

Narration in Poetry and Drama

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1 Definition

Narration as a communicative act in which a chain of happenings is meaningfully structured and transmitted in a particular medium and from a particular point of view underlies not only narrative fiction proper but also poems and plays in that they, too, represent temporally organized sequences and thus relate “stories,” albeit with certain genre-specific differences, necessarily mediating them in the manner of presentation. Lyric poetry in the strict sense (and not only obviously narrative poetry like ballads or verse romances) typically features strings of primarily mental or psychological happenings perceived through the consciousness of single speakers and articulated from their position. Drama enacts strings of happenings with actors in live performance, the presentation of which, though typically devoid of any overt presenting agency, is mediated e.g. through selection, segmentation and arrangement. Thanks to these features characteristic of narrative, lyric poems as well as plays performed on the stage can be profitably analyzed with the transgeneric application of narratological categories, though with poetry the applicability of the notion of story and with drama that of mediation seems to be in question.

2 Explication

Transgeneric narratology proceeds from the assumption that narratology’s highly differentiated system of categories can be applied to the analysis of both poems and plays, possibly opening the way to a more precise definition of their respective generic specificity, even though (lyric) poems do not seem to tell stories and stories in dramas do not seem to be mediated (but presented directly). As far as poetry is concerned, the following argument concentrates on *lyric* poetry in the narrow sense: that narratological categories are generally applicable to *narrative* verse is obvious.

If narration is defined as the representation of chains of happenings in a medium by

a mediating agent, then the three traditional genres, prose fiction, poetry (Schönert 2004) and drama, can be differentiated semiotically by the extent to which they utilize the range of possible modes and levels of mediation. While novels, short stories, etc. typically make use of all available levels and modes of mediation (superordinate narrator, subordinate character's utterance, various modes of focalization), lyric and dramatic texts can be reconstructed as reduced forms in which the range of instances of mediation varies in each case. Seen in this way, lyric texts in the narrower sense (i.e. not just verse narratives or ballads) are distinguished by a characteristic variability in the extent to which they use the range of levels and modes of mediation. Like prose narratives, they can instantiate the two fundamental constituents of the narrative process, temporal sequentiality and mediation, equally well. Similarly to the enacted utterances of characters in dramatic texts, however, they can also seemingly efface the narrator's level and create the impression of performative immediacy of speaking. As a result, the speaker's voice is felt to emanate from simultaneously occurring experience and speech. What a narratological approach to poetry is able to provide are a specific method of analyzing the sequential structure as well as a more precise instrument for differentiating the levels and modes of mediation in lyric poems (both of which in conventional manuals of poetry analysis are usually lacking).

In dramatic texts in performance, on the other hand, the sequence of happenings is presented directly, corporeally, in the form of live characters interacting and communicating on stage, without an overt mediator (such as a narrator (Margolin → Narrator [1])) and seemingly without any mediation whatsoever. Nevertheless, selection, segmentation, combination and focus of the scenes presented imply the existence of a superordinate mediating instance (Jahn 2001; Weidle 2009) or, in other terms, of the abstract author (Schmid → Implied Author [2]). In addition, narrative elements and structures do normally occur at the intradiegetic level of the characters' utterances, but can also be introduced at the extradiegetic level, such as prologues and epilogues and comments by stage managers or overt narrators. A narratological approach to drama can systematically account for the use of such narrative devices and offer new perspectives on the relationship between dialogue and stage directions and the status of the secondary text (Fludernik 2008; Nünning & Sommer 2008).

A transgeneric narratology is, however, by no means restricted to applying narrative theories and terminologies to other genres for analytical purposes. This approach may have repercussions on classical narratology itself in that it highlights the need to reconsider current theories of narrative with their traditional focus on narrative fiction by emphasizing the performative aspects of storytelling, the realization or transmission of narrative content in different media, and the cognitive

activities involved in narrative comprehension.

3 History of the Concept and its Study

3.1 Dimensions of the Transgeneric Approach to Poetry

The following survey focuses specifically on lyric rather than on narrative poetry such as ballads, verse narratives or verse romances. The latter lend themselves readily to the concepts generally employed for prose fiction, albeit with certain differences like the added structuring device of versification (Kinney 1992; McHale 2005, 2010). A transgeneric application of narratology to lyric poetry is of relatively recent vintage, the earliest examples dating back only to the 1980s. For the following discussion, such approaches will be ordered according to the dimension(s) of the poem *qua* narrative text to which narratological categories are applied. These basic dimensions are the levels of the happenings and of their mediation in the form of the poetic text, in particular the modality of its mediation and the organization of its sequential structure, as well as the act and process of articulation.

