

Limits of Narrative (ENN 8) – Panels

Panel 1:

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Inner Limits of Narratives: Narratives and Their Gaps

Description:

Narratives can be considered incomplete in many ways. This inherent quality of narratives arises from their nature as finite texts, and it is confirmed by our overall experience of using a variety of narrative forms for diverse purposes. In modern narrative theory, this incompleteness is often linked to terms such as “places of indeterminacy” (cf. Ingarden 1973 [1937]), and, especially, “blanks” or simply “gaps”. These gaps are not merely incidental or peripheral but rather integral components of narratives, which can take various forms and serve multiple functions (cf. Iser 1978, Eco 1979, Ryan 1980, Ronen 1994, Doležel 1998). Gaps can be temporary or permanent (Sternberg 1985), they can take the form of egregious gaps (Abbott 2008 [2002]), they can relate to characters, space, the whole fictional (story) world, etc. One of their key functions is that they act as frontiers of narrativity: they demarcate the internal, structural contours of narratives, shaping their scope and boundaries.

In this way, gaps serve as essential structural elements that influence the different layers of a narrative and its reception. They govern the coherence of the story, determining how events are connected and how the narrative progresses. Furthermore, they ensure the continuity of spatial-temporal settings, allowing readers to orient themselves within the story’s universe. Similarly, gaps impact the integrity of characters and their actions, providing opportunities for interpretation and reader engagement. These structural features enhance the overall comprehensibility of narratives, inviting readers to actively participate in filling in the missing details. The discussions on this issue are extensive, but still unfinished and inspiring.

Ultimately, gaps function not only as structural delimitations but also as dynamic spaces that foster creativity, interpretation, and meaning-making. The gaps in the narrative, however, do not only affect our understanding of what is narrated, but they are just as revealing of what has been nonnarrated, what has remained non-told, nevertheless belongs to a story (cf. Schmid 2023). By leaving room for ambiguity and openness, the gaps invite diverse readings and interpretations, enriching the narrative experience (see for instance approaches developed by hermeneutics, and cognitive science).

This section invites contributions exploring this crucial source of the internal delimitation of narratives, highlighting their multifaceted roles and the profound impact they have on storytelling and narrative comprehension. Possible questions (among others) include:

- Does the media affect our understanding of gaps in the narrative?
- What role do gaps play in poetry?
- What is the function of gaps in the aesthetic and ethical dimensions of narrative?

- How do untold events affect our understanding of narrative?
- What role do gaps play in reading and mental imagery?

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Beyond Tellability. The Limits of Narrative in the Representation of Everyday Life

Description:

Narrative is generally regarded as a cognitive instrument by means of which we organise and interpret our world. In everyday life, however, this world is shaped by routines and practices beyond conscious perception, beyond being explicitly noticed and therefore beyond being told and/or beyond having tellability. Normal, everyday life is not worth telling, we usually only tell stories about the unprecedented, the unusual, the surprising. Hence, the motivation to tell what happened usually increases with the degree of deviation from the normal course of events. This means that although narratives have their place in daily life, the individual events of such an everyday life (cf. Luckmann / Schütz 1973; Hettlage 2014), the persistent patterns of what is 'normal', rarely become the subject of narratives themselves.

These general remarks on narratives become even more relevant in fictional storytelling. In novels and films we expect the unusual, we want to be entertained by surprising plot twists and unforeseen complications. Fiction hardly seems suitable for conveying everyday life. However, at least since the emergence of realism in art in the 18th

century, narrative has been used in a variety of ways to explore and portray daily life (Auerbach 1955). Narratives might, for example, show ordinary events in order to achieve a 'reality effect' (Barthes 1968) or to signalise parallels of the fictional and the real world. Thus, even if (fictional) narratives and depictions of daily life are not mutually exclusive, storytelling based on everyday life seems to serve as a certain strategy, e.g. to highlight the unusual and unexpected and/or as an ideological, aesthetic, rhetorical etc. tool.

