

Postclassical Narratology: Twenty Years Later

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2019 marks twenty years since the concept of ‘postclassical narratology’ became widely popularized, after the publication of David Herman’s 1999 edited collection *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis*,¹ and the editors of *Word and Text* felt that it deserved a special anniversary issue, the first two sections of which are concerned with ‘General Perspectives’ and ‘Thematic Departures’ (followed by ‘Readings’ and ‘Reviews’).

The aim of this wide-ranging Introduction² is to present a short history of narratology leading up to the ‘postclassical turn’ in 1999 and beyond, as well as to engage with the findings of the contributors to the ‘General Perspectives’, a section that mainly concentrates on the latest developments in narratology. In the second part, the focus will be on the geographical distribution of these contributions seen as a small-scale reflection of current scholarly interest in postclassical narratology in different parts of the world. The third, final part will briefly introduce the articles included in ‘Thematic Departures’ and ‘Readings’.

In order to clarify how narratology emerged as a field,³ one needs to turn the clock back to the 1940s, a period when the first ‘pre-structuralist theories of narrative’ appeared,⁴ then link it with developments in the late 1960s, when narratology actually appeared. Both French and German critics were the first to attempt defining ‘narrative’ and ‘time of narration’ as early as the late 1940s. For instance, Jean Pouillon spoke of psychological reality (*réalité psychologique*) in the novel and differentiated between ‘the interior’ or ‘psychic life’ (*le dedans, la vie psychique*) and ‘the outside’ or ‘the behaviour of the individual’ (*le dehors, la conduite de l’individu*).⁵ Several German thinkers like Günther Müller and Eberhard Lämmert contributed pioneering studies in the 1950s; Müller introduced the fundamental distinction between ‘narrated time’ (*erzählte Zeit*) and ‘time of narration’ (*Erzählzeit*), whose correlation characterizes the pace of a narrative,⁶ and Lämmert proposed the terms *Erzähltheorie* (narrative theory) and *Erzählforschung*

¹ David Herman, ed., *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 1999).

² I wish to express my gratitude to John Piers and Laurent Milesi for suggestions before and during the revision process of this article.

³ This part is indebted especially to Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik, ‘Introduction’, in *Postclassical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses*, ed. Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2010), 1-31, and Jan Christoph Meister, ‘Narratology’, in *Handbook of Narratology*, ed. Peter Hühn, John Pier, Wolf Schmid and Jörg Schönert (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2009), 329-50. Peter Hühn *et al.*’s *Handbook of Narratology* provided the basis for Meister’s open-access *The Living Handbook of Narratology (LHN)*, created on 26 August 2011 and revised on 19 January 2014; available at <https://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/node/48.html> [accessed 23 October 2019].

⁴ Meister, ‘Narratology’, 335.

⁵ Jean Pouillon, *Temps et roman* (Paris: Gallimard, 1946).

⁶ Günther Müller, ‘Erzählte Zeit und Erzählzeit’, in *Festschrift für Paul Kluckhohn und Hermann Schneider* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1948), 195-212.

(narrative research, an interdisciplinary method that aims at a systematic description of the form of presentation of a narrative text in the humanities, cultural studies and social sciences).⁷ The Austrian Franz K. Stanzel took a more philosophical stance in his construction of three prototypical ‘narrative situations’.⁸

Between the 1930s and the late 1950s the Chicago School of literary criticism rediscovered Aristotle’s concepts of plot, character and genre, and championed neo-Aristotelianism as a critical method of textual analysis. Although in the beginning it concentrated mainly on poetry, owing to the work of founding member Ronald Salmon Crane,⁹ it also had a later impact on the study of the epic text, with Norman Friedman’s description of eight types of point of view and fourteen different forms of plot,¹⁰ and especially Wayne Booth, whose *Rhetoric of Fiction* argued for considering all narratives as forms of rhetoric and introduced two essential notions: ‘unreliable narrator’ and ‘implied author’.¹¹

Narratology was born in France, at the intersection of structuralist semiotics and poetics, through the works of Roland Barthes,¹² Gérard Genette,¹³ A. J. Greimas¹⁴ and Tzvetan Todorov, who coined the term *narratologie* in his *Grammaire du Décaméron*,¹⁵ in which he emphasized the need to shift from a surface-level, text-based narrative to what he named *univers de représentation* (the logical and structural features of the narrative).¹⁶ Together with Umberto Eco, these four critics contributed to the influential 1966 journal issue of *Communications*,¹⁷ which proposed a new structuralist approach mainly informed by Ferdinand de Saussure’s posthumously published *Cours de*

⁷ Eberhard Lämmert, *Bauformen des Erzählens* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1955). In ‘On the Foundation of a General Theory of Narrative Structure’, *Poetics* 3 (1972): 5-14, Jens Ihwe coined the term *Narrativik* (‘narrativics’), which however never managed to replace Todorov’s *narratologie* or its later English equivalent.

⁸ Franz K. Stanzel, *Narrative Situations in the Novel: Tom Jones, Moby-Dick, The Ambassadors, Ulysses*, trans. James P. Pusack (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1971 [1955]).

⁹ His two companion edited books established the method that the followers of the Chicago School were to adopt. See Ronald S. Crane, ed., *Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1952), and *Critics and Criticism: Essays in Method* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1957).

¹⁰ Norman L. Friedman, ‘Point of View in Fiction: The Development of a Critical Concept’, *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 70 (1955): 1160-84.

¹¹ Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961).

¹² Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (Paris: Seuil, 1970); Roland Barthes, ‘Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives’, in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977 [orig. 1966]): 79-124.

¹³ Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin, Foreword Jonathan Culler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980 [orig. 1972]); Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky, Foreword Gerald Prince (Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997 [orig. 1982]); Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988 [orig. 1983]).

¹⁴ A. J. Greimas, *Structural Semantics: An Attempt at a Method*, trans. Danielle McDowell, Ronald Schleifer and Alan Velie (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1983 [orig. 1966]).

¹⁵ Tzvetan Todorov, *Grammaire du Décaméron* (The Hague: Mouton, 1969), 10.

¹⁶ Todorov, 9.

¹⁷ *Communications* 8: ‘L’analyse structurale du récit’ (1966).

linguistique générale,¹⁸ Russian formalism, Vladimir Propp's work on the fairy tale,¹⁹ Claude Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology,²⁰ as well as by Noam Chomsky's transformational generative grammar. The contributors to 'L'analyse structurale du récit' also mentioned their indebtedness to Percy Lubbock's early work on point of view²¹ and established a general distinction between *récit* (Bremond, Genette) or *discours* (Todorov), which refers to how a story is told, and *histoire* (plot or *fabula*), which refers to what is told. Looking for a similar formal system applicable to any narrative content, Claude Bremond's work on the *récit* put forward an abstract story grammar.²² The Russian Formalist Victor Shklovsky's binary distinction *fabula/sjuzhet*²³ was to be preserved in the subsequent succession of alternate pairings like *histoire/discours*, *histoire/récit*, *story/plot*, and finally *story/discourse* with their actual meaning: story refers to the sequence of actions/events and discourse to the narration or discursive presentation of events. Structuralist narratology, broadly conceived, took two main directions: thematic versus modal; on the one hand, Propp, Bremond, Greimas among others were interested in semiotics while, on the other hand, others like Genette and Prince were concerned with the manner of telling a story, stressing categories such as voice, point of view, rhythm, changes to the chronological order, etc.

According to Meister, whose 'Narratology' is informed by a bibliometric analysis of some 4,500 entries listed in the online bibliography of the Interdisciplinary Center for Narratology,²⁴ Todorov's 'narratology' did not become popular until 1977, when Mieke Bal published her ground-breaking *Narratologie*,²⁵ and was first used in an English title two years later by Marie-Laure Ryan.²⁶ In 1978, Seymour Chatman's demonstration on the applicability of narratology to visual narratives, especially films, made a significant contribution to broadening the referential use of narrative: not only a novel but also a film, a ballet, comic strips, etc. can be seen to contain narratives since all these other aesthetic media encompass story elements and address themselves to an implied reader whose task is to infer and often reconstruct the implied author's aims.²⁷

¹⁸ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye with the collaboration of Albert Riedlinger (Lausanne and Paris: Payot, 1916).

¹⁹ Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folk Tale*, 1st ed. trans Laurence Scott, Intr. Svatava Pirkova-Jakobson, 2nd rev. ed., Preface Louis A. Wagner, new Intr. Alan Dundes (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2003 [orig. 1928]).

²⁰ Claude Lévi-Strauss, 'The Structural Study of Myth', *Journal of American Folklore* 68 (1955): 428-44; Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York: Basic Books, 1963 [1958]).

²¹ Percy Lubbock, *The Craft of Fiction* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1921).

²² Claude Bremond, *Logique du récit* (Paris: Seuil, 1973).

²³ Victor B. Shklovsky, 'Art as a Technique', in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, trans. and Intro. L. T. Lemon and M. J. Reis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965 [1917]), 3-24.

²⁴ Meister, 'Narratology', 331-2.

²⁵ Mieke Bal, *Narratologie. Essais sur la signification narrative dans quatre romans modernes* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1977). However, the first-ever use of the term seems to be as a translation of the French coinage in a review article of Claude Chabrol's edited 1973 volume *Sémiotique narrative et textuelle*; see Gerald Prince, 'Narrative Signs & Tangents', *Diacritics* IV.3 (1974): 2.

²⁶ Marie-Laure Ryan, 'Linguistic Models in Narratology: From Structuralism to Generative Semantics', *Semiotica* 28 (1979): 127-55.

