts or the concept of 'literature' itself. New concepts, referring to new literary phenomena, are of course formed as well, such as 'bourgeois tragedy' in the eighteenth century.

In addition to concepts deriving from eighteenth-century debates, the literary historian also makes use of theoretical concepts of later origin. In the study of eighteenth-century English literature, these include for example Ian Watt's concepts of the 'rise of the novel', referring to the emergence at the beginning of the century of a genre of the novel which differed radically from seventeenth-century romance, and of 'formal realism' which in Watt's view describes what was crucially 'new' in the novel (cf. Watt, 1981, pp. 34-35). Watt's ideas marked an important turn to the novel in the study of eighteenth-century English literature. In the course of the debate, which has now been ongoing for more than half a century, his views have been contested, corroborated and augmented in a series of major contributions to the 'rise of the novel'. This is an example of how important a new historical conceptualization can be for a field of research.

How such concept formation takes place is difficult, or perhaps impossible, to explain. What is clear is that these concepts concern merely a restricted historical phenomenon – such as the new novel from the beginning of the eighteenth-century England – and that they are not derived from any underlying theory or borrowed from any other discipline. They are based on the empirical study of literature, even though the concept formation is not effected by any simple process of observation.[19] Slightly less difficult

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19   In an account of the genesis of *The Rise of the Novel* from 2000, Watt reveals that he only came to recognize the rootedness of the new English novel in empiricism by the detour of an 'exposure to German thought' of Theodor Adorno, Georg Lukács, Max Weber, and others (cf. Watt, 2000, pp. 151, 153).

to explain is the character of such conceptualization. A concept referring to a complex cultural phenomenon – such as the 'rise of the novel' – is more than a mere word, whose meaning can be defined. The concept is clarified in Watt's book-length study on the topic, in which the phenomenon is elucidated from different aspects but not exhaustively defined. In this sense, Nietzsche is right in contending that something that has a history – or something that is a historical phenomenon – cannot be given a short, sharp definition, as definition was understood in structuralist poetics (or classical physics; see Steinby, 2016). For Genette, as noted above, a definition contains everything – and nothing but – what belongs to the content of the concept: the definition is in this sense exhaustive. A 'prolepsis' is a narrative leap forward in time; it is this and nothing but this, universally and immutably. In contrast, a definition of a phenomenon like 'the rise of the novel' is something like a description, in which the most essential aspects of the phenomenon are brought together. Anyone who attempts such a definition/description is aware of the fact that it will not be exhaustive, nor will it be permanently or universally valid. On the contrary: as research in the field proceeds, new and (hopefully) better descriptions/definitions will follow. And since our understanding of this particular phenomenon is essentially dependent on how we perceive adjacent phenomena, or related phenomena from another age, there is no limit to the progress of our understanding of the phenomenon, and consequently to the need for reformulation of the concept.

Obviously, not all core concepts of literary history were coined originally for the study of a particular historical period or a particular phenomenon; concepts and categories from other fields are applied as tools for the historical study of literature as well. The evolution of our understanding of, for example, the concepts of modernity, individuality, society, and rationality that has taken place over the past few decades in the humanities and social sciences affects the conceptualizations of literary historians as well. What is specific in this appropriation of concepts from other fields in the service of literary history is our awareness that the phenomena we encounter for example in the eighteenth century do not exactly fit the concept as defined in a philosophical or social-scientific theory. The concept does not remain the same when applied in the study of a particular literary historical period. The task of the literary historian is not a matter of identifying something known as 'individuality' or 'rationality' in a particular object of study, but of asking what that phenomenon looks like in this particular period, in the works of these particular authors.

We can pick – somewhat arbitrarily – a few examples of literary historians' conceptualizations from some seminal works on eighteenth-century

English literature. J. Paul Hunter's *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (1994) indicates in its very title that the scope in which the 'rise of the novel' is here examined has expanded decisively from that of Watt's. Hunter reminds us of the danger of 'universalism', 'essentialism', and 'ahistoricism', which remain powerful trends in literary studies (Hunter, 1994, p. 5). He insists on not projecting our views concerning the contemporary novel, and its secularized worldview, onto the eighteenth century. The process of secularization needs to be examined in detail; likewise, the character of the 'realism' of the eighteenth-century novel must be separately determined (ibid., pp. 180, 200). Other concepts that need reconsideration include the didacticism of the early novel (ibid., p. 55), and the development of privacy and its relationship to the public realm (e.g., ibid., pp. 157, 303). We can see that theoretical concepts are used to focus research on particular issues or fields, which are not merely subsumed within a given category but which need to be examined in order to gain a full picture of the specific character of the general phenomenon in this particular historical case. The work of the literary historian is thus to a great extent guided by certain crucial theoretical concepts, while the empirical research on the topic leads to revisions in the conceptualization of the subject.