The panel aims to examine the complex relationship between narrative and everyday life from different disciplinary perspectives. This involves analysing the narrative dimensions of the ordinary both in the practice of everyday storytelling and with regard to fictional narratives. In contrast to studies on this complex, which focus on the diverse manifestations of narrative in everyday life (Andrews 2014) or the possibilities of the aesthetic staging of everyday worlds in art (Groß / Dirk 2022), we intend to explore the limits of this 'cognitive instrument' and examine which dimensions of everyday life are particularly difficult to capture by narratives. In addition to historical case studies on individual works, authors, genres, epochs, etc., contributions focusing on systematic or theoretical questions are particularly welcome. Possible questions (among others) include:

- What role does tellability play in everyday (oral) storytelling?
- Do genres and media differ in terms of the narratability of everyday life?
- Do social media foster narrative practices that are particularly focussed on reproducing the ordinary?
- What strategies are used in literary storytelling to stage the ordinary and banal as worth telling?
- Where are the limits of narratability in relation to everyday phenomena?
- Are there cultural and/or historical contexts in which everyday life is significant as a narrative object?

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Panel 3:

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Narrative and Generative AI: Theories, Methodologies, Practices

The ongoing proliferations of digital systems for producing and modifying media and data through algorithms, powered by large language models, natural language processing and generative adversarial networks are leading to reconsiderations of the limits of fundamental concepts in the humanities. This is exemplified by special issues on how the advent of widespread generative AI impacts notions such as text (*Poetics Today* 45:2, 2024), literacy (*Reading Research Quarterly* 59:4, 2024) and authorship (*American Literature* 95:2, 2023). Whether understood as a rhetorical event (Phelan 2017), a cognitive move (Herman 2009; Walsh 2018), or a semiotic structure (Abbott 2008) ideas about what narrative is and what role it can play in people's life are likewise challenged by the influx of generative AI, particularly in the shape of large language models, such as those powering OpenAI's GPT-4, Google's Gemini and Meta's Llama. On a theoretical level, the issue is contested: Some argue that since a human's narrative meaning making revolves around causal, embodied reasoning while the output from a computational model is based on probability and statistical correlation, such a model is fundamentally incapable of understanding or producing actual acts of narration (Fletcher 2021, 2022; Phelan 2024); such models are, it has been claimed, merely "stochastic parrots" (Bender et al. 2021). Others argue that "There is much to learn from our creations—our machines that can both 'read' and write stories" (Chun and Elkins 2022) because generative AI and large language models can "generate compelling narratives" (Hayles 2023) by using new forms of meaning making that potentially "disrupts human exceptionalism" (Rees 2022).

On a practical level, stories produced by or in tandem with generative AI are rapidly becoming part of both existing and new ways in which humans engage in mediated storytelling activities: users enter into intricate, plot-driven conversations with character bots in Character.ai; parents prompt forth highly personalized fiction to their children with TinyTellerAI; applicants to universities sketch out or rewrite personal life stories through the prompting of chatbots.

This panel invites proposals that engage with the nexus of generative AI and narrative theories, methodologies and practices. The panel welcomes papers that seek to develop or substantiate the theoretical debates as well as papers that engage with any of the many ways generative AIs are appearing in storytelling practices, understood in the widest possible sense: from the nonfictional to the highly interactional and dialogical to the artistic and fictionalized.

The topics of the panel may include but are not limited to:

- new storytelling practices emerging from collaborations between humans and generative AI
- relations between prompted storytelling and everyday and/or theoretical notions of fiction/non-fiction
- large language models and narration in/as literature/art
- generative AI storytelling and the (re)production or subversion of existing ideological/structural biases
- existing or new narratological concepts in conversation with the processes or products of generative AI storytelling
- methods for probing, analyzing or challenging AI storytelling and the effects of its proliferation
- potential societal and/or personal impacts of widespread access to generative AI storytelling.

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Panel 4:

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Narration and Commentary in Medieval Textual Practices

Description:

Medieval narratives are well known for containing numerous—at times extensive—non-narrative passages, such as lists, descriptions, and especially commentaries. These passages can serve to add details to the narrative or function as explanations or evaluations. While some work has been done on these issues, it has primarily focused on longer digressions of specific types such as ekphrasis (Wandhoff 2003), lists (von Contzen 2016), and excurses (Linden 2017). It may be beneficial to shift focus toward the combination of narration and commentary on a microlevel and ask how even small non-narrative elements can be understood as comments and how they contribute to the meaning-making of the whole text (Lechtermann 2021).

Conversely, non-narrative texts like commentaries often incorporate various narrative elements, either in the form of micro-narratives used for illustration or as overarching macro-structures that shape the text as a whole (Lechtermann 2020). Excellent examples of this practice are the medieval commentaries on the Song of Songs, which reframe this largely non-narrative biblical book as a story of the Christian Church, the human soul in its quest for salvation, or the Lives of the Virgin Mary (Kohnen 2023).