According to a traditional view, which remains widespread even today, the generic specificity of lyric poetry as distinct from the epic and dramatic genres is grounded in its particular form of representation or mediation: its supposedly unmediated quality—direct, unfiltered communication of experience by an author identified with a speaker as the subject of this experience. It is this traditional notion of poetic immediate subjectivity that several early narratological approaches to lyric poetry address and try to remedy. Bernhart (1993: 366–68) draws on Stanzel’s distinction between dramatized and withdrawn narrators (i.e. between overt and covert narration) to describe two degrees of the perceptibility of mediation in poetry, the effect of which is either to foreground mediation or to background the mediator and produce the illusion of immediacy. The merit of Bernhart’s argument is its insistence on the ineluctably mediate quality of poetry and on the existence, as in fiction, of an organizing and shaping consciousness, whether visible or invisible. Owing to his adoption of Stanzel’s one-dimensional modeling of mediacy, however, Bernhart refers merely to the variable perceptibility of the narrator, neglecting other modes of mediating such as the various facets of focalization (e.g. perceptual, psychological or ideological). Seemann (1984: 535–38), likewise rejecting the notion of poetic immediacy, derives a much more differentiated hierarchy of levels of mediation from narrative and drama theory. He distinguishes five “levels of communication”: (a) characters; (b) narrator/speaker; (c) implied author; (d) author as the creator of the work in question; (e) author as a biographical person. He points out that the “lowest” level, the utterances of characters, is often unrealized in poetry and that the “highest” level, the real author, is usually irrelevant for

understanding a work. Of particular interest is his distinction between speaker and implied author, based on textual signals in the composition of the work, opening the way to clearer differentiations in the analysis of perspective, not only in satiric verse and dramatic monologues, but more generally, even in cases where these levels appear to collapse into one another. In a similar manner, Kraan (1991) distinguishes empirical author, implied author and what he calls “lyric subject”, stressing the historical variability in the distinctness of these three mediators, e.g. their implicit identity in Romanticism or clear differentiation in modernism (222–23).

Subsequent and more comprehensive proposals add further specifications to such approaches to modeling mediation in lyric poetry by drawing more extensively on the particularly elaborate inventory of terms offered by narrative theory.

Dismissing conventional views of the all-embracing emotionality and self-contained artificiality of poetry that preclude rational analysis, Müller-Zettelmann (2002: 130–31) programmatically advocates a systematic transfer of the results of narratology to raise the theoretical level both of reflection on poetry and of poetry criticism (139–48). As for the dimension of mediation, she concentrates on one singular aspect of lyric poetry: its generic subjectivity (142–44), which she identifies as part of the larger phenomenon of “aesthetic illusion” and analyzes (drawing on Wolf 1998) as the intended effect of various techniques simulating the general position-boundedness of human experience as manifest in the spatial, temporal, cognitive, emotional and ideological restriction of perception and consciousness. This effect of aesthetic illusion, she argues, is further heightened by self-referential artificiality in poems where the speaker presents himself as a creative poet. In Genette’s terms, this phenomenon could be classified as the coincidence of speaker’s voice with internal focalization and simultaneous narration. Despite her initial comprehensive claim, Müller-Zettelmann refrains from exploring the wide range of poetic mediation with the various possible constellations of voice, focalization and time of narration, singling out one special albeit significant case: generic subjectivity.

A systematic all-encompassing application of narratology, differentiating two basic aspects of mediation, agents or instances and levels of mediation and types of perspective, is outlined by Hühn & Schönert (2002: 295–98) and Hühn (2004: 147–51). Firstly, the four agents located on four hierarchical levels largely coincide with those named by Seemann and Kraan: biographical author; abstract (or implied) author; speaker/narrator; protagonist or character in the happenings. Secondly, the two types or modes of perspective are voice (a narrator’s or a character’s verbal utterance, their language) and focalization (the position that determines perception and cognition, the deictic center of the perceptual, cognitive, psychological and ideological focus on the happenings). For the notoriously tricky problem of

