Postclassical Narratology

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The issue to be discussed in this essay concerns narratological terminology, but involves different conceptualizations of theoretical design as well. The essay will be concerned with the relationship between Stanzel’s fundamental defining feature of narrative, its mediacy, on the one hand, and the discussions of narrative mediation or transmission (Chatman) on the other. While Stanzel’s mediacy focuses on the mediateness of narrative, on the fact that the story (histoire) is mediated through the narrative report (Erzählerbericht) of a narrator figure, Chatman’s transmission and what has recently come to be called mediation concern the process of (re)medialization of one histoire or one version of a story into different, especially multi-medial, discourses (e.g., film, ballet, drama, etc.). The contrasting of mediacy and mediation, as I will explain below, thematizes different definitions of narrativity and partially incompatible notions of discourse. Both models do, however, rely on a distinction between a deep-structural histoire (story) and a surface-structural discourse conceived in a variety of ways.

A second term of continuing prominence in narratological debates is that of focalization. In classical models such as Mieke Bal’s, focalization is positioned as a process applying between the story and discourse levels of narrative (see Chatman 1986: 22; Bal 1985: 501). Especially in Bal, focalization does not entirely synchronize with mediation, though some media presum-

1. Bal divides her levels into fabula (≈ Chatman’s story), plot (“restructured fabula”) and text (i.e. the words on the page). In her model, focalization mediates between the levels of fabula and plot.
ably involve the application of necessary or standard types of focalization. While focalization and mediation can therefore be argued to have some overlap, focalization and mediacy seem to stand in a relationship of complementary distribution both practically and theoretically. Practically, focalization (qua point of view) in Stanzel’s model seems unrelated to mediacy since it does not have any direct impact on the mediating discourse of the narrator; story is not transformed into text by means of adding a point of view. Paradoxically, since the mediating narrator does not “see,” this opens up a “who sees” (the reflector mode protagonist) versus “who speaks” (the narrator) dichotomy within Stanzel’s theory. Theoretically, focalization and mediacy clash in their role as representatives of Genette’s versus Stanzel’s models. As the reader will remember, focalization is a term invented by Genette, whereas Stanzel’s three narrative situations combine different types of storytelling or narration with different types of focalization (“perspective”), and he also distinguishes between perspective and mode, both of which have affinities with standard conceptions of point of view or focalization. Looking at the interrelations between focalization and mediacy in Stanzel’s model and contrasting mediacy and mediation may help to bring out some underlying parallels between a number of processes that are said to operate between the story and discourse levels of narratives. Such an inquiry also poses the question of to what extent a reconstruction of story from the discourse can be parallelized with the medial transformation of stories, plots or already existing discourses (Babes in the Wood as material, as story/plot, as a fairy tale transposed into film, cartoon, novel, etc.).

REVISITING STORY AND DISCOURSE—
NO MEDIA/CY/TION WITHOUT DICHOTOMIZATION

Practically all models of narrative theory repose on the story/discourse dichotomy, and they usually approach this binary opposition as a before/after sequence: first there is the story and then one transforms it into a discourse by means of narration by a narrator or through a specific medium like film or theatrical performance or ballet. The origins of the dichotomy lie in Russian formalism and its distinction between fabula and syuzhet (Shklovsky 1965: 57; Eichenbaum 1965: 121–22; Erlich 1965: 240–1), complemented (and muddied) by the story/plot opposition according to E. M. Forster (1990: 42; 86–87). Forster, as one remembers, contrasts story as a sequence of actions with plot (sequence of actions plus motivation): on the one hand, The king died. Then the queen died; on the other, The king died. Then the queen died.
of grief. By contrast, the Russian formalist distinction focuses on the rhetorical rearrangement of story elements in the discourse, illustrated with panache by Shklovsky on the example text of *Tristram Shandy* (Shklovsky 1965). In the later development of narratology, Forster’s distinction has been relegated to the deep structure of narrative: plot and story are now often treated as one level that is anterior to the narrative discourse. In fact, the journey from the events themselves (*Geschehen*, cp. Schmid 2005: 241–72) to story or plot (*Geschichte*), and then on to discourse has been represented in a number of different ways as Korte (1985) and Fludernik (1993: 61–62) already outlined. In Seymour Chatman’s *Story and Discourse* (1978/1986), *narrative transmission* in verbal and visual narrative includes focalization (1986: 158–61). The move from the story level (focusing on existants and actions) to the discourse level (words, images) includes not only a possible rearrangement in the order of plot events (Genette’s anachrony in the category of tense), but also the introduction of focalization and voice (“who sees” and “who speaks”), the latter inflected in a medium-specific manner (see Chatman’s cinematic narrator—1990: 124–38). However, the assumed inclusion of focalization in narrative transmission will have to be modified in a close reading of *Story and Discourse* and in consideration of Chatman’s newer distinctions (1990: 139–60) between filter and slant (see below in the section Mediation and Focalization).

