Event and Eventfulness

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1 Definition

The term "event" refers to a change of state as one of the constitutive features of narrativity (Abbott → Narrativity [1]). We can distinguish between *event I*, a general type of event that has no special requirements, and *event II*, a type of event that satisfies certain additional conditions. A type I event is any change of state explicitly or implicitly represented in a text. A change of state qualifies as a type II event if it is accredited—in an interpretive, context-dependent decision—with certain features such as relevance, unexpectedness, and unusualness. The two types of event correspond to broad and narrow definitions of narrativity, respectively: narration as the relation of changes of any kind and narration as the representation of changes with certain qualities.

2 Explication

The concept of event has become prominent in recent work on narratology. It is generally used to define narrativity in terms of the sequentiality inherent in the narrated story. This sequentiality involves changes of state in the represented world and thus implies temporality, a constitutive aspect of narration that distinguishes it from other forms of discourse such as description or argumentation.

The concept of event is used primarily in two contexts to define two basic types of narration: a type of narration that can be described linguistically and manifests itself in predicates that express changes (event I), on the one hand, and an interpretation- and context-dependent type of narration that implies changes of a special kind (event II), on the other. Both categories are characterized by a change of state: the transition from one state (situation) to another, usually with reference to a character (agent or patient) or a group of characters. The difference between event I and event II lies in the degree of specificity of change to which they refer. Event I involves all kinds of change of state, whereas event II concerns a special kind of change that meets certain additional conditions in the sense, e.g., of being a decisive, unpredictable turn in the narrated happenings, a deviation from the normal, expected course of things, as is implied by event in everyday language.

Whether these additional conditions are met is a matter of interpretation. Event II is therefore a hermeneutic category, unlike event I, which can largely be described objectively.

In language, a type I event is expressed by the difference of predicates (Prince [1987] 2003). A type II event, on the other hand, acquires relevance only with reference to intradiegetic expectations and to a particular literary or cultural context. In other words, it is brought into being and related to its surroundings by an entity (character, narrator, or reader) that comprehends and interprets the change of state involved. Contextual reference of this kind can allow a type I event or a combination of type I events to be transformed into a type II event. Consider the following examples. In and of itself, the sentence "Mary stepped onto the ship" contains a type I event; only as a result of reference (via character, narrator, or reader) to a social context does it acquire special relevance and thereby become a type II event in the sense of being a deviation from what is normal and expected (e.g. emigration as a new beginning). Next, take a historiographical narrative in which the French Revolution is treated in the context of long-term socio-political developments in France. If the historian here describes the Revolution as a type II event on the basis of the profound changes set in motion at the time, we are dealing with the transformation not of a single type I event, but of a multiplicity of type I events.

The two types of event imply different definitions of narrativity, each with a different scope. The type I event is treated as a defining feature inherent in every kind of narrative (e.g. Prince [1987] 2003; Herman 2005); whereas the type II event is integral to a particular type of narrative, contributing to its *raison d'être*, or tellability (Labov 1972; Baroni → Tellability [2]). These two basic types of narrativity can be contrasted (drawing on Lotman [1970] 1977) as plotless narration vs. narration that possesses plot, or as process narration vs. event-based narration. Type I events, largely objective and independent of interpretation, have been studied primarily in linguistics (Frawley 1992), literary computing (Meister 2003), and numerous stucturalist approaches (from the Russian formalists to the French and American narratologists of the 1960s and 70s). The concept of type II event, on the other hand, has been discussed above all in the context of Lotman's idea of plot, in research on everyday narratives (Labov 1972), in psychology (Bruner 1991), in literary theory, in historiography (Suter & Hettling 2001; Rathmann 2003), and also in anthropology (van Gennep 1960; Elsbree 1991).

3   History of the Concept and its Study

3.1   The Concept of Event in the Poetics of the Tragedy and

the Novella

The earliest theoretical conceptualization of type II eventfulness specifically refers to drama, and in particular to Aristotle's *Poetics,* where plot (in tragedy) is characterised by a decisive turning point (Halliwell 1987: chaps. X, XI, XIII). Aristotle distinguishes three types of change which, singly or (ideally) combined, constitute a tragic plot: reversal (*peripeteia*); recognition (*anagnorisis*); and suffering (*pathos*). While *peripeteia* is to be understood as the formal designation of eventful change, *anagnorisis* and *pathos* specify its concrete—i.e. cognitive and existential—manifestations. The tragic hero thus undergoes a (primarily negative) eventful change from prosperity to adversity, but also from ignorance to knowledge.