distinguishing speaker and abstract author and of relating focalization to agent (e.g. whether to speaker or character), they introduce the operation of “attribution” performed by the reader in accordance with his particular understanding of the text. These two sets of differential categories, in conjunction with the operation of attribution, allow for a more precise analysis of lyric poems in their individual, historical and cultural variations than do traditional methods. Hence the seemingly unmediated self-expression of the poet in a simultaneously ongoing experience characteristic of many Romantic poems, for example, can be re-described as the manipulated collapse of the agents/instances and levels of protagonist, speaker and author as well as the contrived congruence of voice and focalization, thus creating the effect of unmediated subjectivity. A special aspect of mediation in lyric poetry concerns the unreliability of the speaker (Shen → Unreliability [3]), a problem frequently discussed with respect to narrative fiction since Booth ([1961] 1983) introduced the term, but rarely taken up in the analysis of poetry. Hühn (1998) offers an early systematic description of the problem arguing that any first-person speaker in lyric poetry is—because of human situatedness—ineluctably limited and biased in his perspective on the world and on himself, which causes partial self-intransparency as to his own motives, desires, and anxieties. Unreliable speaker-narrators are specifically characteristic of the “dramatic monologue” as invented and practised by Victorian poets. In her comprehensive study of this poetic sub-genre Rohwer-Happe (2011) analyzes unreliability as the dissociation or discrepancy between two instances of poetic mediation—those of the speaker and an external superior perspective, often circumscribed as the “implied author” (Booth ([1961] 1983)), a construct rejected by Rohwer-Happe in favor of a combination of textual signals and the reader’s frame of reference.

The other dimension of the poetic text, sequentiality, has hitherto been widely neglected in traditional approaches to poetry analysis, even though it constitutes a central part of a poem’s meaning. For the transgeneric approach to poetry, investigation of this dimension in its temporal organization is essential, since it forms the basis for the application of narratology in the first place. Contrary to mediation with the highly differentiated system of relevant categories already developed by narratology, the dimension of sequentiality lacks a broadly accepted narratological terminology. Because of this, critics are left to develop categories of their own or to draw on a variety of sources from elsewhere.

Stillinger (1985: 98–9) sketches five concrete types of plot in Romantic poetry: conflict between binary forces (mostly of a mental kind) and its resolution; journeys or quests; confrontation between imagination and reality with resultant disillusionment; violation and its consequences; competition between spatial divisions. From these he abstracts two general patterns: (a) progress from a state of

equilibrium to disturbance to a final resolution; (b) encounter of a protagonist's desire or goal with resistance and its resolution. This is an early and rudimentary attempt, loosely inspired by action models applied to prose fiction (Propp, Bremond), in need of further refinement and adaptation. Weststeijn (1989), in another early proposal, advocates application of the concept of plot to lyric poems and provides a demonstration, highlighting two features specific to poetry: the preference for mental actions and the omission (deliberate or not) of the social, spatial and temporal particulars of situation, character and action. Müller-Zettelmann (2002: 133-35), in a programmatic plea for the general transfer of narratological categories to poetry analysis, also mentions these two features, but without further specification, merely referring to the applicability of frame (or schema) theory (149-50). This same concept was earlier proposed by Semino (1995) as a practical instrument for the detailed analysis of poetry, without, however, linking it to narrative. Schema theory, derived from cognitive psychology, explains the reader's comprehension of texts as an operation of activating and applying relevant prior knowledge. According to this theory, knowledge is shown to be organized into patterns called schemata: flexible and dynamic structures which texts may confirm or modify in the course of "schema reinforcement" and "schema refreshment" respectively (85-7). The concept of schema facilitates precise description of the sequential dimension of poetic texts.

A systematic approach to modeling sequentiality combining schema theory with Lotman's concept of *sujet* (in the sense of transgression of a boundary or deviation from a norm) is put forward by Hühn & Schönert (2002), Hühn (2004, 2005) and Hühn & Kiefer (2005). The notion of cognitive schemata, especially in the further distinction between frames (stereotypical knowledge about settings, situations and themes) and scripts (knowledge about stereotyped series of actions and processes), allows for differentiated analysis of the sequential structure of poems and their thematic significance with direct reference to the cultural, social and historical context, since such schemata (Emmott & Alexander → Schemata [4]) are always formed by and dependent on experience within a particular society and culture. Because of the poetic convention of brevity, abstractness and situational and personal indeterminacy, poems are usually less circumstantial than prose fiction in presenting textual triggers for activating frames and scripts, thus requiring greater effort on the reader's part to infer the relevant schemata. Combining schema theory with Lotman's model provides a means for identifying the turning point in a poem, a decisive or merely inferable change from one state (attitude, view, emotion, etc.) to another signaled by deviation from the conventional and predictable pattern of one or more schemata which constitutes the "point" of the text, its *raison d'être* (Baroni → Tellability [5]). Events are ascribed to a figure, an agent who undergoes a decisive change. According to the level of the poetic text at