All of these models depart from the assumption that the story is a given and the discourse transforms it into the text as we have it before our eyes. Such a viewpoint is generative and production-oriented, assuming that the author creates a narrator, who then transforms the story (what happened) into the text/discourse we read. As has been pointed out, from the reader’s perspective the situation is entirely different since the reader reconstructs the story from the discourse, a process that may be quite laborious in some Modernist novels like James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922), William Faulkner’s *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936), or even in newer fiction like Timothy Findley’s *Famous Last Words* (1981) or Rudy Wiebe’s *The Temptations of Big Bear* (1995). All of these narratives require heroic efforts on the part of their readers to work out what happened in what order. What I would like to suggest, though, is that the readerly perspective is not exclusively a reception-oriented view of the story/discourse dichotomy, but that it also applies to the generative perspective. The story is always a construction and an idealized chronological outline. On the other hand, it also needs to be noted that nonfictional narra-

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2. See also the very useful summary in Wenzel (2004: 16–17), who even distinguishes between two layers of discourse.
tives and re-medializations clearly rely on a prior story (though not necessarily referent) which they transform into discourse.

As regards authors’ compositional practices, it is now widely established that these do not start with a story or plot and then literally choose between, say, an omniscient or first-person narrator, between a chronological or analeptic presentation of events, or between types of focalization. On the contrary, pronouncements by various authors on how they came to write their stories often allow us to glimpse a character trait, a key scene, a moral problem, and so on as the germ of the later narrative, and it is from that significant detail that decisions about presentation are developed. Specifically, many plot details are not known to authors when they start to write, as Dickens’s outlines for his later novels demonstrate to perfection. Taking plot as the basic ground on which discourse builds is therefore not very convincing from a generative perspective. The situation is, however, very different if there already exists a prior textual source for the narrative, for instance another novel, a fairy tale, a history book, or if the core of the story is a historical sequence of events which has already been canonized. Under these circumstances, transformations do indeed take place on a prior event sequence. Angela Carter’s re-writings of, respectively, “Beauty and the Beast” and “Bluebeard’s Chamber” in her “The Courtship of Mr. Lyon” and “The Bloody Chamber” in The Bloody Chamber (1979) obviously rely on their model reader’s familiarity with these fairy tales; only then can he/she optimally appreciate Carter’s feminist anti-patriarchal revisions of these sources. One should, however, note that such revisions also change the plot by reintroducing different settings and characters (the piano tuner in “The Bloody Chamber”) and therefore actually create a new plot (and a new discourse). Since the revision of the plot has ideological importance, it cannot be set aside as irrelevant to the creative process.3

Historical writing is even more complicated. On the one hand, there is no historical plot to start with, as Paul Veyne notes in his classic analysis (1971: 13–20); on the other hand, once historians have created the “history of the Peloponnesian War” or the “history of the rise of the gentry,” certain key events have been selected as prominent causes and results in a sequence whose teleological argument provides a storyline. This configuration (Ricoeur 1984–88) is then taken over by other historians, who add to the data, revise in accordance with new sources, and summarize “the story” in their own

3. For a superb discussion of such adaptations, as she calls them, see Hutcheon (2006). Hutcheon in particular discusses modifications of theme, character and plot as common foci of the adaptive process (7–8), thus indicating that adaptations often tend to rewrite the story level.
words. Historiography thus originally creates a new story, but often rewrites it once it has been outlined; indeed, only when a completely new interpretation becomes necessary in the light of recently retrieved evidence (e.g. the discovery and decipherment of the Linear B tablets) is a new story created. At the same time, owing to its factual pretensions, historiography always claims to tell a story that is prior to its narration since history is “out there” and supposedly independent of the individual historian’s text. (Hence the controversial status of Hayden White among historians; he seems to say that there are no events outside the historians’ inventions of stories, though in actual fact he merely queries our representations of those occurrences in story form.)

