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Narratology and Narrative: History and Perspective

The Linguistic Turn

We may consider narratology – the structural study of narratives – in two ways, each of them implying a slightly different *before* and *after*. First, this important endeavor in 20th century literary studies may be regarded as the study of a specific narrative *logic*, the formal structures that unite all narratives, fictional and factual, literary and non-literary. This approach points back primarily to the functionalist study of folklore: myths, ballads, folktales (V. Propp, A. Jolles, C. Lévi-Strauss, etc.) and to more or less formalized logico-mathematical strategies: in its most simple form the ancient stemmatic logic as summed up by Porphyry and in a more advanced version in post-Leibnizian mathematical calculus. Narratology in this strict sense, and as promoted by A.J. Greimas, T. Todorov, C. Bremond and others, seems to develop into a more and more refined mathematical and logical theory, by some seen as formalistic acrobatics. As structure is everything, context nothing, contextualization becomes a problem. Due to its logical structure, any narrative has as its context all other narratives that follow the same logic (which they all do), regardless of medium, genre, content or historical period. Narratology is gradually turned into a general theory of meaning-generating conditions – narratology suspends narratology.

Secondly, narratology may be regarded as the study of specific *texts* with specific cultural functions – storehouses of *memory* on the one hand and, on the other, *meaning-generating devices* integrating human action with time and place, ending up in cognition, identity, values, pragmatic norms, etc. In this case forerunners are language philosophers who since the 18th century have taken language use to be a world-creating enterprise (G. Vico, G. Herder, W. Humboldt, E. Cassirer, to name a few) culminating in phenomenology (with P. Ricœur as the towering figure in this context). Further developments are seen, broadly speaking, in new historicism, new rhetoric, cognitive semantics. Again, context and contextualization present a problem. The context is the given as a historico-cultural setting defined by action, time and space features. To focus on narrative features in texts means to see how the texts co-act with this context and perhaps modify it, that is to see how they fulfill their cultural functions. Therefore, the very notion of text is widened to a point where the media specificity of any given text becomes irrelevant. They are all narratives if they interact with the cultural context in this sense. Once more, narratology – also in this

broader sense of the term – seems to transform itself into something else, a general study of intentional, symbolic action.

In spite of the fact that both trends diminish the role of the specific medium of a given narrative, focusing instead on a general logic or on general functions, both of them refer *de facto* to literature as a primary field of study; moreover, they are both children, twins one might argue, of the linguistic turn at the turn of the last century, and they both *de facto* constantly refer to language as a primary field of study. This paradigmatic shift emphasized a specific medium and its specific logic in a general perspective without losing grip of the specificity. A lesson may be learned if we quickly repaint the history and perspective of this turn in a few broad strokes.

The linguistic turn was a reorientation of scientific thought that exercised a profound impact on the humanities in general and strengthened, in particular, disciplines with language as their main object, such as linguistics, the study of literature and, to a certain extent, philosophy. As a result of the linguistic turn, language came to be a constitutive aspect of any scientific enterprise, also outside the humanities. Nothing affected by language – meaning, symbolic forms, communication, intersubjectivity, world-making, rhetoric, etc. – can be left out by any science without careful argumentation.

Inside the humanities, disciplines that had language as their pivotal point now gained new momentum as a model for other sciences – linguistics in particular. Disciplines such as history or anthropology with a strong empirical tradition viewing language as a simple means of communication could not, in the long run, avoid reconsidering the role of language and symbolic forms in the study of what they considered to be self-evident empirical objects. The debate over such consequences has, explicitly and implicitly, been the driving force in the discussion of the status of science throughout the 20th century.

For the study of literature, with narratology as a particular branch of study, this was an important juncture: the linguistic turn enabled literary studies to move out of the shadow of 19th century positivism and historicism and to see itself as a study of a linguistic object emphasizing its self-reflective character more than its expressive character, focusing on literature as a world-making enterprise more than as an act of mimesis, and highlighting literature as an art more closely bound to the aesthetics of language than to the aesthetics of nature.

This is the cognitive context, as it were, of narratology explaining both the generalizing temptations it has given in to, and the possibility of having a permanent reflection on media specificity as a constitutive aspect of its identity, a possibility it has realized less and less over the years. Probably due to a fear of being tied to only one specific medium, verbal language, narratology gave up

the really important perspective of the linguistic turn – not the foregrounding of the specificity of the medium itself, but of the *reflection* on the media specificity of any given manifestation of meaning as absolutely necessary for the understanding of its contextualization and thereby its reference.