In line with Hunter's study, John Richetti's *The English Novel in History 1700-1780* (1999) contextualizes the 'rise of the novel' both in different literary discourses and in social and cultural history. Richetti suggests that the main theme of the new novel is 'the contested nature of subjectivity' (ibid., p. 3); he elaborates upon this by applying Alasdair MacIntyre's interpretation of 'character' as a mask, 'a mode of social existence', maintaining that the novel dramatizes 'the gap that exists between an individual and his or her social role, a gap that is nonexistent in the *character*' (ibid.; emphasis in the original). Thus, Richetti traces the changes in the forms of subjectivity that are entailed in the new ways of dealing with what is traditionally called 'character' in literary studies. Stuart Sherman, in *Telling Time: Clocks, Diaries, and English Diurnal Form 1660-1785* (1996), discusses the impact of changes in the consciousness of time on the English literature of the period. The characterizing concepts he uses include a 'growing appetite for "contemporaneity"' (Sherman, 1996, p. 172) and a 'task-oriented' versus 'time-governed' model of organizing experience, saying that Defoe's Robinson Crusoe 'refigures task time as tasks timed' (ibid., p. 229). Again, a new form of thought precipitates new forms of shaping the narrative.

Michael McKeon's *The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740* (1987) traces the same development as Hunter and Richetti, but his theoretical frame

is somewhat different and more philosophical, since he is interested particularly in the development of the epistemological and the socio-ethical dimension in the emerging novel. He considers the strength of the novel as a modern genre to be derived from its unrivalled power both to formulate and to explain a set of problems that are central to early modern experience. These may be understood as

> problems of categorical instability, which the novel, originating to resolve, also inevitably reflects. The first sort of instability with which the novel is concerned has to do with generic categories; the second, with social ones. The instability of generic categories registers an epistemological crisis, a major cultural transition in attitudes toward how to tell the truth in narrative. [...] The instability of social categories registers a cultural crisis in attitudes toward the way in which the external social order is related to the internal, moral state of its members (McKeon, 2002, p. 20).

Thus, at the beginning of his empirical study of the emerging novel McKeon defines the leading questions and theses in philosophical and simultaneously cultural and historical terms. He also gives a reflective account of his method, which he calls dialectical and which he defines as follows: 'A basic premise of dialectical method is that all categorizations are operational and conditional rather than once and for all and absolute – that they are parts of a larger process from which they may be abstracted only provisionally' (ibid., p. xviii). That is to say, each category is tested and redefined in the course of the empirical study of the subject, and each definition of a concept, or description of a phenomenon, affects our understanding of other, adjacent concepts as well. Accordingly, McKeon professes the 'virtue of concretion, that of descriptive precision' (ibid.). This is very much, we dare say, how the historian of literature proceeds, even if he (or she) only too rarely explains his or her dealing with concepts and their relation to empirical research.

Encounters, Negotiations

The idea that the compatibility of narratological concepts with literary historical research, and their usefulness in it, consists in narratology's providing the tools for dealing with the formal traits in narrative discourse, to which historical research adds content and context, turns out to be simplistic and defective. The suggestion that narratology can be opened up to historical research by 'semanticizing' the universal narrative forms

defined in narratology presents these forms as an ahistorical repertoire which can be filled in with different contents, while literary historians are disposed to think that form is not separable from the specific content – defined, for example, in terms of genre – which the form expresses. If forms, as suggested above, cannot be defined abstractly, apart from the content, in historical literary research, this points to a fundamental difference in concept formation compared to narratology. What we have here is also a matter of different views of conceptual accuracy: while for narratologists it means exhaustive definition (of a trait in narrative discourse), which is valid for all possible circumstances, for literary historians it means a pertinent description of what is essential in a concrete historical phenomenon. These differences in the understanding of the functioning of theoretical concepts are bound to cause difficulties in attempts to dovetail or fuse narratology with historical literary research.