Similar narrative strategies can also be found in commentaries on other biblical books, treatises on scientific subjects, or manuals in the realm of the artes mechanicae. Since these texts have not been analyzed from a literary perspective on a large scale, they offer new insights into the nature of medieval narrativity, as well as into the role of narrative within a non-fictional context.

This section aims to explore both phenomena within the methodological frameworks of medieval textuality, genre, and narrativity. As recent research has shown, narrativity must be understood as a feature of text with specific cultural contexts (Penas Ibáñez 2008, Rudrum 2008). Nevertheless, the ways in which narrative and non-narrative elements are combined to generate meaning in both fictional and non-fictional discourse may also shed new light on modern literature. The section will, therefore, examine how these historical configurations can provide insights into the boundaries of narration from a diachronic perspective, and it invites participants from non-medieval backgrounds to contribute as well.

Possible questions (among others) include:

- How can narrativity in medieval texts be defined based on the historical use of narrative and non-narrative aspects?
- What can we productively define as commentary, and how helpful is this category in understanding the specific profile of narrative texts from this period?
- How are medieval narrative texts influenced by non-narrative aspects, particularly passages that comment on the narration, the narrated world, or the act of narrating?
- How are medieval commentaries—for example on the Bible, classical literature, or in a scientific context—shaped by a narrative framework or narrative passages?
- Are there ways to use narrative elements in commentaries, or commentary in narrative texts, that are characteristic of specific languages or social contexts?
- Can the notoriously difficult question of text type or genre be addressed by examining the idiosyncratic mixtures of narrative and non-narrative elements in medieval texts?

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Panel 5:

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Authors Against the Story Economy

Description:

Bourdieu (1992) claimed that literature as a field reached its autonomy in the 19th century, with authors such as Flaubert who could assume a financially and societally independent status, free of patronage and didactic obligations. The field was shaped through struggle for symbolic capital, giving rise to values defined by the field itself, not by economical, political, religious, or any other non-literary authority. Such modern values of “pure” literature include complexity, ambivalence, self-reflexivity, impersonality and polyphony.

In the 21st-century, the literary field is losing this autonomy (Thompson 2021, see also Kjerkegaard 2023). This should be a key concern for narrative scholars, as one of the central drivers of this change is the story economy, prompting everyone to tell their story (e.g., Mäkelä et al 2021; Mäkelä & Meretoja 2022). The story economy puts a new strain on literary authors as they need to cope in digital environments (e.g., Murray 2018) where storytelling is considered a strategy and a business model. Narrative capital is further entangled with digital capital (see Ragnedda & Ruiu 2020) acquired, for example, through an ability to invite viral sharing of “your story”.

The prompt to share one’s story further imposes new moral expectations on authors, introducing values that may appear contradictory to those of autonomous art, such as clear affective stance (Kangaskoski 2021), relatability, representability, and consistency of ethos across storytelling genres and platforms.

Many authors either actively choose to or involuntarily end up instrumentalizing their own personal story of survival or transformation, or their intersectional identities, to increase their narrative capital. However, in the spirit of the ENN 2025 general theme “Limits of Narrative”, this section focuses on authors that seek to protect the field by challenging and rejecting the story economy. Our aim is thus to seek new narrative-theoretical perspectives on the antagonistic relationship between literary authorship and storytelling as ubiquitous, instrumental, commodified, and currently dominated by the affordances of digital platforms.

We encourage contributions that combine the study of narrative with literary-sociological and trans medial concerns, the digital literary sphere, or literary valuation that is made in opposition to popular and commodified storytelling (e.g., Vermeulen 2023). The topics may include but are not limited to

- authorial ethos formation (see Korthals Altes 2014) through rejecting the story economy
- changes and disruptions of authorial ethos across narrative platforms
- literary narrative and free speech activism
- conservative authors and narrative ethics
- authors’ rejection of new narrative technologies and platforms
- conceptual relations and conflicts between storytelling, fiction and literature
- literary narratives as “non-compelling” stories
- anti- or weak narrativity, slowness, boredom and maximalism as literary values

- digital afterlives of dead authors
- diachronic change in the valuation of narrative techniques

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Panel 6:

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Limits of Self-Narratives

Description:

In contemporary culture, self-narratives have gained unprecedented prominence, fuelled by a combination of technological advancements, social shifts, and evolving philosophical understandings of identity. Several factors appear to have contributed to the rise of self-narratives.