Narrative and Discourse

Now, facing the next turn of a century, we are not witnessing the emergence of a new turn similar to the linguistic turn. We still have to develop and enlarge the range of the study of texts opened by the linguistic turn: the contextualisation of texts via their media specificity, not their content. If the 19th century saw the emergence of the study of literature as a *specific* discipline on the new map of scientific studies, the 20th century may be conceived as the time span when the study of literature was engaged in defining an *interdisciplinary position* made possible by the linguistic turn, with narratives as an important type of text to promote the definition of such a position. This happened in an unsettled negotiation of boundaries between the disciplines of the humanities and other sciences from the point of view of language and in relation to the symbolic forms of other media. Narratology came to be an agent in this negotiation.

The 19th century trained its scholars to claim „This is the study of literature!“ or „This is a narrative text!“, whereas the 20th century taught us to live in a permanent state of unstable self-reflection: „Is this a study of literature or of ...?“ or „Is this really a narrative? I thought narratives had died out!“ – Due to today’s dynamic encounter of cultures in our everyday lives and to the development of media on a global scale, the negotiation of boundaries will be of less importance in literary studies than their transgression. Scholars will learn to ask: „How can the study of literature contribute to an interdisciplinary development of the humanities and the process of cultural change?“ In other words, I do not think that we can avoid taking as our starting point for the development of narratology the second of the two trends of narratology mentioned above.

In this perspective I will point to two well-known terms, *narrative* and *discourse*, which will be the basic terms from which other terms (logic, form, choice, actant, function, etc.) will have to be derived when described in the following way.

1) The first term, narrative, relates to the basic *human activity* that literature, in an interdisciplinary perspective, *both* is engaged in *and* represents. Any logical form that does not embrace the activity that literature both is and represents will miss the point and push narratology into oblivion. The term narrative has multiple references: it embraces the basic human attempt to organize experience in such a way that we can situate our experience spatio-temporally in rela-

tion to a subject; moreover, it covers the process of telling; and finally, it includes the plot structure of texts. This activity has to be re-addressed by the globally determined local cultures that will increasingly define our daily living space and which, on a daily basis, will display a variety of disrupted norms, tastes, symbols and behaviors of different cultural origins. Such globally conditioned local entities will be shaped as a collage of times, spaces and subjectivities that can compete with any modernist linguistic or visual experiment. This cultural amalgamation challenges the identity of human actions that constitute cultures, a challenge we meet through narratives.

2) The second term, discourse, is connected to the *medium* with which literature works, i.e. language, in an interdisciplinary perspective. The constantly reorganized media environment in which we live forces us to reinvestigate literature in terms of its media specificity. The purpose of the study of literature in this perspective is not to zoom in on its exclusiveness *vis-à-vis* other media or uses of media, but to see how literature is part of a dynamics of changing and interrelated media and media functions that shapes cultures and subjects rather than depicting, expressing or constituting models for them.

Narrative presents the focus of literary studies; discourse analysis provides us with its analytical goals and tools.

Controlled Sequencing

Therefore, a working definition of literature that allows us to work along these lines will not focus on the distinctive features of literature or of the study of literature in an attempt to separate it unambiguously from all other phenomena or disciplines. Instead, it will have to focus on features that locate literature in its different functional contexts, based on its quality as a linguistically mediated aesthetic phenomenon. Such features will also necessarily make literary studies interact with other disciplines. To this end, literature may be characterized as a *process of controlled sequencing*.

Here, 'control' does not mean that literature follows the strict rules of logical inference or deductive proof. It only makes us aware that literature is not a random activity. The non-randomness refers, on the one hand, to the *medium*: to acquire a communicative function in a cultural environment literature has to adapt to certain basic rules that govern the production of language and of literary forms. On the other hand, control in this open sense also relates to human *consciousness*: imaginative structures and creative and receptive processes, as explored by psychoanalysis, anthropology, and cognitive sciences among others, impose certain rules on literary creation and communication when human subjects are involved. If not, literature would not be intersubjectively compre-

hensible. The aim of *discourse analysis* will be to interconnect the media-generated processes of signs with the consciousness-generated process of subjectivity.