We can illustrate the problem with the excellent example of a study in which a literary historian accepts the challenge of narratological theory: Armin Schulz's *Erzähltheorie in mediävistischer Perspektive* (Narrative Theory in a Medievalist Perspective, 2013). Since narratology, despite its ahistorical, universal orientation, was originally constructed with the modern novel in mind ('modern' in the broad sense of beginning in the eighteenth century), the question of its compatibility with the study of medieval literature arises naturally. Schulz' main argument is that narratology does not help much in the analysis of medieval narratives, since it remains on the surface of narration, rather than examining *'how the story – the histoire – is composed conclusively of action and the motives* [*or reasons*] *of action* [*Handlungsgründen*]'.[20] He enumerates important aspects of medieval narratives that contradict the basic suppositions of narratology: author and narrator cannot be distinguished; the characters narrate things they ought not to know about; the narratives appear to contain both too much and too little; the characters are not individualized, but have an identity essentially determined by social bonds, genre-dependent behavioural patterns and their history (but not by any characteristics owned by this individual alone; ibid., pp. 1-2, 128). The vantage point in examining medieval narratives, according to Schulz, has to be that of the different genres – courtly novel, heroic epic, the 'Märe' (a novelistic story in verse), and the courtly legend – since patterns of story, narration, and characters are tied to genre (ibid., pp. 4-5). Important elements in the analysis are

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20   *'wie das Geschehen – die histoire – bündig aus Handlungen und Handlungsgründen zusammengesetzt wird'* (Schulz, 2012, p. 1; emphasis in the original).

narrative schemata, the semantics of space, and the technique of creating coherence (ibid, p. 6). Schulz demonstrates how the narrative schemata and characters of narratives in different genres derive from 'courtly anthropology' and from the medieval worldview, in which a Providence rules over Fortuna and human wilfulness. However, he also introduces a large number of narratological and related theories into his discussion, ranging from Genette to Propp and Bakhtin, but he always returns to the specificity of medieval narration, as deriving from medieval thought patterns and narrative schemata, and the 'collective imagery', which is historically specific (ibid., p. 21). He shows how the logic of creating cohesion in a medieval story is different from a modern one (e.g., ibid., pp. 322, 331); he sums this up by saying that the structure of a medieval narrative derives from 'a conflict between different patterns of creating meaning, of different action schemata, themes, patterns of interaction and anthropologies'.[21] As a whole, Schulz's study demonstrates convincingly that the content and form of a narrative cannot be separated: a form is always the form of a particular content. This content, and consequently its form, is historically variable and contextually determined.

Eighteenth-century narrative literature, particularly the novel, is considered the beginning of the modern tradition of narration; the period is nevertheless sufficiently remote to elicit the question of historical specificity of the narratives of the time. In the present volume, concepts and conceptions both of narratology and of the historical study of literature are reflected upon in the light of eighteenth-century narrative literature. Some of the authors give more stress to narratological, others to historical conceptualizations; some suggest the applicability of certain narratological concepts with further specifications, or propose augmentations to these concepts based on particular historical observations, while others consider that narratological concepts do nor serve to capture the phenomenon in question, and explain why.

The volume opens with Michael McKeon's article on the challenge which the study of eighteenth-century literature presents to narrative theory. The author argues that the universalist emphasis of narratologists 'misrepresents generic historicity as transhistorical', since in their general theories of narrative they chiefly refer to the modern novel. McKeon goes on to reflect upon some crucial concepts in narrative theory. Starting with the concept of realism, he maintains that it is not only Genette and Bal

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21   'vom Widerstreit unterschiedlicher Sinnbildungsmuster, Handlungsschemata, Themen, Interaktionsmuster und Anthropologien'; ibid., p. 348.

who equate mimesis, or the illusory imitation of an external reality, with literary realism; like them, Watt in his concept of formal realism partly misrepresents the phenomenon by disregarding the reflexive moment in realism. Richardson is not merely pretending to be giving a 'historically' accurate account of Pamela's experiences; the form through which this experience is mediated – Pamela's style of letter writing – is thematized as well. Thus, 'diegetic self-consciousness' is part of novelistic realism from the very beginning. McKeon goes on to argue that the narratologists' understanding of 'mimesis' is likewise defective, and for much the same reason as realism: mimesis is understood solely in terms of illusionism. In his discussion of free indirect discourse (FID), McKeon detects important differences between Genette's and Bal's views on the matter. He suggests that the nature of the phenomenon is misrepresented both in Bal's narrative layers model and in Genette's idea of the character's speech being partly 'emancipated' from the narrator's speech, and argues that FID is a reflexive mode of writing which thematizes the realistic form of character representation. He emphasizes that the emergence of FID is to be contextualized in the eighteenth-century preoccupation with 'the nature and the limits of person, impersonation, personality, and personal identity'. Finally, McKeon raises some doubts regarding the claim that postclassical narratology is no longer tacitly bound to the modern novel; at least in some (postmodern, poststructuralist) forms, it seems to be attached even more restrictively to twentieth-century and contemporary narrative.