First, the late 20th-century "memoir boom" fundamentally transformed the landscape of cultural practices. The turn toward the subject, along with feminism and the human rights movement, brought personal stories to the forefront of public and cultural attention. This demand for personal narratives led to the de-hierarchization of genres and the emergence of new hybrid forms, centering on an authentic narrating 'Self' shaped by fictional and discursive strategies. The development of *autofiction*, which reshaped both classical autobiography and modes of self-representation, exemplifies this trend (cf. Gasparini, Grell, Wagner-Egelhaaf, etc.). Moreover, the interest in authenticity permeates genres far removed from the autobiographical register. The narrating "Self" serves as an organizing principle in genres such as biofiction, exofiction, investigative

narratives (*récits d'enquête*), or the fictions of memory. First-person storytelling manifests not only in narrative but also in other forms of discourse. For instance, the growth of *autotheory* (Fournier) and the rise of *autofictional theater* (Mark) signal that the construction of the "self" in contemporary culture extends beyond narrative discourse.

Second, the spread of self-narratives has been influenced by what E. Ann Kaplan terms "trauma culture." Psychological and therapeutic approaches increasingly emphasize the importance of storytelling as a tool for healing and understanding one's experiences. Narrative therapy, for example, empowers individuals to rewrite their personal stories as a means of reframing trauma or challenges. In turn, traumatic experiences have become a source of innovation and experimentation in autobiographical writing (Gilmore). This has led to shifts in forms of subjectivity: relationships between the Self and the Other are now shaped by an ethics of *care* and require empathetic response (cf. Gefen, Gilligan, Zahavi). Moreover, the valorization of traumatic experience repositions the narrating subject from the status of a hero, as in classical narratives, to that of a victim (Azouvi). The dialectic of activity vs. passivity, heroization vs. victimization significantly affects contemporary self-narratives.

Third, the expansion of self-narratives has redefined the boundaries between text and readers. On one hand, there is a diffusion between personal stories and their audiences. While classical autobiography served as a model, contemporary life-writing are more democratic, fostering participation and shared experience between the narrator and the reader. Digital media has amplified the spread of connective and interactive forms of engaging with personal stories on various platforms. On the other hand, an opposing trend can also be observed: the reassertion of boundaries between the Self and the Other. To what extent does contemporary culture permit the appropriation of the experience of the Other? How do legal frameworks shape the boundaries of public self-narratives? Finally, what are the ethical limits of telling stories about others, especially the deceased?

Reflecting on the expansion of self-narratives inevitably leads to questions: is it possible to delineate its limits when the "Self" is in constant transgression? Does storytelling remain the primary tool for constructing the "Self" in contemporary cultural, medial, digital practices, as it offers thinking of life as a "narratively mediated interpretative process" (Meretoja)? Or do the mechanisms of self-construction instead shift the emphasis toward performativity, proposing variants of the "performed Self" (Goffman) or "enacted identity" (Butler)? This panel will address the following questions related to the expansion of self-narratives in contemporary culture and the reconsideration of their boundaries:

- Fact vs. Fiction; Re-enactment vs. Representation in Contemporary Self-Narratives
- Narrating Self: Vulnerability vs. Heroic Representation
- Self and Other: Ethical, Political, and Discursive Aspects
- The Dialectics of 'Narrated Self' vs. 'Performed Self' in contemporary cultural practices
- Narrating Self in Autofiction, Biofiction, Exofiction, and Autotheory
- Trauma and Self-narratives: the Limits of Representation
- Self-narratives across Media

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Panel 7:

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Narrative Entitlement: A Concept for Narratology and the Study of Fiction?

Description:

The concept of narrative entitlement was developed by Amy Shuman (see Shuman, 1986, 2005, 2015). Here is how she introduces it in the first chapter of Shuman (2005: 29):

"In exploring the interaction of competing voices, the concept of entitlement is as fundamental as that of turn taking. Indeed, the conventions of turn taking depend on conventions for defending or determining the rights to speak at all. If "a speaker's right to be the sole talker is a claim to a turn to talk" (Moerman, 1988: 19), entitlement concerns the right to make that claim. Challenges to entitlement raise questions about the ownership of experience. Any claim to the authority to report on experience, to disclose, withhold, or conceal information; to be an author of events; and to repeat another's remarks is an entitlement claim."