Nor does ‚sequencing‘ relate to formal logic, but rather to the fact that literature, being bound to language, has to proceed according to a rhythmic order both when produced and received, and that this sequentiality, therefore, will have to be at the core of any study of literature. Order in this sense is connected to the literary *medium*, as Ferdinand de Saussure stated when linguistics was about to turn: language is always manifested in a time-bound order both on the level of sounds and on the level of syntax. The sequential order of the medium is so intimately related to narrative structures that it has been claimed, by A.J. Greimas as well as by J. Hillis Miller, that there is a narrative nucleus in all literary genres, not only in the epic genres. Anyway, since Aristotle, the sequential quality of literature has been essential for a conception of its subject matter or *content*: told or shown, literature represents human actions.

That is to say that the subject matter represented is not just any event or series of events, but actions that can be measured against a certain purposiveness, that is *human* actions that can be embodied in a human form, prosopopeitically, as it were. It is necessary to underline, however, that sequentiality does not mean a one-dimensional or purely linear order, but an order that, as emphasized in new ways in the electronic media, has always been constituted by an intertwining of linear and non-linear principles. Thus, in literature, the focus on *narrative* inseparably links the media generated process with the content generated process. Or, as Aristotle reminds us in his *Nicomachean Ethics*:

„Our discussion will be adequate if it has as much clearness as the subject-matter admits of, for precision is not to be sought for alike in all discussions, any more than in all products or crafts“.¹

In the 20th century, the study of literature from the media specific perspective has mainly been carried out by formalist approaches (structuralism, semiotics, narratology, structural semantics, new criticism etc.), whereas an interest in structures of consciousness, intentional actions and their – perhaps contradictory – representations has mostly been formulated by phenomenologically oriented strategies (reader-response criticism, deconstructionism, cognitive psychology, dialogism, speech act analysis, etc.).

The implications embedded in the open characterization of literature that I have suggested with narrative as an essential reference point, allow us to make

¹ Richard McKeon: *Nicomachean Ethics*. In: Richard McKeon (ed.): *Introduction to Aristotle*. With a general introduction and new introductions to the particular works by Richard McKeon. 2d ed., rev. and enl. Chicago 1973, pp. 337-581. Here: p. 347.

the controlled sequencing specific and concrete in four different respects: (1) the *medium*, (2) the *representation* and, in the subjective dimension, (3) the *text producer* and (4) the *text receiver*. With regard to the medium and the logic of representation, the overall tendency of the formalist movements has been to see the producer and the receiver as positions entirely determined by the arbitrariness of medium and representation. Phenomenology, on the contrary, has *grosso modo* subsumed representation and medium under the two subjective poles as instances of their intentionality. If narratology continues, it will have to bridge these two polar positions.

Narrative and Discourse Analysis

Both narrative and discourse bring the historical dimension home to textual analysis after its troubled status. The focus on *narrative* rearticulates the conception of the basics of literature from Aristotle to the presumed death of the great narrative and the numerous experiments with the novel and other prose genres during the 20th century. The possibility and necessity of narration are brought up, over and over again, whenever human identity in relation to time, space, and other humans is shattered and their possibility to interact with their cultural context and to locate themselves in it is disturbed. The fundamental questioning of the cultural context itself in the age of globalization, more than that of its particular components, will no doubt give the narrative endeavor a new impetus. Therefore, we will have to focus less on the formal structures of narratology and more on the heterogeneity of Bakhtin's dialogism, the homogeneity of Paul Ricœur's reflections on time and narrative, and the cognitive approach emphasizing the world-making character of language-bound narrative processes and processes of embodiment, as in, for example, Marie-Laure Ryan or various cognitive theories of metaphor.

Discourse analysis has been developed since the late 1960s, trying, from different starting points, to bring the four poles (medium, representation, producer, receiver) on equal footing, with Karl Bühler's phenomenologically inspired axiomatic doctrine of language as a basis. Hence, discourse analysis, like the concern with narrative, re-elaborates important steps in the history of literary criticism, if M.H. Abrams and H. Adams are to be trusted (which I think they are): since Plato the understanding of the quality of literature has laid a shifting emphasis on one or another of the four poles. This synthesizing development has prepared the ground for a new attempt to unite the two mainstreams – the logical and the textual as mentioned above –, thereby enabling us to contextualize literature as a cultural practice in view of its media specific potential.

Discourses

The aim of discourse analysis is to make the focus on narrative analytically accessible in the literary medium. Three main trends have been competing since the 1960s.