²⁷ Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 6. See also his *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), where Chatman considered a text as a communicative object 'that temporally controls its reception by the audience' (6) and where he changed the notion of implied author to an 'inventor' who is 'no person, no substance, no object; it is, rather, the

From the mid-1960s to the early 1980s, scholars of what is known nowadays as the ‘classical’ phase of narratology were concerned with identifying narrative universals. However, at the end of the 1980s, poststructuralism was to influence narratology.²⁸ Jonathan Culler introduced Derridean deconstruction and reversed the relation between story and discourse, demonstrating that in fact it is discourse that generates story and not vice versa.²⁹ Peter Brooks’s *Reading for the Plot* put forward two models of desire, narration and the processes of life in a Freudian vein: ‘the *energetic-dynamic model*, which speaks to the question of human life span, its movement and arrest, and hence to the organization of biography and energetics of the life story’ and ‘the model of *psychoanalytic transference* as consonant with the narrative situation and text’.³⁰ For Brooks narrative makes us understand how an event unfolds, hence we should focus on plot and ‘plotting’ rather than on structure and ‘structuration’. Mieke Bal’s *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* showed that narratology cannot be privileged ‘as an approach to texts traditionally classified as narrative’, but incorporate as well other approaches that ‘may be better equipped to account for those aspects of narrative texts that have traditionally been under-illuminated, partly because of the predominance of a text-immanent, structuralist approach.’³¹ According to Bal, narrative is ‘a cultural attitude, hence, narratology, a perspective on culture’ that invites the narratologist to closely analyse ‘cultural artifacts, events, or domains’, yet taking into account a series of ‘fallacies and risks’.³² Susan Lanser applied feminist theories to narratology³³ and, Thomas Pavel, whose concern was the ontology of fictional worlds, challenged structuralism further by putting forward a poetics of the imaginary worlds of fiction.³⁴ At the end of the 80’s, distinguishing on the same relation between literature and reality, in an issue of *Poetics Today*, Lubomír Doležel proposed an alternative to mimetic theories of fictionality, dealing with types of narrative such as *meta-fictio*, *skaz*,³⁵ in the same issue, Brian McHale, a respected scholar in the area of Postmodernism, analysed Max Apple’s short story ‘Postmodernism’ (reproduced in an appendix) and dedicated a major part of his essay to ‘the inscribed author’ of a text.³⁶ The end of the poststructuralist phase of narratology was marked by Marie-Laure Ryan’s forays into virtual narratives, which she linked to the simulation paradigm of artificial intelligence.³⁷

patterns in the text which the reader negotiates. He is willing to substitute “text principle”, “text design” or “text intent” for the implied author’ (86-7).

²⁸ Meister speaks of ‘poststructuralist narratology’ (1980-1990) before the advent of ‘postclassical narratology and “new” narratologies’ (1990 to the present); see Meister, ‘Narratology’, 339.

²⁹ Jonathan Culler, ‘Story and Discourse in the Analysis of Narrative’, in *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 169-87.

³⁰ Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), 320.

³¹ Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997 [1985]), 14.

³² Bal, *Narratology*, 222.

³³ Susan S. Lanser, ‘Toward a Feminist Narratology’, in *Feminisms. An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*, ed. R. R. Warhol and D. P. Herndl (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986), 674-93.

³⁴ Thomas G. Pavel, *Fictional Worlds* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).

³⁵ Lubomír Doležel, ‘Mimesis and Possible Worlds’, *Poetics Today* 9 (1988): 475-96. Lubomír Doležel’s *Heterocosmica III: Fikční světy protomoderní české prózy* [Heterocosmica III: The Fictional Worlds of Proto-Modern Czech Fiction] (Prague: Karolinum, 2018) is the third in the series that develops a theory of narrative fictional worlds.

³⁶ Brian McHale, ‘Telling Postmodernist Stories’, *Poetics Today* 9 (1988): 545-71.

³⁷ Marie-Laure Ryan, *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991).

The term ‘postclassical narratology’ was introduced by David Herman in his 1997 article ‘Scripts, Sequences, and Stories: Elements of a Postclassical Narratology’, which highlighted the necessity to rethink ‘the problem of narrative sequences’ in order to enrich narratological theory with tools that can be borrowed from ‘other areas of inquiry’.³⁸ In 1999 Herman edited *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis*, where he defined postclassical narratology as follows:

Postclassical narratology (which should not be conflated with poststructuralist theories of narrative) contains classical narratology as one of its ‘moments’ but is marked by a profusion of new methodologies and research hypotheses: the result is a host of new perspectives on the forms and functions of narrative itself. Further, in its postclassical phase, research on narrative does not just expose the limits but also exploits the possibilities of the older, structuralist models. In much the same way, postclassical physics does not simply discard classical Newtonian models, but rather rethinks their conceptual underpinnings and reassesses their scope of applicability.³⁹

Herman did not, in a very literal sense, periodize narratology into classical (before 1999) vs. postclassical (after 1999) since in fact narratology’s postclassical avatars build on the classical concepts of metanarration versus metafiction, chronotope or paratext; his view was that, at the end of the century, narratology was no longer a unified theory but rather a group of related theories, including a classical phase and a postclassical phase whose newly-developed approaches moved beyond structuralism. Postclassical narratology is also concerned with the historicity and contextuality of modes of narrative representation. Herman believed that there were three main scholars whose work shaped the image of what narratology had become: Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan,⁴⁰ Seymour Chatman⁴¹ and Gerald Prince.⁴² Ansgar Nünning’s ‘Narratology or Narratologies? Taking Stock of Recent Developments, Critique and Modest Proposals for Future Uses of the Term’, which traces the various ‘hyphenated and compound narratologies’ that have sprung up after postclassical narratology was coined,⁴³ can be regarded as a delayed response to Herman’s work, a point also made by John Pier’s article in the present issue.

Our contributors (mainly John Pier and Biwu Shang) engage with the characteristics of the more inclusive concept of postclassical narratology, seen either as a gain, since it is ‘related to major strands of postclassical narratology, such as rhetorical narratology, feminist narratology, digital narratology, unnatural narratology, cognitive narratology, and corpus narratology’⁴⁴ – to which corporeal, indigenous and transmedial narratology should be added –, or as a loss, as it is ‘not a unified undertaking, but rather groups together a

³⁸ David Herman, ‘Scripts, Sequences, and Stories: Elements of a Postclassical Narratology’, *PMLA* 112.5 (1997): 1049 and 1057.

³⁹ David Herman, ‘Introduction: Narratologies’, in *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis*, ed. David Herman (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 1999), 2-3.

⁴⁰ Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2002 [1st ed. 1983]).

⁴¹ Chatman, *Story and Discourse*.

⁴² Gerald Prince, *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative* (Berlin: Mouton, 1982); Gerald Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1987).

⁴³ Cf. Ansgar Nünning, ‘Narratology or Narratologies? Taking Stock of Recent Developments, Critique and Modest Proposals for Future Uses of the Term’, in *What is Narratology? Questions and Answers Regarding the Status of a Theory*, ed. Tom Kindt and Hans-Harald Müller (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2003), 258. References to its French translation and reception appear in Pier’s ‘Is There a French Postclassical Narratology?’, 68).

⁴⁴ Biwu Shang, ‘Postclassical Narratology in China: Receptions and Variations’, 47-64.

variety of more or less overlapping paradigms and models and sometimes even incompatible theoretical premises, methodologies and goals'.⁴⁵ Shang's legitimate perception of the rich ramifications of postclassical narratology might explain why, not unlike other successful areas of inquiry, it has become at once, much to Pier's reservations, a theory,⁴⁶ a method⁴⁷ as well as a discipline,⁴⁸ sometimes with mutually contradictory agendas. Therefore, the various directions taken by each of these major intersecting strands, most of which are represented by one or more contributions to this special issue, need to be teased out.

The **rhetorical model**, which originated from Wayne Booth's work on 'the implied author' and attempts to 'asymptotically approximate the condition of "the authorial audience", i.e., the ideal audience for whom the author constructs the text and who understands it perfectly',⁴⁹ is a field to which Peter Rabinowitz, Tom Kindt, Hans-Harald Müller, James Phelan and Richard Walsh, among others, offered insightful contributions.⁵⁰ Phelan attempted to break the fallacy according to which 'the rhetorical model assumes that the flesh and blood reader seeks to enter the authorial audience in order to understand the invitations for engagement that the narrative offers',⁵¹ and concluded that these invitations include the readers' ethical judgments about characters, narrators as well as implied authors.⁵² At the same time, as Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik have shown, the rhetorical model 'can be regarded as an important contextualizing venture that opens the text to the real-world interaction of author and reader, and hence provides a perfect model for discussing the ethics of reading and the treatment of ethical problems in narrative fiction.'⁵³

Feminist narratology 'studies elements of story and/or discourse against the foil of gender differences',⁵⁴ focusing on issues such as the gender of authors, authorial audiences, actual readers, narrators, narratees and characters,⁵⁵ or else dividing narrative

⁴⁵ Pier, 'Is There a French Postclassical Narratology?', 65-90.

⁴⁶ Gerald Prince, 'Surveying Narratology', in *What Is Narratology?*, 1.

⁴⁷ Tom Kindt and Hans-Harald Müller, 'Narrative Theory and/or/as Theory of Interpretation', in *What Is Narratology?*, 211.

⁴⁸ Monika Fludernik and Uri Margolin, 'Introduction', *Style* 38: 'German Narratology' I (2004): 149.

⁴⁹ Alber and Fludernik, 'Introduction', in *Postclassical Narratology*, 10.