The story/discourse dichotomy, and especially the priority of the story, has recently been attacked by Richard Walsh (2001, reprinted in Walsh 2007), who also refers to a debate between Barbara Herrnstein Smith (1980) and Seymour Chatman (1981) in Critical Inquiry. Smith’s article is a sarcastic review of Chatman’s 1978 classic, Story and Discourse, basically from her perspective of a speech act paradigm of speech and writing, which is Smith’s preferred mode of approaching literature in her On the Margins of Discourse (1978). Smith’s major point of attack is the “Platonic,” as she terms it (1980: 213), nature of story in Chatman; in her view, story, like Plato’s ideas, does not exist in the real world. The only thing that exists is versions of stories (specifically discourses of Cinderella), including summaries, which are also discourses. Smith proposes that the reason that most people agree on a similar summary of a text is because they share a cultural background, have similar expectations of what a summary should look like, and deploy the same culturally transmitted genre conventions. Chatman’s reply to Smith focuses on the linguistic model and parallelizes story and discourse with the phonological phoneme/phone dichotomy: “The phonemes are as real as their actualizations on people’s lips; they are not some fuzzy Platonic idea but a reality, a construct by linguists from actual utterances and attributable to the configuration of articulational and semantic features” (1981: 804–5). Chatman’s more basic model is, however, Chomsky’s transformational grammar, since the entire point of reconstructing the underlying story for Chatman is to determine in what way the discourse differs from it (by way of anachronies, focalization, etc.).

It makes perfect sense to contrast the messy text that one has in hand with an idealized chronological story, which the reader needs to piece together in order to understand the narrative. One can also sympathize with narratological tendencies to logically put the story first (though not in terms of actual production). The point of Smith’s criticism that Chatman responds
to only vaguely and insufficiently is the one about the impossibility of finding a core version of Cinderella in its many manifestations from China to Peru. Chatman never really addresses this question. Smith, on the one hand, clearly confuses the chronology of a hypostatized story which belongs to any one discourse *with the mythic kernel* that supposedly lies beneath all Cinderella retellings in three hundred and more versions of that fairy tale. Most of the difficulties that Smith outlines actually touch on the existants (the prince is not a prince but the captain of a ship; Cinderella is the oldest sister) or the setting (cp. Hutcheon 2006: 7–8). The transformation of a chronological into an anachronistic discourse, on the other hand, presupposes the positioning of the *same plot* for both versions. Or, in other words, story/discourse transformations only make sense for *one* specific story version of Cinderella that is transformed into one specific verbal narrative or film or ballet. Different discourse versions of Cinderella in different media, on the other hand, all have their individual stories. Narrative transmission does not in fact coincide with remedialization (the rewriting of a myth), i.e. the presumed Ur-Cinderella responsible for the three hundred or more Cinderella tales on this globe. Where Smith is quite correct, therefore, is in showing that a *remedialization* cannot take the original text (and its story) as a starting point for the *same kind* of transformation that occurs between story and discourse in *one medium*. A rewriting of fairy tales and myths such as Angela Carter’s “The Erl-King,” “Puss in Boots” or “Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest” produces a different discourse (and a different story).

In his brilliant “Fabula and Fictionality in Narrative Theory” (2001; 2007: 52–68), Walsh inverts the classic story before discourse dichotomy by not only emphasizing discourse’s priority over story but by additionally arguing that “*sujet* (discourse) is what we come to understand as a given (fictional) narrative, and *fabula* (story) is how we come to understand it” (2007: 68). Rather than focusing on how we deform story to yield a rearranged discourse, Walsh sees the construction of fabula as a means of explicating the rhetoric of fiction: “Fabula is not so much an event chain underlying the sujet as it is a by-product of the interpretative process by which we throw into relief and assimilate the sujet’s rhetorical control of narrative information” (67); rather, fabula is “an interpretative exercise in establishing representational coherence” in order to achieve “rhetorical perceptibility” (ibid.).