As to narrative fiction proper, there is a close connection between event II and the genesis and development of the novella as a genre, implicitly with respect to plot structure, and explicitly, although rarely and only at a late stage, with respect to poetological reflection. The relevant authors include, above all, Boccaccio and Goethe. In Boccaccio's *Decameron*, the plot frequently involves the violation of a prohibition or crossing a boundary imposed by moral norms (affirmation of sexuality) or by the social order (flaunting of class differences), involving at the same time a revolt against literary tradition (Pabst 1953: 1–7). The power of natural desire, frequently assisted by chance, thus results in a break with the established order, which is characteristic of an event (Schlaffer 1993: 22–3). The obvious eventfulness of narratives, however, does not lie in the form of the author's assertions (found, say, in the introductory passages) but, rather, is hidden behind his apologetic stance, aimed at playing down the disruption of norms by diverting attention to the inferiority of the genre (with its orality, colloquial language, conversational style, and strategy of providing entertainment; Pabst 1953: 27–41, esp. 37). In contrast to cases of eventfulness, however, we also find novellas still aligned with the medieval *exemplum* tradition, which lack unexpected turns. In this respect, the term "novella" does not refer to genre but rather to what is new, but also to gossip and current developments.

Eventfulness II is first mentioned explicitly as a defining feature of *Novelle* by Goethe and the participants in the German *Novelle* debate during the 19th century, although they refer only to certain aspects of the question and then, only in a formulaic manner (Swales 1977: 16, 21–6; Aust [1990] 2006: 26–36). The most concise formulation is found in Goethe's conversations with Eckermann (29 January 1827): "what is a *Novelle* if not an unheard-of occurrence [*Begebenheit*] that has taken place." These words stress both the exceptional nature of an event and its special character of singularity and facticity (Perels 1998: 179–80, 181–89): in Goethe's usage, *Begebenheit* means a disquieting, decisive turn that takes place in

the public sphere or is significant in constituting the individual subject (cf. "Begebenheit," in *Goethe Wörterbuch* 1989). This is also the sense in which the term is used in the *Conversations of German Refugees* (Goethe [1795] 1960: 188).

In the 19th century, Tieck and Heyse stand out for making event the defining property of the *Novelle* in their "turning point" and "falcon" theories, respectively. Tieck describes the central feature of the novella as the "turn in the story, that point at which it unexpectedly begins to take an entirely new course" (1829, reprinted in Kunz ed. [1968] 1973: 53). Heyse highlights the anomalous, the unusual, as a defining feature of the event, especially in his reference to the falcon (drawn from a Boccaccio novella), stating that "the *story*, not the states, the *event*, not the world-view reflected in it, are what matters here,"; "the 'falcon'," he notes, [is] "the special quality that distinguishes this story from a thousand others" (1871, reprinted in Kunz ed. [1968] 1973: 67–8; emphasis in original).

3.2 The Concept of Event in the Context of Tellability and the "Point of the Narrative"

As a theoretical concept, event II has played no more than a peripheral role in narrative studies to date. Aspects of the phenomenon, however, have been highlighted in other contexts and in the guise of a different terminology. Discussions of "tellability" and of the "point of the narrative" (Labov 1972: 366) are the main examples of these other theoretical frameworks, focusing on events as one of the reasons why stories are narrated. An early approach to describing the noteworthiness of a narrative was put forth by Labov (1972: 363–70) in his study of everyday narratives, where the term tellability was adopted. The term "evaluation" (366–75) was used to describe the various ways the narrator stresses the "point" of the narrative, its *raison d'être*. These include external evaluation (direct identification), embedding (of utterances of a character or the narrator in the narrated happenings), evaluative action (in which case emotional involvement in the decisive action is reported), and evaluation by suspension of the action (in which case the central aspect is highlighted by interrupting the reported action). Pratt (1977: 63–78) transfers Labov's approach to literature and shows that his categories apply to literary narrative texts as well; the tellability of a literary narrative, she suggests, is also dependent on deviation from what is normal and on the relevance of such deviation (132–51).