⁵⁰ Peter J. Rabinowitz, 'Truth in Fiction: A Re-examination of Audiences', *Critical Inquiry* 4 (1977): 121-41; Peter J. Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation*, Foreword James Phelan (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 1998 [1987]); James Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric: Technique, Audiences, Ethics, Ideology* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 1996); James Phelan, *Living to Tell about It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005); Tom Kindt and Hans-Harald Müller, *The Implied Author: Concept and Controversy* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006); Richard Walsh, *The Rhetoric of Fictionality: Narrative Theory and the Idea of Fiction* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2007).

⁵¹ James Phelan, 'Rhetoric/Ethics', in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 210.

⁵² James Phelan, *Experiencing Fiction: Judgments, Progressions, and the Rhetorical Theory of Narrative* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press 2007), 6.

⁵³ Alber and Fludernik, 'Introduction', in *Postclassical Narratology*, 11.

⁵⁴ Alber and Fludernik, 'Introduction', in *Postclassical Narratology*, 7.

⁵⁵ Susan Lanser, 'Toward a Feminist Narratology', *Style* 20.3 (1986): 341-63; Ruth Page, 'Feminist Narratology? Literary and Linguistic Perspectives on Gender and Narrativity', *Language and Literature* 12 (2003): 43-56; Ruth Page, *Literary and Linguistic Approaches to Feminist Narratology* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

plots into ‘male’ and ‘female.’⁵⁶ A more recent development of feminist narratology has been its extension to queer studies.⁵⁷

The tremendous development of digital media before the turn of the 21st century opened up avenues and new, often hybrid types of textual production that the likes of Todorov and Genette could not have dreamt of in the 1960s: computer writing hypertext narratives, literary games, Flash fiction, Twitter fiction, Cybertext, videogames, all closely scrutinised by what is now known as **digital narratology**. Several edited collections as well as authored books proposed interpretations on how digital environments can challenge and test the limits of literary theories that were initially meant to deal with the written (printed) text.⁵⁸ Specifically for videogames, an emerging reflection on ludonarratology looks at situations which have no equivalence in any other aesthetic medium, such as the consistency or conflict between a videogame’s narrative told through the story and the narrative told through the gameplay.⁵⁹

Unnatural narratology studies those narratives which are anti-mimetic and thus challenge and move beyond real-world understandings of identity, time, and space, putting the reader in front of impossible events in the actual world. By far one of the most important voices in the field of unnatural narratology is Brian Richardson,⁶⁰ whose

⁵⁶ Kathy Mezei, ed., *Ambiguous Discourse: Feminist Narratology and British Women Writers* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Page, ‘Feminist Narratology?’.

⁵⁷ Judith Roof, *Come As You Are: Sexuality and Narrative* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Susan Lanser, ‘Sexing the Narrative: Propriety, Desire, and the Engendering of Narratology’, *Narrative* 3.1 (1995): 85-94; Susan Lanser, ‘Sexing Narratology: Toward a Gendered Poetics of Narrative Voice’, in *Grenzüberschreitungen: Narratologie im Kontext/ Transcending Boundaries: Narratology in Context*, ed. Walter Grünzweig and Andreas Solbach (Tübingen: Narr, 1999), 167-84; Susan Lanser, ‘Sapphic Dialogics: Historical Narratology and the Sexuality of Form’, in *Postclassical Narratology*, ed. Alber and Fludernik, 186-205.

⁵⁸ George P. Landow, *Hypertext 2.0: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Espen J. Aarseth, *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999); David S. Miall, ‘Trivializing or Liberating? The Limitations of Hypertext Theorizing’, *Mosaic* 32.2 (1999): 157-71; Katherine N. Hayles, ‘Transformation of Narrative and the Materiality of Hypertext’, *Narrative* 9.1 (2001): 21-39; Katherine N. Hayles, ‘Deeper into the Machine: The Future of Electronic Literature’, *Culture Machine* 5 (2003); <http://svr91.edns1.com/~culturem/index.php/cm/article/viewArticle/245/241> [accessed 20 October 2019]; Jan Christoph Meister, *Computing: A Narratological Approach*, trans. Alastair Matthews, Foreword Marie-Laure Ryan (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2003); Marie-Laure Ryan, *Avatars of Story* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); Ruth Page and Bronwen Thomas, eds, *New Narratives: Stories and Storytelling in the Digital Age* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2011); Alice Bell, Astrid Ensslin, Hans Kristian Rustad, eds, *Analyzing Digital Fiction* (London: Routledge, 2014); Daniel Punday, *Computing as Writing* (Minneapolis: Minnesota Press, 2015); Daniel Punday, *Playing at Narratology: Digital Media as Narrative Theory* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2019).

⁵⁹ See Weimin Toh, *A Multimodal Approach to Video Games and the Player Experience* (London: Routledge, 2018).

⁶⁰ Brian Richardson, “‘Time is Out of Joint’”: Narrative Models and the Temporality of Drama’, *Poetics Today* 8.2 (1987): 299-310; Brian Richardson, *Unlikely Stories: Causality and the Nature of Modern Narrative* (Newark, NJ and London: University of Delaware Press, 1997); Brian Richardson, ‘Narrative Poetics and Postmodern Transgression: Theorizing the Collapse of Time, Voice, and Frame’, *Narrative* 8.1 (2000): 23-42; Brian Richardson, *Unnatural Voices: Extreme Narration in Modern and Contemporary Fiction* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2006); Brian Richardson, *Unnatural Narrative: Theory, History, and Practice* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2015); Brian Richardson, *A Poetics of Plot for the Twenty-First Century: Theorizing Unruly Narratives* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2019) [‘unruly’ does not mean ‘unnatural’ but a more general term by which

introductory piece in the Theoretical Section presents a detailed survey of the most notable contributions to this strand of postclassical narratology written in English between 2013 and 2019.⁶¹ Other important scholars who work in the field of unnatural narratology are Jan Alber, Henrik Skov Nielsen, Biwu Shang (co-editor of this issue) and Rüdiger Heinze.⁶²

Cognitive narratologists start from the assumption that ‘readers evoke fictional worlds (or story worlds) on the basis of their real-world knowledge’,⁶³ using the range of the mental processes which are at their disposal and which cognitive narratology endeavours to describe.⁶⁴

Corpus stylistics was narrowed to **corpus narratology**, which is a term that Michael Toolan proposed in his attempt to blend corpus linguistics with ‘a literary interest’,⁶⁵ in his search of a structural stylistic method of narrative analysis according to which readers can understand whether a piece of work has undergone the complete narrative development cycle in order to be considered a narrative. Toolan returned to the

Richardson creates a more expansive model to decipher notions like story, plot, beginnings, endings, temporal devices in a large corpus of works that starts from Aristophanes and Shakespeare and ends with modernist and postmodernist writers such Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Salman Rushdie, Angela Carter].

⁶¹ This article is a continuation of Brian Richardson, ‘Unnatural Narratology: Basic Concepts and Recent Work’, *DIEGESIS. Interdisziplinäres E-Journal für Erzählforschung* 1.1 (2012): 95-102; available at <https://www.diegesis.uni-wuppertal.de/index.php/diegesis/article/view/112> [accessed 20 October 2019]. Since he is the co-editor (with Jan Alber) of a forthcoming anthology entitled *Unnatural Narratology: Extensions, Revisions, and Challenges* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, forthcoming 2020) that revises several of the earlier findings from Jan Alber, Henrik Skov Nielsen and Brian Richardson, eds, *A Poetics of Unnatural Narrative* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2013), Richardson considers that the end of 2019 is the opportune moment to sign a sort of visiting card in advance and reveal to the readers of *Word and Text* the contributors’ suggestions about ‘a very interesting and substantial (if unpredictable) future of the field’ (43).

⁶² Jan Alber, ‘The “Moreness” or “Lessness” of “Natural” Narratology: Samuel Beckett’s “Lessness” Reconsidered’, *Style* 36.1 (2002): 54-75; Henrik Skov Nielsen, ‘The Impersonal Voice in First-Person Narrative Fiction’, *Narrative* 12.2 (2004): 133-50; Rüdiger Heinze, ‘Violations of Mimetic Epistemology in First-Person Narrative Fiction’, *Narrative* 16.3 (2008): 279-97; Jan Alber, ‘Impossible Storyworlds – and What to Do with Them’, *Storyworlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies* 1.1 (2009): 79-96; Jan Alber and Per Krogh Hansen, eds, *Beyond Classical Narration: Transmedial and Unnatural Challenges* (Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter, 2014); Jan Alber, *Unnatural Narrative: Impossible Worlds in Fiction and Drama* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2015); Biwu Shang, *Unnatural Narrative across Borders: Transnational and Comparative Perspectives* (London and New York: Routledge; Shanghai: Shanghai Jiao Tong University Press, 2019); Jan Alber, ‘Unnatural Narratives’, *The Literary Encyclopedia*, 2009; www.litencyc.com [accessed 20 October 2019].

⁶³ Alber and Fludernik, ‘Introduction’, in *Postclassical Narratology*, 12.

⁶⁴ Monika Fludernik, *Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996); Manfred Jahn, ‘Frames, Preferences, and the Reading of Third-Person Narratives: Towards a Cognitive Narratology’, *Poetics Today* 18.4 (1997): 441-68; Manfred Jahn, ‘“Speak, Friend, and Enter”: Garden Paths, Artificial Intelligence, and Cognitive Narratology’, *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis*, ed. David Herman (Columbus, OH, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 1999), 167-94; David Herman, *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2002); David Herman, ed., *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences* (Stanford, CA: CSLI, 2003); Manfred Jahn, ‘“Awake! Open Your Eyes!” The Cognitive Logic of External and Internal Stories’, in *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences*, 195-213; Monika Fludernik, ‘Natural Narratology and Cognitive Parameters’, *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences*, 243-67; Alan Palmer, *Fictional Minds* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004); Lisa Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel* (Columbus, OH, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2006).