First, we have a *linguistically* oriented discourse analysis that moves from analysis of syntax and syntactical components to larger narrative units, first of all stressing those linguistic elements that expose the situated character of language, especially deixis of time, space, and subjects involved in the linguistic process. The groundwork for this type of discourse analysis was done by the Russian formalists with their distinction between *fable* and *subject*, later reformulated by E. Benveniste, G. Genette, R. Barthes and others as the distinction between *discourse* and *history*, discourse referring to the mode of telling or showing via point of view, time constructs, etc., history to the series of actions told or shown. Thus, discourse is the linguistic-rhetorical strategy situating the text in a concrete spatio-temporal context through the communicative process in which the implied subject positions are made visible.

Secondly, we have *phenomenologically* oriented discourse analysis, basically outlined by P. Ricœur and M. Merleau-Ponty. According to this approach discourse is not bound to a specific medium but to a general organisation of human consciousness as an embodied phenomenon. Intentionality is seen as the general capacity of any consciousness to be conscious about something, and this basic object-orientation is articulated by the sign process organized in an irreversible order oriented toward an object. As an object in general, it is presupposed by the chain of signs, and as a specific object, it is constituted and defined by the sign sequence. The irreversibility of the orientation of the signs also covers the anaphoric reference to a previous sign (e.g. ,see above‘), because the anaphora takes place as the production of a new sign (as in the Peircean semiosis). Discourse, as already formulated by Viggo Brøndal, is this irreversible intentional order of signs including various types of intentionality, from a basic intentionality constituting a general object through steps of specifications to the purely instrumental intentionality of the conscious human will.²

If irreversibility is one important aspect of discourse in a phenomenological perspective, subjectivity is the other. In discourse, the symbol-producing subject is situated in two dimensions. It is located in relation to other subjects and, at the same time, in relation to the referential dimension, that is to the object towards which the symbolizing process is oriented. As consciousness is embodied in a human body, discourse makes this body a locus of subjectivity, no

² Cf.: Svend Erik Larsen: *Les maillons du langage*. In: *Langages* 86 (1987) [*Actualité de Brøndal*], pp. 95-110.

longer *a* body but *my* body. Discourse is constitutive of embodied subjectivity and, being irreversible, it constitutes subjectivity as a temporal and thus historical phenomenon. The object addressed and the subject constituted as given by the discourse and, therefore, their ontological status vis-a-vis each other (real, imagined, dreamt, fictional, etc.) cannot be determined without recourse to an ongoing discursive process.

Thirdly, we have *sociologically* oriented discourse analysis, delineated by two almost irreconcilable opponents, M. Foucault and J. Habermas. If contextualization is the headline of linguistic discourse analysis and subjectivity that of phenomenological discourse analysis, power is the basic concern of sociological discourse analysis.

As language contains a grammar and all of us have a linguistic competence in at least one mother tongue, we all have the possibility to express ourselves freely without any distortion determined by political and other power agencies. Such restrictions only occur in a specific context. The universality of natural languages sets the ideal conditions for free human communication. This is J. Habermas' position from which he defines certain contexts as institutionalized frames for the actual manifestation of such ideal communication: the context of science, the context of law. Discourse is language manifested in such frames fulfilling the ideal conditions.

But as we know from linguistic discourse analysis, language works on the basis of marked differences both in the communicative dimension, e.g. between ,I' and ,you', and in the referential dimension, where semantic specificity is defined in structures of hierarchically organized differences. Wherever we have differences, we are prepared for the exercise of power and hegemonical behavior. So, by its very nature language is an instrument of power. This is the position of M. Foucault. His reason for introducing the concept of discourse is to analyze how power and knowledge are linked and how they regulate practical actions, not on an individual but on an institutionalized collective basis. Discourse exercises power through symbolic action.

By means of symbols power as discursive practice (e.g. training in schools) produces a simultaneous exclusion and inclusion from the field of acceptable human actions, separating what is knowable from the unknowable, the acceptable from the unacceptable, the known from the foreign, and so forth. Thus, discourse lays the ground for the basic narratives and narrative modes of a culture: in Habermas' case, narratives about the fate of ideal conditions of communication or, in Foucault's, about the conflictual experiments with the material, symbolic and institutional borders of a culture.