In contrast to Labov's concentration on mediation techniques, Ryan (1991: 148–66) develops a theory of tellability concerning the level of the narrated happenings. Particularly relevant to eventfulness is her distinction between three types of progression in the narrated happenings (155–56): (a) sudden switches in the plot,

contrasts between the goals and results of characters' actions, and self-contradiction; (b) repetition of narrative sequences (e.g. the three wishes or three attempts found in fairy tales); and (c) elements of the narrated happenings that have multiple meanings (e.g. the marriage of Oedipus and Jocasta is a reward, a case of incest, and also the fulfilment of a prophecy). In a second take, Ryan defines tellability in terms of the complexity of the plot sequences, which she situates in an "underlying system of purely virtual embedded narratives" (156), i.e. a network of realized and alternative, unrealized (desired, rejected, imagined), courses of action. In this way, as with event II, but without the term itself being used, the tellability of a story is derived from the structure of its course of action and the complexity of that structure. However, the equation of structural complexity with tellability is problematic, since it tends to isolate textual structures from (cultural, literary) contexts. As a result, the definitions involved remain unspecific, for it is questionable whether complex texts are tellable simply because they are complex, and whether tellability is really determined by the text alone.

A different approach to defining tellability turns to conventionalized genres rather than individual stories in its study of the crucial points in plot development. Here, tellability is examined in terms of structural switches or contrasts. Kock (1978) provides an example of such an approach by drawing a direct link between the interest that genres such as tragedy, the story of quest or trickery in the fairy tale, and the detective novel arouse in the reader and the genre-specific plot structures of those genres. Kock describes plot structures with reference to the concept of the narrative trope. This enables him to point to aspects of narrated happenings that have two functions thereby generating tension between two levels (intention vs. outcome, appearances vs. reality, surface vs. depth, etc.)—a tension that, moreover, serves as the central motivation for reading. An example of such tension-producing dual functions is a setback unwittingly brought about by the protagonist in a tragic or a comic work through his own actions. Clearly this approach does identify crucial switches or changes in the genres in question, but it is nonetheless vulnerable to the criticism outlined above regarding any definition of eventfulness that is based purely on textual structure; both cultural dependency and the relevance of text-internal norms are ignored.

3.3   The Concept of Event in Historiographical Theory

The concept of event has a long, and changeable heritage in historiography. As a historical category, event, was an accepted historiographical category, lacking any explicit definition until the turn of the 19th century. From then onwards, however, it was subjected to increasing theoretical reflection, first in France and later in Germany (Rathmann 2003: 3–11; Ricoeur 1984: 96−111; Rüth 2005). This criticism,

with a concern for scientific accuracy, was directed at aspects of the historical event that depend on interpretation: its singularity; its instantaneous nature; and the involvement of the subject. Event-based history was superseded by structural history and the history of ordinary life. Long-term tendencies, processes, structures, collective mentalities, and supra-individual patterns were now the object of attention. However, a renaissance of the event can be observed in recent historiography, one factor at work here being the realization that events are an irrefutably relevant aspect of historical processes. Historical changes do not take place simply because of structural conditions; they are set in motion as unpredictable and unique occurrences by individuals and individual actions (Rathmann 2003; Suter & Hettling 2001; see also the volumes edited by these scholars).

The definition of eventfulness proposed in this context displays affinities with the narratological concept of the type II event (3.4 below). Suter & Hettling (2001: 24–5) use three criteria to distinguish events from simple happenings: (a) contemporaries must experience a sequence of actions as disquieting and breaking with expectations; (b) the grounds on which the sequence of actions is considered surprising and disquieting must be collective in nature—part, that is, of a social horizon of expectations; and (c) the sequence of actions must result in structural changes that are perceived and discursively processed by those involved. Rathmann (2003: 12–4) argues that fulfilment of criterion (c) alone, without criteria (a) and (b), is enough to constitute an event if the change is presented and discursively mediated as a case of major upheaval. This definition seeks to connect structure and event, long held to be incompatible with one another, as mutually dependent categories.