which the figure is located and at which the decisive turn takes place, three basic event types or planes of eventfulness can be distinguished (Hühn & Kiefer 2005: 7, 246–51): (a) “events in the happenings,” ascribed to storyworld incidents with the protagonist or persona as agent; (b) “presentation events,” located at the discourse level with the speaker/narrator as agent enacting a “story of narration”; in addition, “mediation events” can be marked off as exceptional variants of the presentation event in cases where the decisive change is brought about by a shift in the manner of mediation, e.g. by modification or replacement of schemata, attributable not to the speaker but to the abstract author (as when the speaker’s lament about his artistic sterility is mediated in the form of a perfect poem); (c) “reception events,” which take place during the reading process with the reader as agent in cases when neither the protagonist nor the speaker is willing or able to undergo a (necessary or desirable) change, an event the reader is meant to perform vicariously, as in dramatic monologues (Hühn → Event and Eventfulness [6]). Simon (2004) has proposed a rhetorical approach to sequentiality in poems, on the basis of applying rhetoric as action theory. He construes the progression of a lyric poem as an intention-driven action, in which rhetorical tropes, figures and their concatenation function as sequence patterns. While narratological analyses link the poetic “story” to an agent or patient, Simon’s rhetorical approach locates the action within the text itself. One problematic aspect of this approach concerns the form in which tropes and figures are metaphorically translated into actional moves and extracted from the text in a largely intuitive manner. An analytic model for the practical analysis of sequentiality on the basis of Propp’s and Todorov’s action theories has been developed by Kafalenos (2006: 157–78), more elaborate and systematic than Stiller (1985). Kafalenos analyzes the moment, event or situation represented in a lyric in terms of “functions”, i.e. with respect to its position within a progressive chain of implied causes and possible consequences. The model allows for a distinction between the textual signals and the reader’s interpretations by laying out the successive moves in the reconstruction of the narrative sequence of antecedents and future actions as ascribed to the persona. This approach presents a valuable new contribution to the practical analysis of narrative sequentiality in lyric poetry despite the (untenable) restriction of the temporal dimension of poems to one single moment (in analogy to pictures), a restriction, which ultimately does not affect the applicability of the model.

A final dimension in which narratological approaches to poetry analysis promise new insights concerns the poetic specificity of narrative in lyric poems. Two aspects may be distinguished: First, as to the influence of poetic devices on the mediation of narrative. Such techniques generally lack inherent meaning and become meaningful only by interacting with the semantic dimension. McHale (2009, 2010) equates poetry with versification and identifies its constitutive feature as segmentivity, i.e.

sub-division into smaller units, which offer “affordances” in interaction with the narrative, varying between concordance and discordance and thereby structuring the development of the story. Though broadly valid for verse texts in general, this approach also offers first suggestions for the analysis of the impact of prosodic features on narrative elements in lyric poems. More specific semantic effects have been pointed out by Hühn & Kiefer (2005: 255–56) and Schönert et al. (2007: 327) on the basis of detailed analyses of particular poems, e.g. emphasizing the emotional reaction to a cognitive insight in the course of a reflective process; supporting the eventful shift from the level of the happenings to the poetic text as a way of overcoming problems in the narrated story-world through aestheticization or wit in the form of a presentation event. Second, as to generically specific forms and functions of narrative in lyric poems. Hühn (2005: 167–68), Hühn & Kiefer (2005: 233–35) and Schönert et al. (2007: 311–13) have pointed to characteristic tendencies in which narration in lyric poems tends to differ from that in novels and stories. One such tendency concerns the preference for stories in which simultaneous (performative or mimetic) narration moves towards a decisive turn, either achieving this presentation event at the very end of the poem or, more typically, breaking off before it is achieved, because of external or internal resistance. To negotiate this problematic transition, the speaker often employs prospective narration (cf. e.g. Hühn 2005: 167). This typically lyric phenomenon is also described, from a less explicitly narratological angle, by Dubrow (2006) under the term of “anticipatory amalgam”.

In conclusion, the claim formulated in some programmatic statements that the transfer of narratological concepts to poetry will contribute to a differentiated theory of poetry (Müller-Zettelmann 2000: 4; Hühn & Schönert 2002: 287–88) has yet to bear its full fruit. Even so, this transgeneric thrust is already enriching the analysis of poetry and facilitating investigation of the specific relations between poems and their cultural and historical contexts.