⁶⁵ Michael Toolan, ‘Narrative Progression in the Short Story: First Steps in a Corpus Stylistic Approach’, *Narrative* 16.2 (2008): 105; Michael Toolan, *Narrative Progression in the Short Story, A Corpus Stylistic Approach* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2009).

work of scholars who worked on corpus linguistics such as Gillian Francis, Susan Hunston, William E. Louw, John M. Sinclair, Michael Stubbs, Alison Wray, among others,⁶⁶ as well as researchers who wrote corpus-informed analyses of literary texts: Ronald Carter, George L. Dillon, David Herman, Masahiro Hori, Vyacheslav Yevseyev, Greg Watson and Sonia Zyngier.⁶⁷ For Toolan, a text contains ‘putative textual signalings of narrative progression’ and thus ‘prompts us to formulate expectations’ which ‘inform a multitude of reactions and are hence crucial to the reading experience’.⁶⁸

Corporeal narratology takes as its focus human corporeality, an angle which had been ignored by narrative studies in the 20th century. Daniel Punday, the main representative of this strand, argued that the narrative is a concept constructed by modern-day critics whose assumptions about identity, desire, movement and place actually depend on modern ways of thinking about corporeality that can challenge the basic narrative concepts of character, plot, and narration.⁶⁹ According to Punday

Narrative is corporeal not simply because it needs to use character bodies as a natural part of the stories that it tells, but also because the very ways in which we think about narrative reflect the paradoxes of the body – its ability to give rise to and resist pattern, its position in the world and outside of it, and so on. Narrative, then, always first and foremost depends upon a corporeal hermeneutics – a theory of how the text can be meaningfully articulated through the body [...].⁷⁰

Indigenous studies, critical folklore or fairy-tale studies also developed after the postclassical turn, with narratologists or scholars specialised in folklore or indigenous

⁶⁶ John M. Sinclair, *Corpus, Concordance, Collocation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Michael Hoey, *Patterns of Lexis in Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Susan Hunston and Gillian Francis, *Pattern Grammar: A Corpus-Driven Approach to the Lexical Grammar of English* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2000); Michael Stubbs, ‘Computer-Assisted Text and Corpus Analysis: Lexical Cohesion and Communicative Competence’, in *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, ed. D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen and H.E. Hamilton (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 304-20; Alison Wray, *Formulaic Language and the Lexicon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); John M. Sinclair, *Trust the Text: Language, Corpus and Discourse* (London: Routledge, 2004); Michael Stubbs, ‘Conrad in the Computer: Examples of Quantitative Stylistic Methods’, *Language and Literature* 1.5 (2005): 5-24; William E. Louw, ‘Literary Worlds as Collocation’, in *Literature and Stylistics for Language Learners: Theory and Practice*, ed. Greg Watson and Sonia Zyngier (London: Palgrave, 2006).

⁶⁷ Ronald Carter, *Language and Creativity: The Art of Common Talk* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004); Masahiro Hori, *Investigating Dickens’ Style: A Collocational Analysis* (London: Palgrave, 2004); David Herman, ‘Quantitative Methods in Narratology: A Corpus-Based Study of Motion Events in Stories’, in *Narratology beyond Literary Criticism*, ed. Jan Christoph Meister (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 125-49; Vyacheslav Yevseyev, ‘Measuring Narrativity in Literary Texts’, in *Narratology beyond Literary Criticism: Mediality, Disciplinarity*, ed. Jan Christoph Meister in collaboration with Tom Kindt and Wilhelm Schernus (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2004), 109-24; Greg Watson and Sonia Zyngier, eds, *Literature and Stylistics for Language Learners: Theory and Practice* (London: Palgrave, 2006); George L. Dillon, ‘Corpus, Creativity, Cliché: Where Statistics Meet Aesthetics’, *Journal of Literary Semantics* 35.2 (2006): 97-103.

⁶⁸ Toolan, ‘Narrative Progression in the Short Story’, 105;107.

⁶⁹ Daniel Punday, ‘A Corporeal Narratology?’, *Style* 34.2: ‘Concepts of Narrative’ (2000): 227-42; See also Lars-Christer Hydén, ‘Bodies, Embodiment and Stories’, in *Doing Narrative Research*, ed. Molly Andrews, Corinne Squire and Maria Tamboukou, 2nd ed. (London: Sage, 2013), 126-41 and Julia L. Frengs, *Corporeal Archipelagos: Writing the Body in Francophone Oceanian Women’s Literature* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2018).

⁷⁰ Daniel Punday, *Narrative Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Narratology* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 15.

cultures as well as practitioners in these fields working together to delve into the different cultural, social and political meanings of these types of narratives.⁷¹

Transmedial narratological approaches to media ‘seek to rebuild narratology so that it can handle new genres and storytelling practices across a wide spectrum of media’.⁷² Originally spearheaded by the (mostly German) concept of intermediality (*Intermedialität*) insofar as it intersected with intertextual practices,⁷³ it gave rise to work on audio-narratology that deals with the interplay between audio-visual and verbal narration,⁷⁴ and examined the relation between narratology and drama,⁷⁵ film,⁷⁶ hyperfictions⁷⁷ or any other cultural texts (poetry, paintings and even music)⁷⁸ as a narrative in its own terms.

To these various strands and approaches, one can finally add the more exclusively French field of enunciative narratology (*narratologie énonciative*).⁷⁹ In the more recent past, although we cannot speak about what I would term ‘trauma narratology’, but rather

⁷¹ See Daniel Heath Justice, *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2018).

⁷² Alber and Fludernik, ‘Introduction’, in *Postclassical Narratology*, 8.

⁷³ For this concept, see, for instance, Heinrich F. Plett, ‘Intertextualities’, in *Intertextuality*, ed. Heinrich F. Plett (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1991), 3-29; Jens Schröter, ‘Intermedialität. Facetten und Probleme eines aktuellen medienwissenschaftlichen Begriffs’, *Montage/AV* 7.2 (1998): 129-54; Jörg Helbig, ed., *Intermedialität. Theorie und Praxis eines interdisziplinären Forschungsgebietes* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1998); Jörg Helbig, *Intermedialität: Eine Einführung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001); Irina O. Rajewsky, ‘Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality’, *Intermedialités* 6 (2005): 43-64, which mentions the Canadian offshoot of the Université de Montréal’s Centre de recherche sur l’intermédialité (CRI), established in 1997.

⁷⁴ Jarmila Mildorf and Till Kinzel, eds, *Audionarratology: Interfaces of Sound and Narrative* (Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter, 2016).

⁷⁵ See Richardson, “‘Time is Out of Joint’”; Brian Richardson, ‘Point of View in Drama: Diegetic Monologue, Unreliable Narrators, and the Author’s Voice on Stage’, *Comparative Drama* 22.3 (1988): 193-214; Brian Richardson, ‘Voice and Narration in Postmodern Drama’, *New Literary History* 32 (2001): 681-94; Brian Richardson, ‘Drama and Narrative’, *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Monika Fludernik, ‘Narrative and Drama’, *Theorizing Narrativity*, ed. John Pier and José Ángel García Landa (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2008), 355-83; Ansgar Nünning and Roy Sommer, ‘Diegetic and Mimetic Narrativity: Some Further Steps Towards a Transgeneric Narratology of Drama’, in *Theorizing Narrativity*, ed. Pier and García Landa, 331-53.

⁷⁶ David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (London: Routledge, 1985); Sarah Kozloff, *Invisible Storytellers: Voice-Over Narration in American Fiction Film* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988); Edward Branigan, *Narrative Comprehension and Film* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

⁷⁷ Jörg Helbig, ‘Wie postmodern ist Hyperfiction? Formen der Rezeptionslenkung in fiktionalen Hypertexten’, in *Moderne/Postmoderne*, ed. Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2003), 299-313.

⁷⁸ Marie-Laure Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and the Electronic Media* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Werner Wolf, *The Musicalization of Fiction: A Study in the Theory and History of Intermediality* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999); Werner Wolf, ‘Das Problem der Narrativität in Literatur, bildender Kunst und Musik: Ein Beitrag zu einer intermedialen Erzähltheorie’, in *Erzähltheorie transgenerisch, intermedial, interdisziplinär*, ed. Ansgar Nünning and Vera Nünning (Trier: WVT, 2002), 23-104; Werner Wolf, ‘Narrative and Narrativity: A Narratological Reconceptualization and its Applicability to the Visual Arts’, *Word and Image* 19.3 (2003): 180-97.