The construction of fabula is needed for the interpretation of narrative (65). Walsh here seems to first cast out story (fabula) as the rock on which narratology reposes, but then ends up entrenching the distinction, yet does so from a functionalist rather than temporal (chronology-related) or generic perspective.
To return to our problem of mediacy, mediation, and focalization. One needs to point out that in classic narratological models, all three concepts rely on the opposition between the two levels of story and discourse and that the notions of mediation and focalization presuppose the priority of the deep structural level. (I am using Chatman’s classic formulation here.) Particularly in the case of mediation, this poses the question of whether a remediation of one story into another in a different medium (from novel to film, from fairy tale to Walt Disney production) actually is a remediation, or whether film or cartoon versions do not in reality have different plots which relate to the plots of the source narratives in a framework of family resemblances. Does the process of selection, restructuring, and media-related refocalization create a new story through a new discourse, or is it still the same story?

We will keep these conundra in mind. For the moment we have established that the dichotomy between story and discourse is basic to all recent theorizing about mediacy, mediation, and focalization. We also saw that traditional narratology in practice (though not always in theory) saw the story level as prior to the discourse level and conceived of the discourse as a transformation of the story through the medium of narration (which then included medial and focalizational aspects). We additionally noted that a reception-oriented perspective would tend to emphasize the construction of story from the discourse. A mediational focus, on the other hand, requires a stable plot on which mediation can build and therefore seems to argue for the priority of story. However, as I have suggested, remedialization and narrative transmission are perhaps two entirely different animals and should not be treated as equivalent.

**MEDIACY VERSUS MEDIATION**

When Stanzel introduced the notion of mediacy in 1955, he defined it in the following manner:

> Die vorliegende Untersuchung nimmt ihren Ausgang von dem zentralen Merkmal der Mittelbarkeit der Darstellung im Roman. Mittelbarkeit charakterisiert auch die Darstellungsweise im Epos. [. . .] Im Roman bezeichnet

4. The *de facto* priority of discourse is noted by Genette when he sees the story as the signified of the discourse. For criticism of the story/discourse relation see also Fludernik (1993: 61–63; 1994; 1996: 333–37). Wolf Schmid even has a diagram that visualizes the priority of discourse over story by arrows pointing from narration to discourse, from discourse to plot, and from plot to events (2005: 270).
die Mittelbarkeit der Darstellung jenen Sachverhalt, der von den oben angeführten Theoretikern des Romans in der Anwesenheit eines persönlichen Erzählers gesehen wird. [...] Die Auffassung, daß echte Darstellung im Roman nur durch die Vermittlung eines persönlichen Erzählers möglich wäre, ist in ihrem normativen Anspruch ebenso unhaltbar wie jene besonders von Spiegelhagen vertretene Ansicht, daß der Erzähler völlig unsichtbar zu bleiben habe. [...] In der Regel ist die Erzählung in einem Roman jeweils auf eine ganz bestimmte Art des Vermittlungsvorganges abgestimmt, die dann im ganzen Roman durchgehalten wird. Sie soll hier Erzählsituation genannt werden. Die Mittelbarkeit des Romans erhält in der Erzählsituation ihren konkreten Ausdruck: ein Autor erzählt, was er über eine Sache in Erfahrung gebracht hat, ein anderer tritt als Herausgeber einer Handschrift auf, jemand schreibt Briefe oder erzählt seine eigenen Erlebnisse, um nur einige geläufige Einkleidungen der Erzählsituation zu nennen. Solche Einkleidungen haben alle zum Ziel, im Leser die Illusion zu stärken, daß das Erzählte ein Teil seiner eigenen Wirklichkeitserfahrung sei. (1969: 4–5)

The present investigation takes as its point of departure one central feature of the novel—its mediacy of presentation. Mediacy or indirectness also characterizes the technique of presentation in the epic. [...] For these theoreticians [Petsch, Hamburger, Friedemann] the novel's mediacy of presentation consists in the presence of a personal narrator. [...] The view that authentic presentation in the novel is only possible through the mediation of a personal narrator is as untenable a normative criterion as the view, held notably by Friedrich Spielhagen, that the narrator ought to remain fully invisible. [...] As a rule, the narration in a given novel maintains a single fixed type of mediative process throughout the work. This mediative process will be called the narrative situation. The mediacy of the novel finds its concrete expression in the narrative situation: one author narrates the facts he has learned about a given subject; another appears as the editor of a manuscript; yet another writes letters or narrates his own experiences. These are only a few common guises of the narrative situation. Such guises all have the aim of strengthening the reader’s illusion that the narrated material is a part of his own experience of reality. (1971: 6–7)

In the first sentence of this passage Stanzel notes that mediation of the story by the narrator has generally been taken for granted and was thematized by Robert Petsch (1934), Käte Hamburger (1993), and Käte Friedemann (1965). His contribution to these antecedents is to show that Spielhagen’s ideal of objective, seemingly narrator-less type of narration (1883: 220) is also
mediated, and that mediation therefore manifests itself through a number of different narrative situations.