3.1 Dimensions of the Transgeneric Approach to Drama

Most categories commonly used for the analysis of narrative fiction can equally be applied to drama, as Richardson (2007: 142–51) argues convincingly. This is valid for representations of character, plot, beginnings and endings, time and space as well as for fictional causality (defined by Richardson as the “canon of probability” [150] to which plays and novels adhere), narrative framing and narration. Whereas plot, beginnings and endings and character also belong to the traditional categories of drama criticism, the relevance of concepts of narrative mediation and their applicability in a transgeneric context is currently under debate.

Narratological approaches to drama routinely focus on choric speeches, prologues and messengers, onstage audiences and commentators, instances of character narration and of epic narrators such as the stage manager in Wilder's *Our Town*, on frame narratives and embedded narratives, monologues, soliloquies, asides, audience address, self-reflective or meta-dramatic comments, instances of metalepsis (Pier → Metalepsis [7]) as well as on self-referential techniques such as the play-within-the-play. Recent research also suggests a distinction between mimetic and diegetic narrativity (Abbott → Narrativity [8]) (Nünning & Sommer 2008 : 337–39) and combines the analysis of narration in drama with performative approaches to the study of discourse in narrative fiction (Fludernik 2008: 367–69).

Historically, there has been a tendency in drama criticism to regard epic elements and violation of the Aristotelian unities which frequently went along with them as “undramatic” and to consider them merely as a way to overcome the technical limitations of stage design (Delius 1877). This view was challenged radically by 20th-century playwrights such as Beckett and, of course, Brecht's programmatic use of alienating techniques—frequently narrative or meta-dramatic in nature—which defined his internationally acclaimed notion of an epic theater. Throughout the 20th century, narrative experiments in drama have contributed to the emergence of a canon of plays (including Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, Williams's *The Glass Menagerie* and Shaffer's *Amadeus*) routinely quoted in narratological accounts of drama. The development of drama and theater in the second half of the 20th century, however, should not be reduced to an increased awareness of its narrativity or to self-reflective games with narrative and dramatic conventions: there is a broad variety of new developments including improvised forms of performance, the fusion of theater with other genres, media and technologies, and the emergence of a “post-dramatic” theater which abandons conventional story-based and character-oriented dramaturgy (Lehmann 1999).

The frequent occurrence of narrative or epic elements in performed or presented narratives (theater or film) led Chatman (1990) to question the strict separation of mimesis and diegesis favored by Genette. Instead of identifying the former with showing and preserving the latter for the verbal mediation of narrative content, Chatman points to the fact that both modes (showing and telling) can be used to transmit a story. Thus, a narrator might present a story “through a teller or a shower or some combination of both” (113). In order to avoid terminological confusion, Chatman suggests the new umbrella term “presenter” to designate his broader conception of narrator which subsumes both the narrator in Genette's narrower sense of verbal narration by anthropomorphic narrating instances (a notion compatible with Stanzel's definition of mediacy as the *sine qua non* of

fictional narration), on the one hand, and “a kind of narration that is not performed by a recognizably human agency” (115), on the other. The latter type of narrator may be said to “tell” (or “show” or “present”) the majority of enacted stories on stage and screen. Chatman’s main argument in favor of his approach (besides terminological clarity) is theoretical consistency: “Once we define narrative as the composite of story and discourse (on the basis of its unique double chronology), then *logically*, at least, narratives can be said to be actualizable on the stage or in other iconic media” (114).

This idea is further developed by Jahn (2001), who emphasizes the diegetic nature of stage directions and compares the multiple levels of communication within dramatic texts with narrative embedding in the novel. He also modifies Chatman’s taxonomy of text types (1990: 115) by introducing a “playscript mode” (to which he assigns all utterances belonging to the “secondary text”) and by replacing Chatman’s subdivision of “diegetic” and “mimetic” with the distinction between “written/printed” and “performed” narratives. More recently, Nünning & Sommer (2008) have argued that plays make acts of (intradiegetic) storytelling theatrical by representing acts of character narration, leading them to propose a distinction between different degrees of diegetic narrativity in narratives that extend across the traditional generic boundaries (thus a memory play may have a high degree of diegetic narrativity, while modernist novels preoccupied with the representation of consciousness and processes of perception may be said to have a low degree of either mimetic or diegetic narrativity). Another direction is taken by Fludernik (2008), whose notion of experientiality paves the way for a cognitive narratological approach to drama. She revises the standard narratological model of communication in fictional narrative (based on the distinction between story level and discourse level) by adding a third level, corresponding to performance or enactment in order to highlight the specific circumstances in which storytelling occurs: “In drama, there is a real performance involving actors; in a performance of narrative, the performer and audience ‘take over’ the roles of narrator and narratee. What the model allows one to argue is that in drama, the narratorial level is optional and the performative level is constitutive, whereas in epic narrative, it is the performance level that is optional” (365).

