

Call for Papers

Point of View, Perspective, Focalization: Modeling Mediacy

International and Interdisciplinary Symposium of the Narratology Research Group at the University of Hamburg (established by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft/German Research Foundation)

October 13 – 15, 2006

Every act of verbal representation is inevitably conditioned by a standpoint and thus always mediates a specifically limited and structured view of the facts conveyed. The figurative expression of 'standpoint' can be further specified by determining positions in space and time, concepts of reality and world views as well as modes of perception and forms of articulation.

On account of the variety as well as the stratification of their entities and levels of mediation (abstract author, narrator, characters), narrative texts offer a particularly complex array of dimensions and modes of perspective. In narratological literature, these are referred to by numerous terms and in various degrees of differentiation, for example angle of view, visual focus, *point of view*, perspective, or focalization – with further subclassifications such as internal and external focalization, focalized from within and without, or the spectrum of perceptive, psychological, and ideological facets or parameters of focalization. Moreover, terms of perspective also differ as to the depth and reach of modeling: Whereas 'focalization,' for instance, is usually restricted to the perceptive orientation of characters (figural perspectivations) and *point of view* mainly stands for the narrator's view of the incidents (narratorial perspectivations), 'perspective' may also comprise the selection and combination of the elements of the mediated incidents. Since these different aspects of perspective, although predominantly of a non-verbal nature (such as perceiving, judging, feeling, knowing), are nevertheless all verbally mediated (by the narrator's voice), questions arise as to the possibilities of differentiating not only among the individual aspects or facets of perspectivation, but also between these and the narrator's voice. To what extent can perceiving (in the sense of 'perspectivating') and mediating (in the sense of 'speaking') actually be separated from each other? Is it possible to subsume 'voice' under 'perspective' by assigning the parameters 'verbal organization and ideological orientation' to perspectivation? Is it useful for the practice of text analysis to join voice and perspective in syncretical umbrella terms like 'narrative situation', i.e., does the practical analysis benefit from this loss of theoretical differentiation?

Other questions concern the relationship between micro- and macro-perspectives, i.e., on the one hand, practical methods for deducing the overall perspectival organization of an entire text (the structure and constellation of perspectives and their genre-specific characteristics) from the perspectival implications of semantic units or individual text elements and, on the other, the connectability (and the mode of connection) of textual perspectivations with the cultural and sociohistorical context. In addition, important topics for discussion result from questions about the status of perspective in comparable constellations of mediation in other media, e.g. in the connections between picture and text, or in the movies.

The aim of the symposium is the productive theoretical and methodological clarification of this complex and its elements by means of new approaches. Innovative contributions are invited that are systematically and theoretically oriented and address one or more of the following problems: (1) differentiation and correlation of perspective and voice, (2) reflections on the reach (the range of spectrum) and the depth of the modeling of 'perspective', (3) differentiation and correlation of individual aspects and facets of perspective (distinct differences or overlappings), (4) correlating semantic micro-structures and overall perspectivations or aspects of perspectivation, (5) correlating textual perspectivations with cultural and sociohistorical contexts, reflections on historical or national preferences for the organization of perspective as well as on the anthropological dimension of perspective, (6) applications and differentiations of 'perspective' in the spectrum of the media.

Contributions to the symposium – in the form of problem-related theoretical studies or as 'case studies' (combining theoretical reflections with illustrative examples), however, no mere

applications and no research reports – should not exceed the length of 30 minutes and preferably be formulated in English or, in exceptional cases, in German.

Date and place: Friday, October 13 (noon), until Sunday, October 15, 2006 (noon) at the University of Hamburg, Edmund–Siemers–Allee 1 (east wing, room #).

Proposals of about 700 words are to be submitted by November 15, 2005 to the organizers (Peter Hühn, Wolf Schmid und Jörg Schönert) (huehn@uni-hamburg.de; wschmid@uni-hamburg.de; j.schoenert@uni-hamburg.de). The final selection will be made by December 15, 2005.

Expenses: The participants of the symposium are requested to apply at their universities and/or their respective national organizations for grants to finance their expenses for travel and accommodation. If this is not (or not sufficiently) possible, the Narratology Research Group will file an application for a reimbursement of these expenses (or shares of it) from the funds of the German Research Foundation (DFG).