In his 1979/1984 *Theory of Narrative*, the concept of mediacy is elaborated differently, in relation to the opposition of narrative (epic) with drama, a contrast that Stanzel borrows from Pfister (1977/1991):

> The three *narrative situations* distinguished below must be understood first and foremost as rough descriptions of basic possibilities of rendering the mediacy of narration. It is characteristic of the *first-person narrative situation* that the mediacy of narration belongs totally to the fictional realm of the characters of the novel: the mediator, that is, the first-person narrator, is a character of this world just as the other characters are. [. . . ] It is characteristic of the *authorial narrative situation* that the narrator is outside the world of the characters. [. . . ] Here the process of transmission originates from an external perspective, as will be explained in the chapter on “perspective.” Finally, in the *figural narrative situation*, the mediating narrator is replaced by a reflector: a character in the novel who thinks, feels and perceives, but does not speak to the reader like a narrator. [. . . ] (Stanzel 1984: 4–5)

Stanzel then goes on to equate his concept of mediacy with Seymour Chatman’s *narrative transmission* (5). He proceeds to align foregrounded mediacy with the literariness of a narrative, citing Shklovsky’s *Tristram Shandy* essay as an analysis of foregrounded mediacy (6). Later in the introduction Stanzel reduces narrative transmission (mediacy) to the narratorial function. The narrator is either openly active in the telling of the tale or hides behind it:

> All those narrative elements and the system of their coordination which serve to transmit the story to the reader belong to the surface structure. The main representative of this transmission process is the narrator, who can either perform before the eyes of the reader and portray his own narrative act, or can withdraw so far behind the characters of the narrative that the reader is no longer aware of his presence. (16–17)

The main grounding of Stanzel’s mediacy thus lies in the verbal mediation of story by means of a narrator’s act of narration. Narrative is to be distinguished from drama by its mediacy. Whereas the story of drama is enacted on stage and therefore presented without mediation, immediately, narratives represent the events through the medium of verbal narration by a narrator figure. Stanzel’s model therefore relies on a definition of narrative
that excludes drama from it—a traditional German axiom that goes back to Goethe’s genre distinction between epic, poetry, and drama as the basic triad of available generic forms. Narrativity, in the sense of what constitutes a narrative,\(^5\) in Stanzel therefore includes a story versus discourse distinction and entails a mandatory narrational level figured in a narratorial persona (who/which may, however, be laid back, covert or even seemingly non-existent, as in reflector-mode narrative, i.e. in narratives of global internal focalization). Such a definition does not cover nonverbal narratives or drama; its presuppositions, especially that of the distinction between narrative, lyric, and dramatic modes, clearly proclaim that such an extension is not desired.

Although the exclusiveness of Stanzel’s definition of mediacy, and implicitly of narrativity, seems restrictive today, one does well to remember that the necessary existence of a narrator, and the privileging of the verbal act of narration, can also be found in Gérard Genette, who has been drastically outspoken regarding his rejection of Banfield’s no-narrator theory:

> Narrative without a narrator, the utterance without an uttering, seem to me pure illusion [. . .]. I can therefore set against its devotees only this regretful confession: “Your narrative without a narrator may perhaps exist, but for the forty-seven years during which I have been reading narratives, I have never met one.” Regretful is, moreover, a term of pure politeness, for if I were to meet such a narrative, I would flee as quickly as my legs could carry me: when I open a book, whether it is a narrative or not, I do so to have the author speak to me. And since I am not yet either deaf or dumb, sometimes I even happen to answer him. (Genette 1988: 101–2)