The affinities with the narratological type II event lie in contextual reference, the importance of deviation, the role of relevance, the need for interpretation and perception, and the discursive foundations of the event. Differences exist regarding the point of reference, however: Suter & Hettling and Rathmann suggest primarily that reference be made to the consciousness of contemporaries, whereas narratologists distinguish various points of reference: a change can be eventful for characters, the narrator, the abstract author, or the intended (or actual) reader, but not necessarily for all of them. Equally, though, since incidents may turn out to be eventful only in retrospect, the historian or a later generation can be postulated as a possible frame of reference in the case of historical events.

3.4 Concepts of Eventfulness in Cultural and Social Anthropology

A concept of eventful change, termed "passage,", "transition" or "transformation" across an intermediate state or "threshold" (Latin "limen,", hence the term liminality for this in-between state), has also been developed in cultural and social anthropology. The concept is used to designate significant ritualized changes of status in the lives of individuals or groups within tribal societies. Van Gennep ([1909] 1960) introduced the term "rite of passage" to analyse such processes as betrothals, marriages, funerals and—most typically—initiations from adolescence to adulthood, which all, he argued, share a basic three-phase structure: "I propose to call the rites of separation from a previous world *preliminal rites,* those conducted during the transitional stage *liminal (or threshold) rites*, and the ceremonies of incorporation into the new world *postliminal rites*" (21). Turner (1967, 1969) developed van Gennep's concept further in two directions: on the one hand, extending the application to non-tribal, i.e. modern societies, and on the other, concentrating on the in-between stage of liminality to analysze the particular conditions prevailing during that period (such as erosion of the established order, disorientation, possibility of new perspectives, etc.).

For the individuals involved and, seen from their perspective, changes defined as rites of passage possess the features of a type II event. But for a knowledgeable superior observer, these changes are conventional and predictable, lacking the quality of unexpectedness and deviation from a norm. This difference highlights the context-dependence of type II events. As for their relevance to social life and their reflection in literature, such rites are clearly prescribed in traditional, relatively stable and cyclical cultures, but much less so in modern societies.

Positing a structural homology between ritual and story, Elsbree (1991) has applied van Gennep's tripartite model to the analysis of literary narratives, using (contemporary) novels and (Victorian) poems as examples. He argues that these narratives variously focus on the stage of liminality, mostly an unwonted and unchosen liminality imposed on the characters by social or political developments and characterized by a painful dissolution of the normal and the familiar (18−20). "Liminality is the phase during which values are tested, issues are clarified, choices begin to have consequences" […] "the threshold between past and future, […] the present tense of destinies in the making" (22). But this model, though potentially suggestive of interesting parallels between ritualized transitions and eventful narrative turns, is as yet applied only in a loose and unspecific sense lacking terminological and analytical precision.

3.5 Discussion of the Concept of Event in Literary Theory

Defining narrativity on the basis of the concept of event supersedes (in most cases,

earlier) attempts to capture the special quality of narration by referring to the role of mediation (e.g. Friedemann [1910] 1965; Stanzel [1955] 1971; Alber & Fludernik → Mediacy and Narrative Mediation [3]). Event-based approaches are supported by the following insight: although representations in language or other media—e.g. narratives, but also descriptions and arguments—are always mediated, narration alone is set apart from other forms of discourse by the fact that what is represented is marked by temporality (Sternberg 2001: 115; Schmid 2003, 2005: 11–16). Accordingly, the representation of a change (of state, of situation, of a form of behavior) that takes place in time is frequently identified as constitutive of narration, as noted by Ryan (1991: 124) in commenting on her "narrative as state-transition diagram": "the most widely accepted claim about the nature of narrative is that it represents a chronologically ordered sequence of states and events." Similarly, Herman (2005: 151): "Events, conceived as time- and place-specific transitions from some source state S […] to some target state S' […], are thus a prerequisite for narrative." Approaches to a definition that are based on changes in time can be divided into two basic types (cf. "Explication" above): event I (general changes of any kind) and event II (changes that meet further qualitative conditions).