John Richetti's article continues the discussion of the topic of realism in the eighteenth-century novel, adopting another angle: he examines the intricate relationship between rhetorical plot-making and the representation of 'socio-economic actualities' in Fielding's *Tom Jones*. He begins by arguing that plot is for Fielding a generically determined rhetorical artifice, rather than an arrangement of events as they flow from the characters and their experiences, as suggested by contemporary narrative theory. Fielding is presenting his readers with a 'comic epic in prose', which crucially affects the way the narrator deals with incidents and, above all, with the outcome of events. What is at issue for Richetti, however, is the tension between the comic-epic plot and the representation of problematical aspects of actual mid-eighteenth-century English life and social institutions – indeed giving 'a fairly complete survey of English institutions' – which resists a full absorption into comic artifice. Richetti suggests that the socio-historical aspect is present particularly in some of the minor characters; he demonstrates this by analysing some of the soldiers in whose company Tom spends some time in Book VII. More specifically, the ruthless Northerton,

who in a quarrel almost stabs Tom to death, is interpreted as a character from a socio-economic and institutional landscape, who nevertheless also functions as a cog in the machinery of plot leading to the discovery of Tom's parentage and his return to Paradise Hall, and who disappears from the novel after fulfilling his 'task' in the plot. Richetti compares Northerton's role to that of the three Blifils (young Blifil, his father, and his uncle), who represent the 'evil', scheming counterforce to Tom. They are completely absorbed in their function in the plot construction – with their intrigues and their intent to manipulate an 'audience' (Mr. Allworthy), they are a kind of parallel to the plot-making of the Fieldingesque narrator – while Northerton acts just as the reckless himself. What remains of him is a residue of 'unassimilated characterological substance' in the novel, which hints at other, additional possibilities of plot construction, more like those dealt with in contemporary narratology.

The presence of ample descriptive detail is considered to be a character-istic of literary realism, and Watt's claim that the 'rise of the novel' involves a shift to formal realism, i.e. to considering as real what is particular in time and space, fuelled the conception that eighteenth-century novels abound with descriptive details – which has proved to be a misconception. Monika Fludernik tackles the question of the description of house interiors in eighteenth-century literature, using the tools provided by Franz Stanzel in his concepts of perspectival and aperspectival description. Fludernik starts historically, with a brief overview of pre-eighteenth-century types of description – ekphrasis, portrait description, allegorical description – and includes in her discussion a contextual or 'culturalist' aspect: the increase in interior descriptions in eighteenth-century literature was due in part to changes in interior design in non-aristocratic households. As she points out, Stanzel's concept of perspectival description refers to representing interiors in a manner which defines the spatial locations of the rooms and the objects in them, i.e. 'draws a map', rather than (aperspectivally) merely giving an account – an inventory, a list – of the contents of the rooms. Fludernik delineates the development in eighteenth-century literature from aperspectival to perspectival description of interiors. While in early descriptions of houses the organizing principle was critical assessment of the house and the objects in it, rather than spatial contiguity, in the 'tour guide model' the description follows more or less closely the visitor's route in the house. The earliest perspectival descriptions are thus found in Gothic novels, while for example Defoe in Moll Flanders represents spaces and the location of objects only to the extent that it is relevant to the action.

Aino Mäkikalli takes a look at two early eighteenth-century English novels: Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* and Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. She interprets the temporal order in these narratives in the context of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century conceptions of time. The analysis examines the structure and temporal continuum of events and representations of characters in relation to time, in the context of contemporary time-keeping, chronological studies and the idea of history. Mäkikalli shows how the intrusion of history – 'real life' – into Behn's narrative disrupts its 'adventure time', which is characteristic of the baroque romance. Defoe's dating of events is more precise than Behn's, but both authors use temporal references to enhance the verisimilitude of the narrative and to create an effect of reality.