Shuman also writes in an overview article dated 2015:

"Much is at stake in contests and questions about who owns a story and who is entitled to tell it or hear it. Claiming ownership of a story, or challenging someone else's right to tell it, points beyond the stories themselves to issues of status, dignity, power, and moral and ethical relations between tellers and listeners."

Shuman began to explore these issues by drawing on a corpus of oral and written narratives from urban adolescents in an eastern U.S. city, i.e., a corpus of vernacular narratives (see Shuman, 1986). Most of his work focuses on this type of narratives. In the 2015 article, she implicitly invites us to consider different cultural contexts in which

the tellers claim or dispute the rights to tell a particular story and a little further on she cites the cases of Rigoberta Menchu's disputed testimony and Roberto Benigni's *Life is Beautiful*, a fictional film about the Holocaust, which has also been the subject of entitlement challenges.

A key concept in the narrative analysis of vernacular narratives (see De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2015), the concept of narrative entitlement has no recognized place or status in narratology. Two examples strike us as revealing:

- The *Living Handbook of Narratology* does not contain an entry dedicated to narrative entitlement;
- Natalya Bekhta's book on *We-Narratives: Collective Storytelling in Contemporary Fiction* (2020, Winner, 2021 Perkins Prize from the International Society for the Study of Narrative) does not use this concept, nor does it appear in the index.

We hypothesize here that the confused theorization of the narrator in narratology, and the substitution of the narrator for the author in the consideration of the narrative management, are at least partially responsible for this state of affairs, and we propose to put this hypothesis to the test within the framework of the panel.

The general aim of this panel is to decompartmentalize narrative analysis (of vernacular narratives) and narratology, without losing sight of the specificity of the narratives analyzed by narratology, particularly fictional narratives.

In France, an episode such as the 2007 controversy between writers Camille Laurence and Marie Darrieussecq clearly raised issues of entitlement, with the former accusing the latter of having “psychically” plagiarized or pirated her in her novel *Tom est mort* (*Tom is dead*), and of having written “a book about grief” rather than “a book of grief,” thus mimicking an experience she had not personally experienced. On the other hand, Paul Otchakovski-Laurens, her publisher, defended Marie Darrieussecq, arguing that “Marie Darrieussecq, like all writers, whether novelists or not, [was] no less entitled to write about the death of children than Camille Laurens.”

Reading more or less recent works of literary criticism, such as the one co-edited by Patricia Bissa Enama and Nathalie Fontane Wacker on *Le Secret de famille dans le roman contemporain* (*The family secret in the contemporary novel*, 2016), or Aurélie Barjonet's *L'Ère des non-témoins. La littérature des “petits-enfants” de la Shoah* (*The age of non-witnesses: The literature of the “grandchildren” of the Shoah*, 2022), also invite us to question the relevance of the concept of narrative entitlement for narratology and the study of fiction.

We invite paper proposals on:

- how entitlement is claimed, or challenged (according to Shuman, 2005: 29, “Entitlement is more often challenged than explicitly claimed”), or again negotiated by characters, starting with character-narrators, in certain fictional narratives;
- the way in which issues of entitlement and story ownership are addressed in certain fictional narratives: is this the same way as in vernacular narratives, or in a different way (James Phelan's triad of the mimetic, thematic, and synthetic dimensions of fictional narrative can be called upon here, as can other theories focusing on the specificity of literary narrative in general and fictional narrative in particular);
- with regard to authors of fictional narratives, and not just fictional narrators, are there more sensitive or problematic subjects than others in terms of entitlement, on which to write a fictional narrative? are some authors more entitled than others to write fictional narratives on certain subjects? do entitlement issues also concern readers of fictional narratives?
- the issue of transferring entitlement, among authors, between authors and non-authors, family, civil society;
- the possibility for raising these issues at a legal level;

- what distinguishes narrative entitlement and story ownership from other forms of entitlement and ownership concerning ideas, opinions and other personal and cultural artifacts.

(Non-exhaustive list.)

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Panel 8:

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Limits of Narrative in Medieval Texts

Against the background of the framework topic the section focuses on exploring the boundaries of storytelling in medieval texts, shedding light on the relationship between narrative (stories) and non-narrative forms (such as descriptions, arguments, and teachings). Medieval texts provide an excellent case study for this exploration. These works often combine storytelling with other purposes, such as religious instruction, legal discourse, or moral guidance, blurring the line between narrative and other text types. For instance, sermons frequently include short moral tales ('exempla'), while legal texts may weave in illustrative anecdotes to clarify their points (Ott 1988, Olson 2014, Mertz / Yovel 2005). Accordingly, narrative and non-narrative formats are often intricately linked, especially within one and the same text.