3.5.1 Event I

The approaches to defining narrativity based on event I are many and varied. Numerous theorists define the minimal story or narrative or identify event as a basic element of narration in terms of change of state. This is the background against which Prince (1973: 31) describes changes as causal-chronological sequences of three elements: "A minimal story consists of three conjoined events: The first and third events are stative, the second active. Furthermore, the third event is the inverse of the first." "Event" here refers to stative and dynamic states of affairs (17). In a later take on the issue, in his programmatic definition of a minimal story, Prince ([1987] 2003: 28; emphasis in original) uses event to mean a change: "*event*. a change of state manifested in discourse by a process statement in the mode of *Do or Happen*." Stempel (1973: 328–30) defines the minimal narrative schema syntactically as a sequence of sentential statements that meet the following conditions: the subjects must have the same reference; it must be possible to contrast and correlate the predicates; and the predicates must be chronologically ordered. The same idea of the event is put forward, on a higher level of abstraction, by Meister (2003: 116; emphasis in original): "by an event we understand the attribution of distinct properties to an identical event object under a stable event focus" (the term "event focus" refers to the point of reference for the change involved).

Todorov (1971: 39) defines change in time as a necessary component of narration

by referring to two principles of narrative: successiveness and transformation. By further distinguishing between different kinds of transformation, he arrives at a typology of narrative organization understood as involving different kinds of event: mythological, gnoseological, and ideological transformations—changes, that is, involving situation, cognition, or behavioral norms (40, 42). With respect to the basic elements of the structure of narrative progression, Todorov ([1968] 1977: 111) proposes a three-stage configuration: initial equilibrium—destabilization—new equilibrium. Bremond ([1966] 1980: 387–88) sets out a more flexible dynamic way of modeling change in which alternatives are also considered. He puts forward the idea of a three-part elementary sequence of events leading from the virtuality (of a goal or an expectation), via the act of (non-)actualization, to manifest (non-)realization, the attainment or non-attainment of the goal, with amelioration or degradation as variants of change (390–92).

Ryan (1991: 127–47) uses a similar kind of sequential structure with multiple stages to classify events with reference to the causes or driving forces behind them, particularly in terms of the level of intentionality involved. Actions are contrasted with happenings (changes with and without human causation respectively) and moves with passive moves (plan-based action and lack of action, respectively, as conflict resolution). Ryan's system also includes outcomes (the successes or failures that result from actions) and plans (the planning of actions). The study of linguistics has witnessed comparable efforts to draw up predicate-based typologies of events or their components. Examples include Frawley (1992: 182–95), who distinguishes between statives, actives, inchoatives, and resultatives, and Vendler (1967), who distinguishes between activity, accomplishment, achievement, and state. Drawing on Frawley and Vendler, Herman (2002: 27–51) refers to the selection and linking of such event components in an attempt to define individual narrative genres (e.g. the epic, newspaper articles, ghost stories) in terms of their event structures. The undertaking is not a convincing success, for it seems likely that the specific type of eventfulness associated with a genre can be identified only hermeneutically—in terms, that is, of event II—rather than on a linguistic level. It is also questionable whether the distinctive nature of a genre can be delineated so clearly from that of other genres or be captured in simple, general formulas of this kind.

All these different ways of conceptualizing event I have two features in common. (a) If they define narrativity in terms of temporality, they do so with reference to the presence of change on the level of the represented happenings. The necessity of linguistic mediation is highlighted in the process, but in the vast majority of cases this implies reference to changes in the narrated world alone, not to changes on the level of discourse (presentation). The proposals regarding sentence-based definitions (Stempel 1973; Todorov [1968] 1977; Prince 1973, [1987] 2003) are no

different in this respect. In the terminology of Meister (2003: 107–08, 114–16), we are dealing with object events, which he distinguishes from discourse events, where the changes take place on the discourse level; the difference, though, concerns merely the recipient's acts of cognitive interpretation involving the events. At any rate, all these definitions seek to achieve an objectivizing operationalization of the definition of event on the basis of linguistic expressions without considering the scope of reference to literary contexts and normative social contexts as a source of meaning. The hermeneutic role of the reader, that is to say, is excluded. (b) If different types of event are distinguished from one another, the aim is either to provide no more than a qualitative classification of kinds of change or to distinguish between different types of narrative on the basis of such a classification (which, however, is inadequate as far as the dimension of meaning is concerned). It was recognized at an early date (Culler 1975: 205–07; Chatman 1978: 92–5) that the crucial processes and aspects of meaning in narrative texts cannot be grasped by means of categories, such as these, that are formalized independently of interpretation and context. Recently, Sternberg (2010) has put forward a comprehensive critique of objectivist approaches to eventfulness.