Whereas narratologists from Chatman and Richardson to Jahn and Fludernik have repeatedly emphasized the narrativity of drama from a variety of perspectives, there are also critical voices rejecting the idea of a narratology of drama (or at least parts of it). Referring to Stanzel’s notion of mediacy, Rajewsky (2007: 58) insists on the distinction between narrative communication in the novel and non-mediated communication in drama, thus excluding the possibility of heterodiegetic narration on the stage (where, she argues, discourse is always produced by participants of the

storyworld). This view is supported by Schenk-Haupt (2007: 30), who maintains that “extradiegetic narration is impossible in dramatic writing.”

Proponents of a narratology of drama, however, generally agree that both Genette’s notion of diegetic narration as a verbal transmission of narrative content and Stanzel’s insistence on mediacy as a prerequisite of narrative are too restrictive, proceeding, as they do, from the normative assumption (based on normative genre theory) that there is no narrative discourse in drama. There are several more recent (and more convincing) alternatives to Genette’s and Stanzel’s definitions of narrative available, including Chatman’s revision of Genette’s concept and Jahn’s subsequent modification of Chatman, Ryan’s transgeneric and transmedial definitions of narrative as a “cognitive template” (Ryan 2005; Nünning & Sommer 2008: 333), or Fludernik’s “natural” narratology, based on her definitions of narrativity and experientiality. Therefore, attempts to prove transgeneric narratology wrong by pointing out its incompatibility with Genette (Schenk-Haupt 2007: 31–2) or Stanzel (Rajewsky 2007: 58) can hardly be convincing. Schenk-Haupt’s conclusion that there “is no direct extradiegetic communication in dramatic writing—authorial characters, embedded stories, epic devices, and the quirky expansion of stage directions merely create the aesthetic illusion of an extradiegetic agent speaking” (2007: 37) is valid for all narratological concepts: they all refer to effects produced by verbal, visual or auditive signs.

Rajewsky (2007) further suggests that a transgeneric and transmedial narratology should not try to level the differences between the various media in which stories can be transmitted. For this reason, she rejects Jahn’s argument that unperformable, unrealizable stage directions can be regarded as evidence of a heterodiegetic narrating instance: since they cannot be performed, they highlight generic conventions and emphasize the distinctions between narrative fiction and narrative drama which transgeneric narratology seeks to overcome (61). Schenk-Haupt (2007) offers a similar argument: “If we accepted that [...] the secondary text took over a narrative, mediating function, this would eventually lead to a confusion of generic boundaries” (36). The disagreement seems to be partly due to the fact that the discussion of the relationship between primary and secondary text is merged with the text vs. performance debate and/or with generic issues.

Ultimately, the existence (or absence) of a narrating instance in drama is a matter of perspective: it depends both on the critic’s chosen theoretical framework (Genette/Stanzel vs. Chatman /Jahn/ Ryan/ Fludernik) and on his or her main research interests (narrative vs. genres/media). Admittedly, narratology sometimes tends to produce counter-intuitive concepts, and a play’s “superordinate narrative agent” (Jahn 2001: 672) or “superordinate narrative system” (Weidle 2009) may

easily fall into that category for critics more concerned with performance and performativity. Transgeneric narratology is still in its infancy, however, and if the current cognitive approaches are pursued further, a truly transmedial and interdisciplinary theory of storytelling and narrative comprehension might be developed which would not only help to solve some of the problems in classical genre theory, but also allow for a better understanding of the anthropological function of narrative in literary and in non-literary discourses.

4 Topics for Further Investigation

4.1 Topics for Further Investigation: Poetry

The relation of the various event types with different historical epochs and with different cultures and cultural traditions; comparison between poetry and prose fiction in their various genres with respect to the schemata used, event types and the degree of realization of events.

4.2 Topics for Further Investigation: Drama

The compatibility or mutual dependency of transgeneric and transmedial theories of narrative; a comparative discussion of diegetic narrativity in dramas, play texts and performances; a revision of structuralist narratological approaches to drama from a cognitive and pragmatic/semantic perspective.

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