⁷⁹ Sylvie Patron even names it ‘A French Speciality’ in ‘Enunciative Narratology: A French Speciality’, in *Current Trends in Narratology*, ed. Greta Olson (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2011), 312-35. See also René Rivara, *La langue du récit. Introduction à la narratologie énonciative* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2000); Alain Rabatel, *Homo narrans. Pour une analyse énonciative et interactionnelle du récit*, 2 vols (Limoges: Lambert-Lucas, 2008).

trauma narratives that are analysed by critics at the border between trauma studies and narratology, trauma scholars like Cathy Caruth, Dori Laub, Shoshana Felman, Dominick LaCapra, Lawrence Langer or cultural studies specialists and narratologists like Mieke Bal analysed trauma, its ethics or its aesthetics, also using narratological tools.⁸⁰ At the intersection between cultural studies, trauma studies and narrative studies concepts such as Vladimir Biti's 'traumatic constellations', those 'political arena(s) characterized by asymmetries along (their) many intersecting and overlapping axes',⁸¹ by which he understands 'national, social, economic, cultural and gender ones' prove to be a productive framework through which traumas can be seen as 'multilateral constructs'.⁸²

The present collection of articles, via the voices of Biwu Shang and John Pier in 'General Perspectives', proposes an implicit dialogue between the adepts of postclassical narratology, who have widely adopted and popularized it (apart from Biwu Shang himself, mention can be made of Jan Alber, Monika Fludernik, Luc Herman, Gerald Prince, Dan Shen and Bart Vervaeck), and the more circumspect scholars who have been reticent to recognise the label (Meir Sternberg, John Pier).⁸³

Regardless of these scholarly divergences, it is undeniable that the last two decades have witnessed a massive interest in postclassical narratology, especially in the United States and Asia – hence a relative preponderance of scholarship affiliated in one way or another to these geographical spaces – but also in Australia and several parts of Europe. The two articles that open this anniversary issue, by Brian Richardson and Biwu Shang, acknowledge the rapid development of narratology in the United States and China in the past years. While Richardson focuses on the more recent advances in unnatural narratology that endeavours to surpass 'the limitations of existing narrative theory and show how its categories and definitions can be enhanced and made more comprehensive and accurate as evidenced in an unaccountable number of works' (36), Shang celebrates the richness of narratological studies in these two decades, attempting to examine and assess the development of narrative inquiries in the postclassical context and tentatively suggesting that we are moving towards a second phase in postclassical narratology. But as Shang also argues in his essay, postclassical narratology nowadays is far from being merely an American affair since, after Critical Theory entered the study of narratives in China, Chinese academics not only welcomed the concept but also valuably contributed to the field, including with their own home-grown version of narratology.⁸⁴ Many of the findings

⁸⁰ See also the work of Ian Fleishman, Ogaga Ifowodo, Kamayani Kumar and Angelie Multani, Marita Nadal and Mónica Calvo, Alan Gibbs, Gabrielle Rippl, Philipp Schweighauser, Therese Steffen, Tijna Kirss, Margit Sutrop, Laurie Vickroy, Christina D. Weber, Anne Whitehead.

⁸¹ Vladimir Biti, *Tracing Global Democracy: Literature, Theory, and the Politics of Trauma* (Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter, 2016), 5.

⁸² Vladimir Biti, *Attached to Dispossession: Sacrificial Narratives in Post-Imperial Europe* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018), 1 and 15.

⁸³ Meir Sternberg is doubtful of both the term 'postclassical narratology' and the classical/postclassical distinction in narrative studies ('Reconceptualizing Narratology: Arguments for a Functionalist and Constructivist Approach to Narrative', *Enthymema* 4 (2011): 35-50). In 'Narratology or Narratologies?', Ansgar Nünning also points out that the main risk of widening the concept of postclassical narratology towards so many theoretical as well as practical disciplines and approaches is that the differences between narratology and narrative studies are erased. Hence Nünning's cautious belief that despite their interdisciplinarity, the various theories from the 1980s to the present could be best grouped under the umbrella term 'narrative theories'.

⁸⁴ Guoqiang Qiao, 'On the Possibilities of Developing a Chinese Version of Narratology', *Neohelicon* 42.5 (2015): 639-55.

of these scholars who wrote in Chinese were either translated into English or mentioned and summarized by Chinese academics in international journals, and it is therefore appropriate for this issue to bring together a significant proportion of essays by Chinese narratologists written directly in English.

In spite of its unprecedented development, postclassical narratology has also met with adverse reactions from various sides, which is reflected in the cautiousness and/or misgivings expressed by several contributors to this issue about the use of this all-encompassing label. This is the reason behind our editorial decision to republish John Pier's 'Is There a French Postclassical Narratology?' (orig. 2011), which remains to date the only in-depth engagement with the evolution of narratology in France, since it records both sides of the debate, pro or contra the adoption of this taxonomic category. To sum up the gist of Pier's findings, narratologists in France, the birth place of 'classical narratology', found neither Herman's 'classical/postclassical' division⁸⁵ nor Nünning's 'hyphenated and compound narratologies' relevant. Pier also notes that postclassical narratology 'has been generated in a context marked largely by English-language scholarship', making us aware that in fact 'few Francophone narrative theorists think of their work in these terms' (67). This also helps to explain why, with the notable exception of Pier's article, there are no contributions from the country where narratology was born or from any other Francophone quarters. For Pier, there is no such thing as French postclassical narratology because French narrative theory either 'has addressed questions raised by narratology but without necessarily claiming, or in some cases even refusing, the title of narratology' (the best example of this tendency being how Paul Ricœur's *Time and Narrative*⁸⁶ pioneered a new approach through phenomenological hermeneutics), or 'has evolved within the various frameworks offered by theories of discourse that got underway shortly after the birth of narratology and for which narratology was one source of momentum' (83). Since Pier originally published his findings about France in 2011, in Francophone spaces work has been done on transmedial, transhistorical as well as transcultural phenomena. Marc Marti, who is also a specialist in video games, edited several volumes on storytelling and narrative theory.⁸⁷ Two volumes on postclassical narratology were published in Francophone spaces by Raphaël Baroni⁸⁸ and Sylvie Patron.⁸⁹ John Pier's forthcoming edited *Contemporary French and Francophone Narratology* attests to some echoes of postclassical narratology in French-language research, although no particular method or theory prevails.⁹⁰ Yet, perhaps, among the

⁸⁵ It should be noted that French academics are less prone to periodization and pigeonholing, let alone when these unproblematically rely on the 'post-' prefix. See, for instance, Jacques Derrida, 'Some Statements and Truisms about Neologisms, Newisms, Postisms, Parasitisms, and Other Small Seismisms', trans. Anne Tomiche, in *The States of 'Theory': History, Art, and Critical Discourse*, ed. and intr. David Carroll (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 63-94.

⁸⁶ Paul Ricœur, *Time and Narrative*, trans. K. McLaughlin and D. Pellauer (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984 [orig. 1983]).

⁸⁷ Marc Marti, ed., *Storytelling et tension narrative: en attendant la fin*, Preface in collaboration with Nicolas Pelissier (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2013); Marc Marti, ed., *Du storytelling à la mise en récit des mondes sociaux: la révolution narrative a-t-elle eu lieu ?*, Preface in collaboration with Nicolas Pelissier (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2012).

⁸⁸ Raphaël Baroni, *Les Rouages de l'intrigue. Les outils de la narratologie postclassique pour l'analyse des textes littéraires* (Genève: Slatkine, 2017).

⁸⁹ Sylvie Patron, ed., *Introduction à la narratologie postclassique. Les nouvelles directions de la recherche sur le récit* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2018).

⁹⁰ John Pier, ed., *Contemporary French and Francophone Narratology* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, forthcoming 2020).

most notable developments in France is the emerging field of fictionality studies (especially through the work of Françoise Lavocat⁹¹) that a few branches of narratology take into account nowadays. Current approaches to fiction can be considered as an outgrowth of narratology even though, to some extent, they represent a critique of postclassical narratology. At the instigation of Françoise Lavocat together with Alison Jamse from the University of Chicago, the International Society for Fiction and Fictionality Studies was set up in Paris.⁹² The founding of the society entitled ‘La fiction change-t-elle le monde?/ Does Fiction Change the World?’ took place in November 2019, quite interestingly in France, the country where narratology began and exactly twenty years after postclassical narratology developed...

I asserted previously that the story/discourse dichotomy still held true to this day, all the more so since narratology inevitably ended up intersecting with the widespread development of discourse analysis.⁹³ Discourse analysis originated as a separate field that can be traced as far back as Austrian-born Leo Spitzer’s 1928 *Stilstudien* (Style Studies),⁹⁴ but it became more famous after Zellig Harris used the term in the second half of the 20th century.⁹⁵ By the time narratology appeared as a fully-fledged discipline in the late 1960s, discourse analysis, or its French variant (*analyse du discours*), had already caught the attention of a range of disciplines like semiotics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and pragmatics – and to this day remains associated with Social Sciences rather than the Humanities. Related to discourse analysis, conversation analysis, which deals with verbal interaction, emerged as an atypical application of narratological methodologies, as did the study of other cultural rather than written narratives, such as film, arts, videogames, graphic novels,⁹⁶ etc. In this respect, specific mention should be made of the work on conversational analysis by William Labov,⁹⁷ Deborah Tannen⁹⁸ and Wallace Chafe⁹⁹ that had a significant impact on postclassical narratology, as well as the work of linguists and psychologists like Alexandra Georgakopoulou, Mark Freeman, Anna de Fina, Brigitte Boothe and Michael Bamberg.¹⁰⁰

⁹¹ See Françoise Lavocat and Anne Duprat, eds, *Fiction et cultures* (Nîmes: Lucie éditions, 2010) and, especially, Françoise Lavocat, *Fait et fiction: Pour une frontière* (Paris: Seuil, 2016) which is being translated both in English and in Chinese.

⁹² Available at <https://fiction.hypotheses.org/> [accessed 30 November 2019].

⁹³ The first one to connect discourse analysis and literature is Dominique Maingueneau whose main work in discourse analysis is listed in the Bibliography section here. On the connection he made see John Pier’s forthcoming chapter ‘Discourse Analysis and Narrative Theory: A French Perspective’, in *Contemporary French and Francophone Narratology*, which can be considered a sequel to his article included in this volume.