3.5.2 Event II

Use of the concept of type II event in literary theory requires that a change meets certain additional conditions. Such conditions have been identified from various perspectives, which will now be reviewed not in historical order but systematically, progressing from approaches concerned with definition to ones involving methodology and analysis, above all in the case of Lotman's plot model, which has proved to be particularly fruitful in practice.

In his discussion of the role of narration in structuring reality as part of human existence, Bruner (1991) draws attention to all the central dimensions of eventfulness involved in event II: the hermeneutic component; the modality of deviation; the place of norms as a point of reference; and context sensitivity. With the idea of "hermeneutic composability" (7–11) he stresses the fact that stories do not exist in the world, but depend for their existence on human consciousness to provide the horizon against which they stand. He adopts the phrase "canonicity and breach" (11–13) to describe how a precipitating event, resulting in a break with expectations, i.e. a deviation from what is normal and from routine scripts, is a necessary condition of tellability. Breaks of this kind always involve norms (15–16). Finally, these features give rise to the context sensitivity (16–18), making real-world narration "such a viable instrument for cultural negotiation" (17).

In order to distinguish event II from event I, Schmid (2003, 2005: 20–27) introduces additional criteria that a change of state must fulfil in order to qualify as an event in

this narrower sense. First, facticity and resultativity are specified as necessary conditions. Eventfulness, that is to say, requires that a change actually take place (rather than being simply desired or imagined) and that it reach a conclusion (rather than having simply begun or being in progress). These binary conditions are supplemented by five properties that can be present to different degrees and must also be displayed by a change, if the event is to qualify as eventful in the manner of a type II event. Thus, changes are more or less eventful depending on the extent to which these five properties are present. Specifically, the criteria are those of relevance (significance in the represented world), unpredictability (deviation from what is expected, from the principles of the general order of the world), effect (consequences of the change for the character concerned or for the narrated world), irreversibility (persistence and irrevocability of the change's consequences), and non-iterativity (singularity of the change).

In theory, the necessary conditions of facticity and resultativity are binary and context-independent, whereas the nature and magnitude of the five additional criteria are predominantly dependent on cultural, historical, or literary contexts and can be interpreted in different ways by the various participants in narrative communication. The extent to which a change in the narrated world qualifies as significant, unpredictable, momentous, or irreversible depends on the established system of norms and current conventional ideas about the nature of society and reality, but also on literary (e.g. genre-specific) conventions and can therefore vary socially and historically between different mentalities and cultures. This is ultimately true of facticity and resultativity as conditions for full type II eventfulness, as well. In certain historical cultural contexts, changes that are only imagined or not fully realized can acquire (reduced) eventful status in so far as the acts of imagining, planning (etc.) as such signal a (beginning or faltering) change in a character.

The relevance of a change can be evaluated differently from different standpoints. Thus, the level of relevance often differs depending on whether the point of reference is the real author, the narrator, or one or more characters. In the case of unpredictability, we must distinguish the expectations of protagonists from the scripts of author and reader. What for a hero is an unpredictable event can for the reader be a central part of a genre's script. These are the central criteria for the definition of event II as also suggested by Bruner: the role of interpretation, the modality of deviation, context sensitivity, and the relevance of norms.

Lotman's plot model ([1970] 1977) offers a comprehensive approach that combines a context-sensitive and norm-related concept of type II eventfulness with a practical apparatus for analyzing texts in terms of their event structures (Titzmann 2003: 3077–84; Hauschild 2009). Lotman explicitly distinguishes two kinds of event: a basic