The topic in Liisa Steinby's article is temporality, and the related questions of the central experiencing subject and the perception of other characters, in Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. The vantage point are the two revolutions in conceptions of time that took place in eighteenth-century literature. The first revolution, occurring at the beginning of the century, is that which Ian Watt refers to as the 'formal realism' of the new novel: what is now conceived as 'reality' are particular things in a particular place and at a particular time, rather than universal, timeless essences of things. The second revolution, taking place towards the end of the century, is the breakthrough of historicism – conceiving of all human things as historically changing – which has a counterpart in the novel of the development of an individual (the *Bildungsroman*). Steinby shows that the temporal structure of *Moll Flanders* is primarily determined by the protagonist's manner of seeing everything from the perspective of her struggle for survival. In *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, the main form of temporality is the individual's experience of time, in which he constantly recurs to past experiences, reinterpreting them and himself in their light, has new experiences which cannot immediately be given any definitive meaning, and imagines the future, which essentially codetermines the interpretation of past and present. What the protagonist himself is, how his life-story should be narrated, and what the other characters are both in themselves and for him, are then questions processed temporally, rather than something that can be instantaneously and definitively resolved.

In Dorothee Birke's contribution, the main theoretical concept is Stanzel's authorial narration, which she considers in the light of two examples of English novels from the 1750s. Stanzel's authorial narration is often equated to narration from a position of 'godlike omniscience', comprising not only the characters' hidden motives and thoughts but also the moral value of the

acts, and is therefore often seen as outdated and incompatible with modern scepticism towards authority. Birke, however, argues that already in the eighteenth-century novel, authorial narration meant less the assumption of an authoritative stance than reflecting on narrative authority. Such means of reflection included commentaries on events and characters and on the narration itself, projected reader figures, and 'gnomic' commentaries, offering general maxims concerning morality or human nature. Haywood's *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* opens with a passage on the general state of contemporary morals and manners, allowing the reader either to judge the heroine according to these conventional norms or, on the contrary, to examine these norms critically on the basis of the character and her story. As readers, we are invited to reflect upon our expectations and our role as reader. In the anonymously published *Charlotte Summers*, excessive authorial intrusions and Fieldingesque irony are displayed to make the reader conscious of him- or herself, as someone who is manipulated and convinced by the narrator, but who may also raise questions concerning the narrator's authority.

Karin Kukkonen looks at the problem of tellability in the context of German eighteenth-century criticism and novel-writing. The relevant critical discussion here was conducted by the German authority on poetics Johann Christoph Gottsched and the Swiss theoreticians Johann Jakob Bodmer and Johan Jakob Breitinger, and it concerned the question of how to make a literary work interesting by using a topic which contains something 'marvellous' without contradicting its verisimilitude. Kukkonen suggests that there is not only a lower limit of tellability – what makes the story worthwhile relating and reading – but also an upper one: too disturbing an event may not bear narration, while too many extraordinary elements may render it impossible to structure the whole into a convincing narrative. Using an example from eighteenth-century novel-writing, Maria Anna Sagar's *Karolinens Tagebuch*, Kukkonen elucidates the difference between event-based and character-based narrativity, the latter historically succeeding the former. *Karolinens Tagebuch* contains, in addition to letters by the I-narrator concerning her own, rather eventless life, the story of her friend, whose life-story closely resembles the lives of the heroines in admired contemporary novels by Christian Fürchtegott Gellert and Sophie von La Roche. The tellability of these (rather eventful) character novels is contrasted with Karoline's plan to write a novel following the pattern of the adventurous baroque novel, which in this context represents an exceeding of the limit of (event-based) tellability: too many extraordinary events cannot be shaped into a convincing whole. Kukkonen goes on to argue that the relatively eventless life of the

protagonist achieves tellability by the reciprocal mirroring of the different narrative strains in her letters. Thus, the metafictional dimension proves to be a relevant aspect of tellability.

Claudia Nitschke starts with an analysis of the functions of embedded narratives in Wieland's *Don Sylvio*, and goes on to outline a trajectory reaching from Wieland through Lessing to the emergence of the aesthetic autonomy of art in Goethe's *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten*. *Don Sylvio* is described as a highly complex construction of different diegetic levels, ostensible presence of publisher, translator and author, spurious footnotes, authorial intrusions and the comments of the characters within the main story on the embedded ones. Not only is literary self-consciousness displayed – playfully and often satirically – in the structure of the novel, but the understanding of the nature and function of literature is also its main topic: the plot consists of the young protagonist's learning to distinguish between fiction and reality. Nitschke shows how this takes place in the interplay between embedded stories and the protagonist's experiences in 'real' life (i.e., in the main story of the novel). The theoretical categories used in the analysis include immediacy and immersion, the Husserlian conception of 'intersubjective objectivity', and the difference between the pragmatic and the ontological approach toward fiction. In the end, Don Sylvio is able to differentiate between real life and literature, as a sphere of its own – a sphere which here is still not experienced primarily aesthetically. While Lessing emphasizes emotion and empathy as essential factors in understanding literature, Goethe's novella cycle ends with a fairytale which emphasizes the aesthetic autonomy of literature.