Parallelizing the reading process with narration, Genette humorously presents the activity of reading as a conversation with a person, the real author or narrator (in the case of a fictional narrative). Genette’s model goes beyond Stanzel’s in its focus on the level of narration, separating as it does the narrator as extraliegetic communicative instance on the one hand, and the product of his/her act of narration, the narrative discourse, on the other. It is precisely this split in the mediacy-constituting narrational transmission between sender and textual message that opened up the way for Seymour Chatman to include first film and later other media under the banner of narrative transmission. Chatman’s model allows for the existence of different “texts”—purely verbal, filmic, dramatic. It therefore implies the hypostatizing of a narrating instance

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5. In opposition to different definitions of narrativity as constructedness in Hayden White (1981) and in opposition to narrativehood in Gerald Prince (1982, 2008).
in film, drama, and even in other visual media (see Chatman’s cinematic narrator, 1990: 124–38).

Although both Stanzel and Genette anchor a narrator telling the story in their theoretical models, for Stanzel the narrator splits into two types—on the one hand an explicit teller in most first-person narratives and in authorial narratives with a foregrounded narrator figure; and on the other a disguised narrator in reflector-mode narratives, where the narrator is in abeyance, covert, seemingly absent, and the story seems to be “told,” i.e. conveyed, by a reflector figure (often called “narrator” by Booth, e.g. 1983: 274) or Jamesian “center of consciousness” (James 1934: xvii–xviii; 322–25). By contrast, Genette takes the narrator as fundamental, but combines voice, mode, and tense as inflections of the relationships between story, discourse, and narration. Although every narrative has a narrator, there is actually no real mediation going on since the narrator produces a discourse (the discourse being the signified of the narration as signifier), and the discourse in turn is the signifier of the story, its signified. This means that in Genette the one necessary thing is a narrator, and the story emerges indirectly as the signified of the narrational acts’ signified—it is at second remove from the story. Rather than subscribing to a story–discourse model, then, Genette’s typology actually consists of a double dyad or triad: A. narration-B. récit [B1 discourse-B2 story]. In fact, this dichotomy, in which one term of the binary opposition splits into a further dichotomy, is a recurring structure in Genette’s model. His model of focalization also works in the same way: focalization versus no focalization (focalization zéro), with focalization divided into internal versus external. One cannot speak of mediacy or mediation proper in Genette, but only of signification.

Stanzel, on the other hand, entirely focuses on mediation qua mediacy, but he exclusively means mediation through the narratorial discourse. The point of Stanzel’s model, however, is not so much to thematize mediation—this he really takes for granted as the constitutive feature of narrative (epic) in contrast to drama in so far as both genres tell a story—but to propose two types of mediacy, namely explicit and implicit or overt and covert, and to demonstrate how the pretense of immediacy in figural narrative can be achieved. Since the reflector character does not narrate and all narrative is mediate, how is mediacy achieved in this type of fiction which seems to provide immediate access to the experience of the characters, to the story? If immediacy were actually possible, this would militate against the axiomatic distinction between drama and narrative, but such dramatic immediacy is possible only rarely in dialogue novels; in figural narrative, instead, mediacy is camouflaged by the narrator’s sly disappearance behind the scenes,
allowing the reflector character’s psyche to move to the foreground, supplying a deictic center of orientation and evaluation. Stanzel therefore sees mediacy as a kind of mediation, but not in terms of different media (verbal telling versus visual, performative narrative), but of different types of verbal narrative—by means of either overt telling (first-person or authorial narrative) or “reflecting” through the center of consciousness within a narrative discourse that, as to its source, remains disguised, occulted, camouflaged. From the perspective of later Balian, Chatmanesque or Wolfian models, Stanzel’s theory is therefore not a theory of mediation but of mediacy—in so far the translation of *Mittelbarkeit*, literally “mediability,” is correct. It is a theory of the foregrounding or backgrounding of mediacy by the narratorial discourse, which is the one and only medium of narrative.