concept of event of the event I variety, described as "the smallest indivisible unit of plot construction" (Lotman [1970] 1977: 233); and a concept of event of the event II variety, occurring on a higher level, which he defines in terms of spatial semantics as a "unit of plot construction," writing that "an event in a text is the shifting of a persona across the borders of a semantic field" (233). By plot, Lotman means an eventful action sequence with three components: "1) some semantic field divided into two mutually complementary subsets; 2) the border between these subsets, which under normal circumstances is impenetrable, though in a given instance (a text with a plot always deals with a *given* instance) it proves to be penetrable for the hero-agent; 3) the hero-agent" (240; emphasis in original). A semantic field represents a normative order, subdivided like any other order into two binary subsets, set apart, that is, from its opposite. Lotman uses topological terms as the basis for his definition of an event, but he stresses the normative relevance of the definition by pointing out that normative values (e.g. good vs. evil, ruling vs. serving, valuable vs. worthless) tend to be described by spatial images and oppositions (above vs. below, right vs. left, open vs. closed, near vs. far, moving vs. stationary, etc.). Thus, Lotman's spatial semantics should be understood as a metaphor for non-spatial, normative complexes.

The concept of the semantic field is shaped by Lotman's belief that artistic language represents a "secondary modeling system" (9), that is, that its role in creating world structure is culturally and historically specific and in this respect embodies the link between text and context. In this way, Lotman takes the semantic field with its binary subdivisions as a point of reference for establishing and elucidating the normative dimension of eventfulness as well as its dependence on cultural and social historical contexts. Whether or not a change is eventful (e.g. the marriage of a female servant and a nobleman) depends on the historically variable class structure of society (such a marriage was eventful in 18th-century England; it would be so to a far lesser degree, if at all, in the 21st century). Determining eventfulness is therefore a hermeneutic process.

Lotman defines as "plotless" a text that simply describes a normative framework and anchors the characters in both subspaces without the possibility of change—a text, that is, whose only function is classification. By adding cross-boundary mobility of one or more characters to this plotless substrate, a text with a plot is created, producing an event (237–38). An event therefore represents a violation of the established order, a deviation from the norm, in extreme cases a "revolutionary event" (238). According to how strict the system of norms is and how stable its order, the boundary between the subsets can be more or less impermeable, making it possible for events to acquire various degrees of eventfulness, to be positioned at various points on the plot scale (236).

Lotman's plot model provides a powerful set of tools that makes it possible to describe with precision the many forms and degrees of eventfulness in narrative texts. The protagonist, for example, can be integrated into the second semantic subset, and thereby become immobile, after the boundary crossing has taken place; but he can also return to the first subset and negate the event (meaning that the established order and norms are affirmed) or remain in motion, set forth again, and go through another important change, triggering a realignment of field structure (what was the second subset becomes the first subset of a new overall and differently defined field; 240–41).

Renner (1983, 2004), Titzmann (2003), and Krah (1999) seek to increase the practical suitability of Lotman's model for textual analysis by refining its concepts and formalizing its categories. Renner (1983, 2004) reformulates Lotman's spatial metaphor in terms of set theory, describing the normative regularities of the semantic space as a set of "ordering statements" so that spatial change can be redefined as a successive process of disruption, removal, or replacement of such ordering statements. This description of how the boundary crossing takes place provides a more precise picture of it as a potentially progressive, as opposed to instantaneous, phenomenon. An important prerequisite for this refinement lies in the observation that spaces are not homogeneous but can display a graded structure with respect to their ordering principles: through his changing position within the space, the protagonist increases his opposition to the dominant order of this subset, until, at some stage, he reaches an extreme point that qualifies as an event (the extreme point rule). It is questionable, however, whether Renner's extreme formalization of Lotman's categories really represents a step forward for analysis in practical terms. Titzmann (2003) suggests two additional categories to supplement those of Lotman. First, he introduces the concept of "meta-event," which involves not only the passage of the protagonist from the first to the second subset as a result of his boundary crossing, but also modification of the entire field, the world order itself (e.g. if the boundary crossing transforms the social opposition between the subsets into a morally defined subdivision in the field). Second, Titzmann introduces the concept of modalization of semantic spaces, which accounts for the fact that it is possible for subsets to differ from one another in terms of their modality (as dreams, fantasies, wishes contrasting with reality). Subcategories of spatial opposition and boundary crossing, in particular, are suggested by Krah (1999 : 7–9) in the context of a closer study of certain aspects of the concept of space. Subspaces can represent autonomous alternatives in formal terms, or they can be related to one another functionally as contrastive spaces or by their relationship to a certain standpoint (system vs. environment, inside vs. outside). Spatial subdivisions can also be conceptually defined in many ways, (in terms of nature vs.