⁹⁴ Leo Spitzer, *Stilstudien* (Munich: Hueber, 1928).

⁹⁵ Zellig Harris, ‘Discourse Analysis’, *Language* 28:1 (1952): 1-30; ‘Discourse Analysis: A Sample Text’, *Language* 28:4 (1952): 474-94.

⁹⁶ See, for instance, Johanna Drucker, ‘Graphic Devices: Narration and Navigation’, *Narrative* 16.2 (2008): 121-39; Johanna Drucker, ‘What Is Graphic about Graphic Novels?’, *English Language Notes* 46.2: ‘Graphia: The Graphic Novel and Literary Criticism’ (2008): 39-55.

⁹⁷ William Labov, *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular* (Philadelphia, PE: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972).

⁹⁸ Deborah Tannen, *Conversational Style: Analyzing Talk Among Friends* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1984).

⁹⁹ Wallace L. Chafe, *Discourse, Consciousness, and Time: The Flow and Displacement of Conscious Experience in Speaking and Writing* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

¹⁰⁰ Alexandra Georgakopoulou, ‘Self-Presentation and Interactional Alliances in E-mail Discourse: The Style- and Code-Switches of Greek Messages’, *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 7 (1997): 141-64; Mark Freeman, ‘Culture, Narrative, and the Poetic Construction of Selfhood’, *Journal of Constructivist Psychology* 12 (1999): 99-116; Anna de Fina, *Identity in Narrative: A Study of Immigrant Discourse*

So far, this Introduction has enlisted the work of individual scholars. However, it should not be forgotten that no field can develop significantly and durably without consolidation by research groups (to which these individuals may also belong) and, equally crucially, without institutional support. For this point, I rely once more on Meister's excellent survey in order to delve into what he thought represented the 'gradual consolidation of organizational and institutional structures' in the field of narratology in three different phases:

Phase 1: The formation of cross-disciplinary narratological interest groups. Beginning with the contributors to the programmatic 1966 special issue of the journal *Communications* and the creation during the 1970s by Bremond, Genette, Todorov, Marin, and Metz of the Centre de recherches sur les arts et le langage (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), informal organizational models (also represented by the Tel Aviv group¹⁰¹ with its influential journal *Poetics Today*, or in the Amsterdam School initiated by Bal) have played a decisive role in shaping narratology as a paradigmatic inter-discipline.

Phase 2: The advent of officially funded narratological institutions for academic research and teaching since the late 1990s, such as the 'Forschergruppe Narratologie' and the 'Interdisciplinary Center for Narratology' at Hamburg University, the 'Zentrum für Erzählforschung' at Wuppertal University as well as the 'Center for Narratological Studies' at the University of Southern Denmark and the 'Project Narrative' at Ohio State University in the US.

Phase 3: The founding of national and international narratological umbrella organizations. These include the North American 'International Society for the Study of Narrative', the Scandinavian 'Nordic Network', and the 'European Narratology Network'.¹⁰²

Since then, more research groups have been extremely active in the field of narratology. In North America, apart from the Project Narrative at Ohio State

(Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2003); Brigitte Boothe, *Der Patient als Erzähler in der Psychotherapie* (Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag, 2004 [1994]); Michael Bamberg, ed, *Narrative, State of the Art* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2007); Michael Bamberg, Anna de Fina and Deborah Schiffrin, eds, *Selves and Identities in Narrative Discourse* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2007).

¹⁰¹ The Tel Aviv 'school's rhetorical-functional approach to narrative differs from other reception-oriented theories by, on the one hand, noting how readers fill informational gaps in narratives via cognitive strategies and, on the other hand, by examining how texts are rhetorically fashioned to influence how their readers interpret them.' (Monika Fludernik and Greta Olson, 'Introduction', in *Current Trends in Narratology*, ed. Olson, 19). In Israel influential are Tamar Yacobi's theory of unreliable narration ('Narrative and Normative Pattern: On Interpreting Fiction', *Journal of Literary Studies* 3 (1987): 18-41; 'Package-Deals in Fictional Narrative: The Case of the Narrator's (Un)Reliability', *Narrative* 9.2 (2001): 223-9; 'Authorial Rhetoric, Narratorial (Un)Reliability, Divergent Readings: Tolstoy's *Kreutzer Sonata*', in *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, ed. James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 108-23) and Meir Sternberg's approach to narrative ('Telling in Time (I): Chronology and Narrative Theory', *Poetics Today* 11.4 (1990): 901-48; 'Telling in Time (II): Chronology, Teleology, Narrativity', *Poetics Today* 13.3 (1992): 463-541; 'How Narrativity Makes a Difference', *Narrative* 9.2 (2001): 115-22). For a presentation of the Tel Aviv School see Eyal Segal, 'The "Tel Aviv School": A Rhetorical-Functional Approach to Narrative', in *Current Trends in Narratology*, ed. Olson, 297-311). In Jerusalem there are also reputable narratologists such as Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan (her ground-breaking *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Methuen, 1989) was reprinted five times: in 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1999, 2001, with a 2nd edition in 2002, reprinted in 2003, 2004, 2005) and Leona Toker (see *Eloquent Reticence: Withholding Information in Fictional Narrative* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 1993); *Return from the Archipelago: Narratives of Gulag Survivors* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000); *Towards the Ethics of Form in Fiction: Narratives of Cultural Remission* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2010).)

¹⁰² Meister, 'Narratology', 341.

University,¹⁰³ The Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Narrative (CIRN)¹⁰⁴ from Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada investigates the role of narrative (or story) in human experience and puts forward the use of narrative approaches in different fields. The European Narratology Network includes universities, research institutions and interest groups from Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Spain, Scotland, Switzerland etc.¹⁰⁵ The aim of the association is narrative representation in literature, film, digital media, etc. across all European languages and cultures.

In Germany worth mentioning are the Freiburg Centre on Fictionality and Factual Narrative headed by Monika Fludernik,¹⁰⁶ a centre which ‘pursues a rigorously interdisciplinary programme’,¹⁰⁷ linked to the Graduate School ‘Factual and Fictional Narration’,¹⁰⁸ and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Narrative Studies, headed by Richard Walsh at York University, as well as Zentrum für Erzählforschung (ZEF) from the Bergischen Universität Wuppertal,¹⁰⁹ Bonner Zentrum für Transkulturelle Narratologie¹¹⁰ (an interdisciplinary research group from the University of Bonn, dedicated to narrative strategies and structures in non-European literatures) and The Interdisciplinary Centre for Narratology in Hamburg;¹¹¹ the members of the Hamburg centre worked on the implementation of interdisciplinary narratological concepts into digital media, ‘fictionality/factuality’ and proposed a methodological approach using computational means to look at large-scale corpora of narratives.

In his forthcoming *Contemporary French and Francophone Narratology*, John Pier presents an exhaustive list of research groups and institutions from France and Switzerland:¹¹² «Recherches contemporaines en narratologie», a research seminar organized by the Centre de recherche sur les arts et le langage (CRAL),¹¹³ a section of the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) and the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris;¹¹⁴ the Laboratoire Interdisciplinaire Récits

¹⁰³ Available at <https://projectnarrative.osu.edu/> [accessed 29 November 2019].

¹⁰⁴ Available at <http://stu-sites.ca/cirn/> [accessed 29 November 2019].

¹⁰⁵ Available at <https://www.narratology.net/> [accessed 20 October 2019].

¹⁰⁶ To Fludernik’s well-known work in English, one should add the translations in English of her German publications, especially *Einführung in die Erzähltheorie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006) [*An Introduction to Narratology*, trans. Patricia Häusler-Greenfield and Monika Fludernik (London and New York: Routledge, 2009)] and her work in German (for instance, with Nicole Falkenhayner and Julia Steiner, *Faktuales und Fiktionales Erzählen* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2015)).

¹⁰⁷ Available at https://www.anglistik.uni-freiburg.de/departement/dept-admin-sections/literary-studies/fludernik_chair/current-projects/faktuales-und-fiktionales-erzaehlen?set_language=en [accessed 20 October 2019].

¹⁰⁸ Available at <https://www.grk-erzaehlen.uni-freiburg.de/english-summary/> [accessed 20 October 2019].

¹⁰⁹ Available at <https://www.zef.uni-wuppertal.de/de/home/home.html> [accessed 29 November 2019].

¹¹⁰ Available at <https://www.bztn.uni-bonn.de/en> [accessed 29 November 2019].

¹¹¹ Available at <https://www.icn.uni-hamburg.de/> [accessed 29 November 2019].

¹¹² I am very grateful to John Pier for sharing with me his *Introduction* to the volume which contains the list of seminars, research centres and websites from France and Switzerland mentioned here.

¹¹³ Available at <http://cral.ehess.fr/> [accessed 20 November 2019]. CRAL was founded in 1983 after the death of Barthes by Genette, Todorov, Bremond and a few others. Among the most recent international colloquia, worth mentioning are *Poétique, esthétique et écriture: autour de l’œuvre de Gérard Genette* [Poetics, Aesthetics and Writing: on Gérard Genette’s Work], organized by l’IRIS, *Création, cognition, société* (PSL) and le CRAL (EHESS), under the supervision of John Pier et Jean-Marie Schaeffer in October 2019 and *Récits à l’épreuve du hasard* [Narratives Put to the Test of Chance], organized by Centre de recherches sur les arts et le langage (CNRS/EHESS), Séminaire *Recherches contemporaines en narratologie* that takes place three times per month in Paris (main organizer Philippe Roussin, in collaboration with Olivier Caïra, Anne Duprat, Annick Louis, John Pier).