In literary studies, Foucault's discourse analysis has been immensely influential, e.g. in minority studies or in post-colonial studies, whereas Habermas'

influence on the study of literature is rather limited. Literary studies have also been enhanced by linguistically based discourse analysis, particularly in structuralism and semiotics. Especially the works on narrator strategies and viewpoints have been important. But also this trend is only one third of the whole story.

The outline of discourse analysis that I envision in the development of the study of narratives will be a unified version of the three dimensions of discourse analysis, with the phenomenologically oriented dimension as the basic reference point. The reflection on the embodied subject and its relation to intersubjective symbol formations will be the core of the narratives, also when new media question the relation between subject and body and when the cultural disruptions of time and place challenge intersubjective relations. This becomes clear when we take into account the numerous studies using the cognitive quasi-phenomenological theories of metaphors and image schemata in order to understand the media interface, both in terms of what is happening on the screen when we use it and our actions in front of the screen.³ Here, media specific sequential order, both performed and represented, is crucial for the contextualization of the medium through its use.

Théramène's Narrative

However, to illustrate my point, I will wind up my argument in suggesting a brief analysis of a particular narrative: the so-called 'le récit de Théramène' from Racine's *Phèdre* (1677),⁴ relating the violent death of Hyppolite to his

³ Cf. for example the not so new pedagogical program Story Space developed by G. P. Bolter e.a. in 1992 and P. Maglio and T. Matlock's more recent overview *Metaphors We Surf the Web by* (in: *Journal of Cognitive Science* 1998 pp. 1-9) and J. D. Bolter and R. Grusin's programmatic *Remediation* (Cambridge/MA 1999).

⁴ Spitzer's *The „récit de Théramène“* is a thorough and inspiring compositional and stylistic analysis of the 'récit', but only in relation to the events and the emotions referred to. He does not situate the 'récit' as an act of enunciation as I do in my analysis. (Cf.: *The „récit de Théramène“*. In: Leo Spitzer: *Linguistic and Literary History. Essays in Linguistics*. Princeton 1967 (1948), pp. 87-134.) – In Reiss' analysis we find an interpretational overkill when he takes the (possibly) only passé simple in the 'récit' („apporta“) as a symptom of a shift of an entire world view. He does not situate the 'récit' as part of a dramatic dialogue; that is, as spoken although elevated French, where passé simple is reduced but cannot be avoided, simply due to rules of grammar and not to stylistic choices (as can be seen in, for instance, the 'récits' of Phèdre in Act I, sc. iii and Aricie in Act II, sc. i). He uses Thésée's acceptance of Aricie as his daughter to support the view that a new world view emerges: she is not of the family and without forefathers among the gods. But he overlooks that Aricie is Thésée's niece and already part of the family and therefore also with heavenly ancestors. His point that le passé simple can be used only with reference to events prior to the beginning of the

father Thésée, who has inflicted the painful death on his son upon presuming him guilty of incest with his stepmother, Phèdre, the wife of Thésée. Obeying a curse pronounced by Thésée, a sea monster emerges from the sea and kills Hypolite. Only after Théràmène's story, and as an effect of it, does Thésée learn about Hypolite's innocence and redeem his guilt in accepting Hypolite's secret fiancée, Aricie, daughter of his enemy, as his own daughter.

I chose this narrative for several reasons: First, it is an already situated narrative thus emphasizing the importance of *contextualization* as part of the narration. Secondly, it is part of a non-narrative genre, tragedy, which nevertheless, through Aristotle's *Poetics*, defined an ideal narrative logic, the linear logic of dramatic action, which was unquestioned for centuries. Nevertheless, this is not a general logic, but only a logic for selected events: even when violent action is crucial for the dramatic action, it is not allowed to be performed on stage but only to be told. Hence, Théràmène's story is part of a *heterogeneous* narrative complexity of telling and acting. Thirdly, our story is a narrative positioned in a field of several active media, that of dramatic performance. Thus, it is part of an *intersemiotic* activity, like the modern electronic media or like film. Fourthly, the story is a prototypical element of the tragedy since the Greeks. We find it, although conceived differently, in Euripides' *Hippolytos* as well as in Seneca's *Hippolytus*. In Euripides, Hippolytos, dying and forgiving his father, is brought on stage immediately after the 'récit'. In Seneca, the messenger talks at length in a rhetorically overelaborated style that almost decontextualizes the narrative. The bloody remnants of Hippolytus are finally produced on stage in this more melodramatic piece. Only in Racine does the embedded narrative both narrate the terrible event and call forth its practical and cognitive consequences. It is narrative as symbolic action, exemplifying the *power in narration* and the *power of the narrative act*.