culture, home vs. foreign, normality vs. deviation, past vs. present, everyday vs. exotic, etc.) as well as from a gender-specific perspective. An event can take place in the form of a boundary crossing by a character in which that character retains his features unchanged or, alternatively, adopts opposing ones (so as to adapt to the other field); or an event can also—as a meta-event (Titzmann 2003)—take place as a transformation of the spatial opposition. This corresponds to forms of event-deletion, (by which Krah means ways of continuing after an event has taken place): return to the initial space, absorption into the opposing space, or meta-deletion (retracting the reorganization of the spatial opposition). Typologies of this kind allow the phenomenon of eventfulness to be identified more precisely, thus providing a prerequisite for a closer analysis of eventfulness in narrative texts.

Members of the Narratology Research Group in Hamburg have combined Lotman's plot and concept of events with schema theory (Emmott & Alexander → Schemata [4]) to produce a text model designed around narrative theory and a practical model for narratological analysis that includes a detailed typology of events (Hühn & Schönert 2002; Hühn & Kiefer 2005; Hühn 2005, 2008; Schönert et al. 2007). Reference is made to lyric poetry on the one hand, and to narrative fiction on the other. The approach stresses the fact that eventfulness is dependent on cultural and historical context, and it proposes that the relevant contexts be treated in terms of the schemata (frames and scripts) called to mind and activated by the text—that is, the meaning-bearing cultural or literary patterns relevant in each case (such as conventional patterns for how to proceed in choosing a partner, etc., or literary, genre-specific plot schemata). Eventfulness is constituted by deviation from a script, a break with expectations. With this in mind, schema theory (whose script concept makes it possible to model processes of change) and plot theory in the Lotman style (which uses the boundary crossing to model deviation and break with the norm) can be combined in the search for a precise definition of eventfulness (Hühn 2008). As levels of deviation can be more or less pronounced, eventfulness is not an absolute quality, but relative and a matter of degree: a text can be more or less eventful depending on the amount of deviation involved (Schmid 2003, 2005).

Eventful changes involve a participant in the action (an agent or a patient) and can be located on various levels of textual structure. Correspondingly, three types of event can be distinguished (Hühn, in Hühn & Kiefer 2005: 246–51, 2008). In events in the happenings, the crucial change affects the protagonist on the level of the narrated happenings, i.e. one or more characters in the narrated world. Presentation events involve the extradiegetic level, since they concern the narratorial figure as an agent, the story of the narrator (Schmid 1982). In reception events, the crucial change takes place neither on the level of the happenings nor on that of presentation, since its occurrence involves neither the protagonist nor the narrator

as agent. Instead, it must be enacted by the (ideal) reader in place of the protagonist or the narrator because they are unwilling or unable to do so, as in the dramatic monologue (Browning, Tennyson) or in Joyce's *Dubliners*. In such cases, a full expression of the event is distinctively omitted from the text. This prompts readers either to undertake an eventful mental change or to somehow seek to achieve a better understanding—in both cases 'against' the text. In the context of practical analysis, such a differentiation between event types, based on the structure of the narrative text, can be combined with Krah's concrete categorizations.

4 Topics for Further Investigation

(a) The historical dimension of the category of event, i.e. its relationship to different types of culture and social world orders, remains open to study: does it appear—as a sign of the new and the novel—more frequently in periods when traditional orders are disintegrating or being weakened (in the modern and modernist periods)? Are events to be found in tradition-bound societies, or in cultures that operate in terms of tradition and continuity? It would be interesting in this respect to provide a comparison with narrative texts from 'distant' cultures not yet affected by the West (such as certain populations in South America, Asia, Africa). (b) The potent concept of event forged by Lotman is particularly well suited for use with literary narrative texts. How might we describe points of eventfulness, or tellability, in other text types (anecdotes, news reports, newspaper articles, jokes, gossip, etc.) that also involve surprises and the unexpected? (c) How events are expressed in other literary genres, such as drama and lyric poetry, requires consideration. (d) And finally, the expression of event as it occurs in other media, particularly film and painting, is also an interesting topic for investigation.

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