While questions about boundaries and transitional phenomena between narrative and non-narrative literary genres have already been raised (e.g. on the relationship between lyric and epic, Bleumer / Emmelius 2011), the section aims at broadening the perspective by considering the relationship between narrative and non-narrative text types and formats in general, thus examining:

1. How narrative and non-narrative formats overlap within individual works or genres.
2. The role of storytelling in pragmatic writing like religious, legal, and didactic texts, contrasting these with more studied courtly literature.
3. The role of storytelling in smaller text forms, and their incorporation into larger works.

One can think here of the multifaceted digressions ('Exkurse', Linden 2017) or proverbs in the courtly novel (Reuvekamp 2007) as well as the procedure of *descriptio*. The same applies to the interweaving of discursive and narrative speech e.g. in religious, legal and didactic texts (Friedrich 2017, Köbele 2017). This question arises for small-format text genres (e.g. exempla, Reden, Sprüche, Rätsel, Gebete etc.) as well as for their insertion in more extensive texts, cf. exempla in sermons, legal texts or behavioral teachings (Bleumer / Emmelius 2008). In general, the 'protonarrative' status of so-called 'simple forms' ('einfache Formen', Jolles 1969 [1930]) such as Kasus, Legende, Rätsel, Spruch or Witz should be reflected upon (Rippl 2014, 2017). The section delves into how medieval texts relate narration and description, narration and argumentation, narration and imagery or figurative language (e.g., metaphors and allegory), as well as narration and iconography. These elements often blur the boundaries between storytelling and textual analysis, as seen in allegorical texts like Minnereden (Glauch 2017) or Jagdallegorien etc.

By contextualizing these or similar phenomena in their historical and cultural settings, this section seeks to answer critical questions: How strong is the narrative potential in each case? Where do storytelling transitions occur, and what purpose do they serve? And how does the development of storytelling in medieval texts reflect broader cultural or functional shifts?

Through meaningful text-based case studies, this section aims to provide new insights into the 'limits of narrative' and their correlation with text functions in medieval culture. It also raises larger theoretical questions about whether current approaches to analyzing storytelling (historical narratology, Contzen / Tilg 2019) are sufficient to address the complexity of these texts – do the limits of narrative also make visible the limits of (historical) narratology?

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Panel 9:

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Causal and Emotional Understanding of Narratives

Classical narratological approaches – from Aristotle through E. M. Forster to Noël Carroll – identify the story (*histoire*) as the distinguishing feature of narrative. Narratives depict stories, they claim, and define stories as a chronologically ordered sequence of concrete states and/or events that are causally interconnected and can tendentially be framed within plot patterns (cf. Martínez 2017, 4). With E.M. Forster’s well-known example: While „The king died and then the queen died” is not a story (in Forster’s deviating terminology: a “plot”), „The king died, and then the queen died of grief” is. The phrase „of grief” causally links the two events, embedding them in a common explanatory context. The presence of this cause-and-effect context, linking events in a causal network, can be seen as a boundary between narrative and non-narrative formats, and also as the property that allows narratives to be used in a wide variety of fields. „In ordinary speech, we use narratives to explain how things happened and why certain standing conditions were important. Narrative is capable of performing this role because it tracks causal networks” (Carroll 2001, 128). Narratives are hence a common

form of explanation. Accordingly, narrative understanding itself takes the form of explanation and supposes the reader's or viewer's activity of constructing a coherent explanatory context linking events causally.

In recent years, this view has been challenged from two directions. Theorists of cognitive poetics, such as Marisa Bortolussi, Peter Dixon, and Emma Kafalenos (building primarily on Jonathan Culler's earlier critique), have attacked it from the perspective of reception and human thought processes. They argue that causal thinking is part of the recipient's basic cognitive equipment, so deeply rooted in our thinking that, in many cases, it is spontaneously activated. We automatically assume a causal relationship between events that occur close to each other in time and space, or follow each other in time. Even where we should not rationally assume causal connections, we often construct them. Thus, we interpret the sentence "The king died and then the queen died", or even "The king died. The queen also died" as a story, since we relate the two events to each other due to their temporal succession and the way they are narrated – that is, because of their sequential arrangement in the *discourse*. Therefore, the requirement for causal connections is unnecessary in the definition of narrative „because human understanding of time *per se* already inextricably includes causal connections" (Kovács 2011, 52).