Observing and Voicing the Events

The basis of Théràmène's story is a dialogue between voices embodied on stage, structurally similar to what is going on between disembodied narrative voices and characters in a novel. Like a hyper-personal narrator preparing for a character to unfold his story, or like the implicit reader – or listener to an oral

drama in order to respect the three units, has no bearing on Phèdre's 'récit' in Act V, sc. vii – she simply uses French grammar when introducing a few *passé simple* when relating events from and not prior to the first acts. (Cf.: Timothy Reiss: *Tragedy and Truth*. New Haven 1980.) (Barrault does not seem to see any specific significance in the use of *le passé simple*. He does not make any comments on *le passé simple* in his detailed report on the *mise en scène* of Phèdre [Cf.: Jean-Louis Barrault: *Mise en scène de Phèdre de Racine*. Paris 1994]).

narration – expressing his impatience to see the story take off, Thésée opens act V, sc. vi with a series of questions. Thus, Théràmène's story is both an active communicative act and an act of reference to what actually happened, modulating its strategy and its narrative devices both in relation to the narrated events and in relation to the explicit receiver, Thésée, and the implicit receiver, the audience. Thésée is nailed to the ground because of the uniqueness of the events in *his* life and, here, their uniqueness is simply that they are unknown to *him*. In general, as the audience will know, will know that gods kill people, use monsters for that purpose and make it happen rather randomly; what else is new? But as the opening lines reveal, this is a unique case according to any standards: „le plus aimable“ and the „le moins coupable“, impersonated in the same person, Hyppolite, is dead.

So, the act of narration and the events are both, and first of all, dialogically situated in three dimensions:

1) *In relation to Thésée*: Théràmène tells something Thésée does not know and does not want to know.

2) *In relation to the audience*: Théràmène tells something that is known in general, but in this extreme case is improbable. Hence, it has to be told as something they want to know but can hardly believe. In both cases the story has to be dragged out; in the first case in order to spare Thésée's feelings (and maybe his household from his anger or grief), and in the second case to convince the audience that what is told is true. This influences the third dimension:

3) *In relation to the events*: Théràmène does not tell what has happened but what he has seen happen. The role of *sight* is repeated from Thésée's first words and thus positions the dialogue as part of a drama: he tells us, the audience, that he sees Théràmène cry and thus, we see it, too. But now Théràmène goes on claiming to have actually seen the impossible take place: the kindest and least guilty person dies. Then, through the story, he reports what he has seen – hence the audience can be sure it is true (and Thésée as well, of course) – and he does so in the sequential order of the process of visual perception, that is, at a pace that is digestible for the terrified Thésée and for the curious audience with space for details and for reflection. This process culminates in a double visual perception: Théràmène observes the mourning Aricie observe her dying fiancé – seeing what is not to be seen, a situation that is diametrically opposed to Théràmène's initial observation of the non-observing Hippolyte who takes leave with downcast eyes.

Thus, the sight gradually expands its meaning from a mere dramatic convention via perceptual observation and verification to the symbolic meaning of insight, actually created by and through the narrative symbolic act, an insight

that has an impact on the actions immediately following the ‚récit‘. Sight embraces the three dimensions above.

Parallel to the role of sight is the role of the *word*: the problem of not being able or willing to utter certain words always has an immediate dramatic effect, theatre being based on embodied verbal dialogues (neither Phèdre nor Hypolite can tell until after the ‚récit‘ what was actually going on between them). The questions first put by Thésée are an invitation to transform an experience beyond words into language. In the ‚récit‘ itself the first reference to words concerns the non- or pre-linguistic „cri“ or „voix formidable“ from the underground. Then the words from Hyppolite that cannot be recognized or listened to are followed by Théràmène’s doubtful „on dit qu’ on a vu.“ Only later does Théràmène tell that understandable words are uttered – he addresses himself the dying young man whose words then are repeated literally in direct speech, including their interruption („Qu’ il lui rende...“). Life culminating in a heroic monster-fight and words culminating in an utterance of sublime forgiveness are broken off at the same time in a truncated sentence, leaving it to Théràmène to accomplish Hyppolite’s act and word in telling what he has seen and heard. Also, the abrupt ending makes it necessary for him to do so, because „l’œil même de son père“ could not recognize Hyppolite and the father has not heard his words. Even the faithful Aricie is not reliable enough – she has not heard the last words, and in brackets Théràmène suggests that the sight of Hippolyte is too much for her, whereas he is the both empathetic and well-informed clear-headed observer.