Christine Waldschmidt asks a question that has not been asked in narratological theory: how is the relationship between the thought content of a narrative and its narrative form to be understood? This is a question which was very much present in the eighteenth-century literary scene, because of the stress in Enlightenment thinking on the didactic aspect of literature. Waldschmidt discusses the issue as one of rhetoricity: narrative form was viewed as the rhetorical means for persuading the reader to accept the thought content of an exemplary story. In Germany, the topic was discussed particularly in the framework of the theory of the fable. As examples of this tradition, Waldschmidt analyses a fable by Lessing and a short story by Schiller, a renarration of an embedded story in Diderot's *Jacques le fataliste*. In Lessing's fable about the dying wolf, the reader is made to accept the fact that hypocrisy is common in the world, but that this need not unsettle the existence of an ideal moral order. In Schiller's story *Merkwürdiges Beispiel einer weiblichen Rache*, no moral conclusion can be drawn on the basis of

the story, in which events take place just as in the revenge plan of the female protagonist – except for the decisive, unexpected turn in the end, which shatters her wish for revenge. This unexpected outcome demonstrates the presence of a dynamic of psychic energies in human beings which we are not aware of. Waldschmidt's conclusion is that Schiller is here continuing the exemplary mode of storytelling, but that the general thought that guides it is something that is in need of investigation rather than any known truth.

Penny Pritchard's topic is the characterization of the deceased in English eighteenth-century funeral sermons. She starts by reminding us of the fact that the 'rise of the novel' took place amidst the flourishing of a plethora of various fictional and (mostly) non-fictional text-types, which is one reason to examine the characterization in funeral sermons with narratological tools developed for the study of fiction. Published funeral sermons were a didactic genre, the purpose of which was to exhort listeners or readers to follow in their lives the exemplary spiritual conduct of the now dead. The 'obligatory' praise of the Christian virtues of the deceased in the biographical parts of the funeral sermons led to accusations of hypocrisy. The praise of the Christian conduct of the deceased often followed a typology of professional virtues: the person was characterized as a charitable merchant or a philanthropic physician. Finally, Pritchard discusses two atypical cases of characterization in a funeral sermon: one in which an idiosyncratic manner of the deceased is mentioned – the interest in this is motivated by the extraordinary stature of the deceased (Sir Robert Boyle) – and another in which the funeral sermon is used to absolve the reputation of the deceased against unjust accusations. The general and moral nature of the characterizations does not leave space for 'experienciality', which according to Monika Fludernik is a criterion of narrativity.

In the last two articles in the volume, Genette's concept of paratext (or peritext) is applied to eighteenth-century writing. Pat Rogers discusses the biographies published by the English bookseller and publisher Edmund Curll, who also wrote parts of them. These biographies, whose subjects included authors, churchmen, scholars, politicians, soldiers, and historic figures from previous centuries, typically consisted of a great variety of different components, of which the biography itself was only one, minor part. Rogers describes the characteristic features of a Curllean biography, classifies the different types of paratext in terms of the categories of the time, and defines their different functions, yielding a list different from Genette's. A few exemplary cases clarify Curll's compilation method, which aimed primarily at maximizing commercial profit. Curll's case is an extreme example of the use of paratexts – if we can call them that, in

books in which they no longer form a 'threshold' into the work proper but very much the matter itself.

Finally, Teemu Ikonen's subject is peritextuality in French eighteenth-century narratives. Rather than aiming at a classification of various peritexts – Ikonen finds Genette's project problematical – he examines peritextuality as a matter of 'dispositional' effects across the boundary of text and 'off-texts', effects which can be studied in terms of textual order, of the position of the author and of the reader, respectively. Two different versions of a work, by Diderot and de Laclos, in which the same narrative is embedded in different peritexts, are examined as examples. Ikonen shows how changes and rearrangements in peritextual settings transform the position of the author as an authority, and invite the reader to adopt different stances to the narrative text. The differences between versions of texts should not simply be left to textual criticism, Ikonen concludes: authorial revisions common in the eighteenth century can be considered as acts of repetition and transformation, creating narratologically challenging connections between the main narrative, its framings, and the cultural context.

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