A more serious challenge, one that truly undermines the role of causality, is the critique by the American philosopher David Velleman in his 2003 study *Narrative Explanation*. According to him, the distinguishing feature of stories does not lie in their ability to provide causal explanations. Forster's example „The king died and then the queen died" is not a story because it implicitly contains a causal relationship or because the reader automatically relates the events causally to each other. It is a story because the sequence of events unfolding in time initiates and resolves a temporally unfolding emotional cadence in the recipients. „Any sequence of events, no matter how improbable, can provide material for storytelling if it completes an emotional cadence" (Velleman 2003, 6). Velleman therefore sees the primary function of narratives in making events emotionally tangible. A story enables us to assimilate events, not to patterns of how things happen, but rather to familiar patterns of how things feel (Velleman 2003, 20). This is why the narrative format is so widespread and prevalent in everyday life, in medical, journalistic, legal discourse, sports reporting, etc. It transfers causal links from the rational level onto the emotional level and adds emotional understanding to 'normal' causal understanding or even replaces it.

The section will contribute to clarifying the concept of narrative, examining the forms of emotional coherence and their relationship to causal coherence, as well as their role in the definition of narrative. Topics could include, for example:

- Emotional patterns, emotional cadences in fictional and/or factual narratives such as tension-release patterns etc., and corresponding text structures
- Typical causal and emotional patterns of specific narrative genres
- The relationship of casual and emotional coherence of narratives
- May emotional resonance outweigh rational explanation?
- What are the potential limitations of using causal relationships to define narratives?
- What roles do causal or emotional turning points play in narratives?
- How does cognitive poetics challenge the necessity of causal links in narrative construction?

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Panel 10:

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Cross-Genre and Cross-Media Transferability of Narrative Categories: Possibilities and Limits

Description:

Speaking of artistic narrative is no longer confined to verbal storytelling. Not only has a variety of non-literary narrative arts been acknowledged and systemized (see e.g. Mahne 2007); there are also numerous attempts to attribute narrativity to genres and media traditionally regarded as non-narrative, as for instance poetry (cf. Culler 2018) or even music (cf. Gutter/Gutter 2015). However, each term-stretching generates questions about its justifiability. Is the claimed narrativity of the non-narrative just an effect of its hybrid structure and hence no real extension? In many works belonging to arts that generally lack narrators there are exceptional appearances of them anyway, which is e.g. the case of voice-over narration in film, narrator-characters on stage (cf. Schwanecke 2022) or speech scrolls in painting. Even without such obvious manifestations, the narration often positively suggests itself by the mere structure of a work (like in a picture cycle) or is prompted by the paratext (like in program music). However, as to the latter cases, a contrary question arises: is the discovery of a narrative dimension not just a superimposing of a meta-story on a work that does not in fact include it?

Certainly there are far more options situated between the above-mentioned extremes. They all are welcome as topics of this section. Overall approaches are desired as much as studies concerning single narrative categories. For instance:

- who (or what) could be regarded as the equivalent of the narrator in works apparently not featuring this instance? And, for the case such one would be found, would it be also dividable into further classes as is its literary counterpart?
- are there forms of unreliability other than narrative ones? A good example to ponder upon is the editorial fiction i.e. fictitious authenticity claims, especially popular in 18th century novels. Firstly, they may be regarded as a rather author- than narrator-related version of unreliability. Secondly, having parallels in all other arts (think of find footage in film or attributing of visual or musical pieces to non-existing painters/composers), it is a genuinely intermedial phenomenon. On the other hand, there are also forms of recipients' deception that are specific to one kind of media, like the trompe l'œil in visual arts, which are equally worth to be examined for their affinity to narrational devices.
- does each alleged transgression of fictionality boundaries, even one that occurs in a non-narrative context (like audience addresses in performing arts or faux-terrain in

panoramic paintings) deserve to be called a metalepsis – against the term’s hitherto prevailing connotations (cf. Genette 2004)?

Some steps into these special matters have been taken already (cf. Ryan 2004 for metalepsis and Pettersson 2015 for unreliability), but, like in the case of general reflection, it is still much to be done. For which this section offers a near opportunity.

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