The entire ‚récit‘ therefore anchors the events in relation to the two specific receivers: Thésée and the audience, and locates the narrating subject, Théràmène, as the only possible and reliable and therefore necessary narrator. This is made clear when after the *peripeteia*, the attack of the monster, he addresses Thésée in order to underscore both his reliability and his compassion. In the final scene of the tragedy his story is immediately turned into action and a definitive emotional balance is also produced. From this point of view, and in contrast to a classical and more recent formalist narratology, an analysis of the narrated events and their sequential logic cannot be separated from an analysis of the narration as a contextualized communicative act.

Discursive Anchoring

This construal of a subject, necessary for the specific sequential order of the narrative, is produced by Théràmène through his use of a series of media specific discursive devices of indexical character, first and foremost verbal conjugation and demonstrative and possessive pronouns. Let us take a look at the

pronouns first. In the case of Hyppolite, the hands, the chariot, the horses, the men are not presented by the use of the definite article, but *mostly* by possessive pronouns (,son‘, ,sa‘, ,ses‘). The same goes *grosso modo* for the perceptual details of the sea-monster, too – the forehead, the body (,son front“, ,son corps“). The guard accompanying Hyppolite is collectively united behind a ,leur“ (Aricie is an exception, though). This use of pronouns creates a cohesion between the two main characters and their qualities, a unity that is thus discursively produced from what Théràmène has seen: they both stand out as unique, being one with their body, their belongings and their actions.

The demonstrative pronouns (,ce cri redoutable“, ,ce monstre sauvage“, ,ce héros“ etc.) are the way in which the sense of presence of the narrator is produced, and thereby also the authenticity of his observation and the reliability of his story: Believe me, I was there!

Now, the representation of presence through discursive means brings us to the verbal conjugation. As is well-known the past, present and future tenses bring narrated events in relation to the moment of enunciation and thereby to the narrating subject in its act of narrating. The aspects – in French *le passé simple* and *l'imparfait* – create a difference inside the past tense in relation to the narrated events, namely, between events of a finite occurrence (beginning, ending, interruptions, emergence, etc. – *le passé simple*) and events of a permanent or ongoing character, often forming the background of the first (*l'imparfait*). In spoken French, and more so today, *le passé simple* is most often replaced by *le passé composé* with the finite verb in the present tense thereby relating the past events to the ongoing unfolding of the speaking – or narrating – subject and thus reflecting the fact of the ongoing process of speech. In this case, *l'imparfait* forms the background of these past events – the scene of the narrated events is also seen as part of the scene of enunciation. In dramatic and thus actually spoken dialogue, also in the case of Racine, the most used verbal forms are, of course, the present tense, *l'imparfait*, *le passé composé*, and more rarely *le passé simple*, whereas the future is neutral to these changes.

Théràmène's story, like the stories of Phèdre (I, sc. iii) and Aricie (II, sc. i), is a story embedded in a spoken dialogue. It is therefore marked by the fact that it, like any narrative, relates past events to an audience as well as by the fact that the events and the narrating subject are situated on dialogical conditions. It is of no importance to the discursive strategy whether this audience is explicit or implicit or whether the dialogue is fictional or not.

The main verbal forms used are the present tense, *l'imparfait* and *le passé composé* as in all other dramatic dialogue (and more complex composite forms modifying those main forms). The future is used occasionally. *L'imparfait* is

used more frequently than in other parts of the dialogue, due to the character of this segment as an embedded story. *Le passé simple* is used once („apporta“), perhaps followed by another which, though, may be a present tense („fuit“).

The main discursive device to make the story stand out from the standard use of enunciative markers in a dramatic dialogue is the use of *le présent historique*, which brings the events to life in the moment of narration. It is not just a way of making the whole scene more vibrant for the audience, as is often claimed, but stressing its relation to the narrating subject and thus underscoring that we are engaged in an act of speech with the narrator as responsible subject. Thus, the events are related as being conditioned by observation, by memory and by the media bound rhetorical skills implemented in the narration. The events and those conditions are inseparably linked together.

This inseparability is the core of narratology.

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