¹¹⁴ Available at <http://narratologie.ehess.fr/> [accessed 20 October 2019].

Cultures Sociétés (LIRCES) at the Université Nice Sophia Antipolis,¹¹⁵ where the oldest review on narratology, *Cahiers de narratologie*, has been edited since 1987;¹¹⁶ The Centre de recherche sur les médiations (CREM) from the Université de Lorraine;¹¹⁷ the Paris Center for Narrative Matters (Université Paris Diderot and The American University of Paris) and the two dedicated websites that the Université de Lausanne launched last year: Réseau des Narratologues Francophones (RéNaF)¹¹⁸ and Pôle de Narratologie Transmédiat (NaTrans).¹¹⁹ To these we can add Séminaire NATA (Narratologie théorique et appli-quée), from the Université Bordeaux Montaigne.¹²⁰

In Spain, at University of Zaragoza, noteworthy is the work of narratologist José Ángel García Landa, *A Bibliography of Literary Theory, Criticism and Philology*.¹²¹

In Great Britain, apart from the Interdisciplinary Centre for Narrative Studies from York University, whose main goal is to produce interdisciplinary research seen as ‘dialogue rather than synthesis’,¹²² The Centre for Narrative Research¹²³ from University of East London studies narratology across social sciences; at the University of Edinburgh, in 2015, a research project on ‘A History of Distributed Cognition’¹²⁴ explored the expression and suppression of notions of distributed cognition between classical antiquity and the early twentieth century.

University of Tampere (Finland) in 2014, deals with four strands: autobiographical and cultural memory; health, illness and narrative, intermediality; digital narratives and society; narrative hermeneutics and identity. Several research projects in narratology in Helsinki are under the leadership of Heta Pyrhönen.¹²⁵ Still in Scandinavia, Denmark, there are three research centres: Center for Narratologiske Studier¹²⁶ from University of Southern Denmark, Kolding; Narrative Research Lab working on unnatural narratology, narrative rhetoric and rhetorical discourse, the study of fictiobiographism and mockumentary and The Centre for Fictionality Studies that investigates fictionality as a quality, both at Aarhus University and headed by one of the major postclassical narratologists, Henrik Skov Nielsen. Otherwise, both Finland and Denmark but also Norway, Sweden and Estonia set up the Nordic Network of Narrative Studies.¹²⁷

¹¹⁵ Available at <http://unice.fr/laboratoires/lirces/fr/accueil> [accessed 20 October 2019].

¹¹⁶ Available at <https://journals.openedition.org/narratologie/> [accessed 20 October 2019].

¹¹⁷ Available at <https://crem.univ-lorraine.fr/> [accessed 20 October 2019].

¹¹⁸ Available at <https://wp.unil.ch/narratologie/renaf/> [accessed 20 October 2019].

¹¹⁹ Available at <https://wp.unil.ch/narratologie/natrans/> [accessed 20 October 2019].

¹²⁰ Available at <https://climas.u-bordeaux-montaigne.fr/le-laboratoire/nata> [accessed 29 November 2019].

¹²¹ Available at <http://personal.unizar.es/garciala/bibliography.html> [accessed 29 November 2019].

¹²² Available at <https://www.york.ac.uk/narrative-studies/> [accessed 20 October 2019]. Their projects in progress deal with the complexity of narrative theory and science, culture, social robotics, multi-player interactive drama, video games, virtual museums, etc.

¹²³ Available at <https://www.uel.ac.uk/research/centre-for-narrative-research> [accessed 29 November 2019].

¹²⁴ Available at <https://www.ed.ac.uk/history-classics-archaeology/research/research-projects/distributed-cognition> [accessed 29 November 2019].

¹²⁵ Pyrhönen is one of the contributors to the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn and Marie-Laure Ryan (New York: Routledge, 2005). Her publications include ‘Genre’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 109-23, and her collection, co-edited with J. Kantola, *Reading Today* (London: University College London Press, 2017).

¹²⁶ Available at https://www.sdu.dk/da/om_sdu/institutter_centre/c_narratologi [accessed 29 November 2019].

¹²⁷ Available at <http://nordicnarratologynet.ut.ee/> [accessed 29 November 2019].

The Narratology Research Group (Narratológiai Kutatócsoport) at the University of Pécs, Hungary, developed projects in the fields of pictorial narrative, cultural anthropology, historiography, psychology, autobiography, reflexivity, theology, digital media and transmediality. In The Czech Republic, where the structuralist tradition is still fairly dominant, scholars' research output in narratology remains substantial and is boosted by the existence of two research centres in Prague – at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, where scholars devised a team who edited *A Dictionary of Structuralist Literary Theory and Critics*,¹²⁸ and another centre whose principal investigators, Alice Jedličková and Stanislava Fedrová were in charge of the project entitled *Poetics of Description: A Survey of its Representational Scope in Intermedia Perspective* (2012-14).¹²⁹ Moreover, the Brno Narratological Circle (Brněnský naratologický kroužek) hosts public lectures delivered by leading Czech scholars and younger scholars with an interest in literary studies, narratology, semiotics, film studies, theatre studies, aesthetics and philosophy. In Poland the Gdańsk Narratological Group undertook research in Polish narratology, also taking into account a variety of new approaches, from which cognition and identity are the most prominent topics; this group also issues the reputed journal *Diegesis*.¹³⁰ Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck published a very recent article on recent narratologies in the journal *Tekstualia* that appears under the auspices of the centre, where they declared that 'narratology has come to tackle ever wider subjects from ever more interdisciplinary perspectives, it has branched out and become so multifaceted that its diverse disciplines can no longer be neatly separated'.¹³¹

Interest in cognition is also illustrated by the work of literary theorist Anna Łebkowska whose volume *Between Literary Theories and Literary Fiction* (in Polish) is regarded as a modern classic.¹³² Other Polish researchers like Zofia Mitosek, Przemysław Pietrzak and Joanna Jeziorska-Haładyi¹³³ deal with nonliterary and cognitive narratology. Narrare, a Research Centre for Interdisciplinary Narrative Studies.¹³⁴

The longer-term sustainability of any discipline also calls for taught courses and narratology is no exception. In the United States, the interest in postclassical narratology is big with many research projects developed within the Project Narrative at Ohio State University, and some taught courses in universities such as New York University, Pennsylvania University, University of Chicago, Brown University, Catawba College,

¹²⁸ Ondřej Sládek *et al.* *Slovník literárněvědného strukturalismu* (Brno: Host, 2018).

¹²⁹ Available at <https://starfos.tacr.cz/cs/project/GAP406%2F12%2F1711> [accessed 20 October 2019].

¹³⁰ Available at <https://www.diegesis.uni-wuppertal.de/index.php/diegesis/article/view/193/262> [accessed 29 November 2019].

¹³¹ Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck, 'State of the Art or State of Confusion? A Brief Look at Recent Narratologies', *Tekstualia: 'Post-classical Narratology. Intermediality: Between Texts, Media and Genres'*, ed. Bartosz Lutostanski, 1.4 (2018): 14.

¹³² Anna Łebkowska, *Między teoriami a fikcją literacką* [Between Literary Theories and Literary Fiction] (Kraków: Universitas, 2012). Łebkowska is also the author of *Empatia. O literackich narracjach przełomu XX i XXI wieku* [Empathy: On Literary Narratives at the Turn of the 21st Century] (Kraków: Universitas, 2008).

¹³³ Zofia Mitosek, *Poznanie (w) powieści – od Balzaka do Masłowskiej* [Cognition in the novel – from Balzac to Masłowska] (Kraków: Universitas, 2003); Przemysław Pietrzak, *Powieść nowoczesna i dylematy współczesnej nauki o literaturze* [The Modern Novel and the Dilemmas of Modern Literary Studies] (Warszawa: Wydział Polonistyki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2007); Zofia Mitosek, *Co z tą ironią?* [What's with Irony?] (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2013); Joanna Jeziorska-Haładyi, *Tekstowe wykładniki fikcji. Na przykładzie reportażu i powieści autobiograficznej* [Textual Cues of Fictionality: On the Example of Reportage and the Autobiographical Novel] (Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, 2013).

¹³⁴ Available at <https://research.tuni.fi/narrare/> [accessed 29 November 2019].

University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa among many others.¹³⁵ Nowadays, narrative theory and narratology, in particular postclassical narratology, are so important in China that they are taught as compulsory subjects in many universities and many scholars are encouraged to write their MA dissertation and PhD thesis on postclassical narratology.¹³⁶ In Europe narratology is far from being taught systematically in universities that have reduced significantly the number of courses or modules in literature since they adopted the Bologna system. Narratology is in most fortunate cases part of an optional course that students need to enrol in.¹³⁷ With such a discrepancy between Europe and China, as Biwu Shang asserts, Chinese ‘contributions to narratology are beginning to catch the eye of Western academia and helping to “redefine the field”’ (47).

‘Thematic Departures’ include new perspectives on rhetorical narratology, feminist narratology, queer narrative theory and corporeal narratology. Samuel Caleb Wee’s ‘Songs of “Experientiality”’: Reconsidering the Relationship between Poeticity and Narrativity in Postclassical Narratology’ focuses on narrative poetry, a genre that postclassical narratologists like Phelan, Hühn and Jens Kiefer struggled to acknowledge, for which they were criticised by Brian McHale. Wee takes up a half-way position in the debate: he accepts neither Fludernik’s locating narrativity and poeticity at opposite ends nor Alber’s predicament that ‘that natural narratology goes some way towards helping to recuperate “a great number of experimental and plotless texts as narratives”’ (97). Interpreting the degree of poeticity of Samuel Beckett’s ‘Lessness’ with the help of Alber, Wee proposes a reconceptualization of the two axes, considering that in many experimental texts like Virginia Woolf’s *The Waves*, Elizabeth Smart’s *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept*, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s *Dictee* or many of John Banville’s texts with their ‘characteristic rhythms, denseness and ontological echoes’, ‘narrativity co-exists amicably with either poeticity or lyricality, or both’ (99). Indeed, a more subtle tool to explore such texts that I defined elsewhere as ‘[o]stentatiously mixing the laws regulating different genres’ is needed. To Wee’s examples, I would add Maurice Blanchot’s *récits*, Hélène Cixous’s ‘critifictions’¹³⁸ or even what I called elsewhere Derrida’s “prose”, with its polyphonic, polylogic effects and internal rhythmic spacings’

¹³⁵ The list is far from complete. I selected some courses on narratology which are taught in the academic year 2019-2020. Universities like New York University or Pennsylvania University offer a large number of courses in narratology, among which, Writing Narrative, Architecture Narrative Fundamentals of Storytelling, Interactive Narrative, Race, Nations and Narrative, Narrative across Cultures, Great Story Collection, The Novel: What Is a Subject etc. To these we can add very specific courses like, for instance, David Wellbery’s seminar ‘Narratology of Tears’ at the University of Chicago or Andrew H. Weaver’s course on Narratology and the Lied in the Department of Music at Catholic University of America. For links to all these courses see Webography at the end of this Introduction.

¹³⁶ For instance, Peking University, Tsinghua University, Shanghai Jiao Tong University (here in the summer of 2019 a seminar on Narratology was held and on December 6th, the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies of Narrative was inaugurated with a conference entitled ‘Dialogue on the Frontiers of Contemporary Narratology between China and the West), Fudan University, University of Science and Technology of China, Zheijiang University.

¹³⁷ Some of these courses are at BA level, others MA level. Some universities (i.e. Aarhus University, University of Hamburg, University of Groningen) offer/ed summer or winter courses in Narratology or Narrative Studies.

¹³⁸ The term was used by Laurent Milesi, in ‘Portraits of H. C. as J. D. and Back’, *New Literary History* 37 (2006): 51-70. Milesi demarcated it from Raymond Federman’s earlier use ‘to refer to the miscegenation of the critical and the fictional-creative in Cixous’ writings’ in ‘De-monstrating Monsters: Unmastering (in) Derrida and Cixous’, *Parallax* 25.3 (2019): 281.

that invests the limits between philosophy and literature, renegotiating the watertight boundaries between the “space of literature” and the “space of philosophy”.¹³⁹ Wee ends his essay on the question as to whether the liberalization of narrative brought about the anxiety ‘that opening up the borders of narrativity might lead to a loss of its quiddity, rendering narrative theory a dispossessed, strange and unfamiliar field’ and concludes that this is a fallacy, since ‘[r]egardless of how we conceive it, narrative [...] survives, always, in the valley of its own making.’ (105)

The aim of Charlotte Lindemann’s ‘Dialogue and the Limits of Narrative Discourse: Genette, Gertrude Stein’ is to affirm the important role that dialogue plays for postclassical narratology. Explaining the relative lack of scholarship on dialogue as ‘a lasting impact of Mikhail Bakhtin’s work on the subject’ (108), Lindemann turns to Gertrude Stein’s realist ‘Q.E.D.’ and modernist ‘Melanctha’ to show how the two short stories, with different aesthetic modes, challenge the place of dialogue in both narrative and narrative theory. Her examples illustrate how ‘[p]erhaps dialogue is not passively neglected, but actively resistant to narratology’s abstract theoretical systems.’ (109) Thus, disputing Genette’s mistrust in direct speech, in contradistinction to recent feminist scholarship, Lindemann argues that dialogue’s unique position at the limits of narrative discourse makes it ‘simultaneously a cornerstone of realism and a proto-experimental variable that threatens to unravel it’ (111). In addition, dialogue also achieved ‘the more modest project of holding standard language in conversation with its own limits’ (122).

In ‘On the Queer Rhetoric of Metalepsis’, Florian Zitzelsberger also critically reviews one of Genette’s concepts, metalepsis, which refers to ‘any intrusion by the extradiegetic narrator or narratee into the diegetic universe (or by diegetic characters into a metadiegetic universe, etc.), or the inverse’.¹⁴⁰ Taking his cue from the duality of metalepsis, Zitzelsberger proposes a review of the concept through the postclassical lens of queer narratology that originates from the transmedial adaptation and application of the phenomenon. Thus, he defines metalepsis as ‘a *semantic displacement of elements originally belonging to (onto)logically discriminative syntactic units of a text, which results in a distortion of previously ascribed notions of naturalness, normalcy and normativity employed to fix narrative in place*’ (133). In the second part of his essay, Zitzelsberger’s article theorises metalepsis as a queer signifying practice and considers metaleptic occurrences as ‘a surplus of the compulsory form of narrative’ (135). The author’s argumentation for regarding metalepsis as a distinctly queer signifier is twofold: on the one hand, it brings a challenge to heteronormativity ‘as the primary principle ordering narrative’ and, on the other hand, it reverses the established hierarchies (137).

Xiaomeng Wan’s ‘Body as Resource of Narrative Communication: An Intersection of Corporeal Narratology with Rhetorical Narratology’ reviews Daniel Punday’s classical model of corporeal narratology, suggesting its extension via the narrative communication model in Phelan’s rhetorical narrative theories. Thus, she constructs a hybrid model that reverses Daniel Punday’s classical narratology framework, integrating the two models ‘into a systematic feedback loop’ (157).

‘Readings’ engage with scholars’ works in narrative theory and fictionality. Vladimir Biti’s ‘Almost the Same but not Quite: Kafka and His “Assignees”’ explores some of Kafka’s short stories, following the way in which the German writer suggested that the truth always relates to lying. Biti sees Kafka’s characters from ‘An Imperial

¹³⁹ See Arleen Ionescu, ‘Spacing Literature between Mallarmé, Blanchot and Derrida’, *Parallax* 21.1 (2015): 70.

¹⁴⁰ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 234-5.

Message' as truth distorters, in spite of their role as truth's couriers, and asks whether, at the end of his waiting, before the door is closed, the protagonist of 'Before the Law' perceives 'indeed the truth, or just a phantasy of it as induced by a longing for it.' (163) Bringing in his analysis the truth as the light that Josef K. sees at the end of *The Trial*, Biti explains that Kafka's characters (whom Biti calls 'figures') permanently evoke a lost truth that they cling to because it 'emancipates them both from the pressure of their "historical fate"' (163). Since the flame of truth is 'horrible' for his characters and can shock readers, Biti's contention is that Kafka's method was 'to present it indirectly, through the terrified face of his figures who suddenly meet its shine.' (164) Biti divides these figures, attached to the 'flame' of the truth 'that shines in the darkness of their "heterotopias"', into explorers (those who 'have a more active attitude to their "historical fate"') and the more passive 'evokers'. Interpreting other telling scenes from *The Trial*, 'Investigations of a Dog', 'The Cares of a Family Man', 'The Penal Colony', and connecting them to Kafka's biography, Biti concludes that Kafka's figures attach themselves to this truth 'by way of its evocation, exploration and subversive mimicry, emancipat[ing] themselves from the pressure of historical law', while their author places himself apart and in this way, involuntarily, 're-entangles [himself] with his assignees' (174).

Yili Tang's 'Character Narration and Fictionality in Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot*' explores Barnes's 'hybrid book' which resists 'any attempt at genre classification' (176). Her rhetorical approach starts from James Phelan's theories on character narration and follows the two tracks of narrative communication which he proposes: the narrator-narratee track and the implied author-authorial audience track, exploring Braithwaite's roles as a narrator and as a character as well as his authorial purpose and his direct relation with his audiences from which he expects responses. Tang also analyses Barnes's fictionality, bearing in mind his paradoxical explanations that when one writes fiction, one does it in order to tell the truth, and endeavours to get the crux of Barnes's exploration of truth in *Flaubert's Parrot*. Tang determines how much Braithwaite uses the material of Flaubert's life to retell his own life, challenging his readers to perform the role of the character narrator and go through his mental progression, which makes the 'act of reading rewarding in itself' (176).

The issue ends with Yuzhen Lin's review of Biwu Shang's *Unnatural Narrative across Borders: Transnational and Comparative Perspectives* and Fang Cai's review of Xiuyan Fu's *Chinese Narratology*.

With our modest contribution to the buoyant field of narratology, published in a journal whose critical remit is Critical theory more widely, we hope to have lived up to Susan Lanser's suggestion that 'Narratology is blessed with extraordinary thinkers.'¹⁴¹ While echoing her words, I am thinking of both the reputed narratologists whose work was an inspiration for all contributors here but also of the young scholars who are approaching this field with fresh perspectives. In the same interview conducted by one such young scholar, Lanser expressed her conviction that 'the future of narratology will be what we make it. Or, to be more precise: what you, the younger generations, make it.'¹⁴² Since in this issue emphasis has been put on novel contributions by young scholars,

¹⁴¹ Susan S. Lanser, 'My Narratology: An Interview with Susan S. Lanser', *DIEGESIS: Interdisciplinary E-Journal for Narrative Research* 5.1 (2016): 81; available at <https://www.diegesis.uni-wuppertal.de/index.php/diegesis/article/view/216/307> [accessed 29 October 2019].

¹⁴² Lanser, 'My Narratology', 83.

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