Stanzel, as the quotations cited above show, alternates between a dual and a triple manifestation of mediacy. On the one hand, the three narrative situations (first-person, authorial, and figural) are said to instantiate mediacy; on the other hand, the modal difference between telling and showing (reflecting) is constitutive of mediacy. This inconsistency could be related to the existence of two levels of mediacy. At some points, as in our first quotation (1969: 4–5), Stanzel seems to focus on the generic forms of mediacy, including the diary, the editor’s report and other frames in the various manifestations of mediacy; at other times the emphasis is on the (missing) narrator persona and veiled act of narration or on the foregrounding/backgrounding of narratorial mediation. From that latter perspective, the triad of narrative situations begins to slide into a dichotomy, since both first-person and authorial narratives have a clear narrator persona, with the exception (in Stanzel’s model) of the autonomous interior monologue. Cohn’s suggestion to reduce the three axes in Stanzel’s *Theory of Narrative* therefore articulates the unease triggered by the slide between a clear triadic and an equally obvious dual set-up within the model (Cohn 1981).

My own model in *Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology* extends Stanzel’s theoretical edifice by revising two of his presuppositions. First, it became clear to me that reflector-mode narrative substitutes consciousness for narration; the medium of figural narrative is therefore less a covert narrator hiding behind the mind of a protagonist than a different mode of cognitive conceptualizing of characters’ experience—*telling* versus *experiencing*. This then led to my addition of two further such frames—based on conversational narrative formats posited as prototypical and therefore of cognitive salience: *viewing* and *reflecting* (ideating) (see Fludernik 1996: 43–52). In my model there are thus four different ways in which forms of consciousness mediate narrative experience within frames. Later in the book I also integrated readers’ immersive
projections into that model when discussing Banfield’s empty center and Stanzel’s reflectorization technique (his *Personalisierung*) in contrast with what I called forms of figuralization (using Stanzel’s English term for his *personale Erzählsituation*, i.e. the *figural* narrative situation).  

Because viewing and experiencing are not based on discourse or language, this model additionally opened the way to a broader understanding of narrative and narrativity, which no longer remained limited to verbal narrative. Note, however, that the mediation of experientiality through cognitive frames, i.e. mediacy, is not at all equivalent or even comparable to media-related mediation per se—different cognitive frames may come into play in different media. The model therefore welcomes considerations of mediation, but without dropping the notion of mediacy as a separate category. For these reasons, it is important to continue to distinguish between the concepts of mediacy and mediation.

MEDIATION AND FOCALIZATION

Whereas, as we have seen, Genette’s focalization can be added to any possible narrative, Stanzel’s internal perspective is central to figural narrative texts, combining with the reflector mode: *grosso modo* one can say that mediacy comes either in teller or in reflector mode, and if in the latter, one has internal focalization à la Genette. (It is not important for our argument here that Genette’s internal focalization, Stanzel’s internal perspective, Stanzel’s figural narrative and his reflector mode do not all refer to precisely the same thing and have some very jagged edges.) Since Stanzel excludes all nonverbal narratives


7. Stanzel’s perspective “involves the control of the process of apperception which the reader performs in order to obtain a concrete perceptual image of the fictional reality” (1984: 111); thus “[i]nternal perspective prevails when the point of view from which the narrated world is perceived or represented is located in the main character or in the centre of events” (ibid.). Reflector-mode narrative, which also covers first-person texts, is marked by “a close correspondence between internal perspective and the mode dominated by a reflector character” (141), while the figural narrative situation contains a dominance of internal perspective with a prevailing reflector mode. But first-person reflector-mode narratives in Stanzel belong to the first-person narrative situation. As for Genette’s focalization, it is defined through a restriction of point of view *within* the narrative world (Genette 1972/1980: 185–6). This internal focalization seems to correspond almost precisely with Stanzel’s internal perspective, except that their opposites, external focalization and external perspective, differ radically. Internal focalization in Genette contrasts with external focalization—an external view of the fictional world which disallows insight into characters’ minds; whereas Stanzel’s external perspective characterizes the narrator’s all-encompassing vision on the fictional world including “his” omniscient ability to look into the protagonists’ minds. Thus, Fielding’s depiction of his
from consideration, the question of how to treat focalization in film does not pose itself within his theory. Nor is there a question of where to locate focalization. Since Stanzel only has one type of “focalization,” namely reflector mode narrative, which is one of two ways in which mediacy manifests itself, focalization therefore clearly “occurs” between the story level and the discourse level. Hence, it comes to rank with those transformations usually positioned in this space: the rearrangement of chronology (Genette’s category order) and the selection and compression process (Günther Müller’s Erzählen-zeit versus erzählte Zeit [1948]).

Once one starts to consider narrative as existing in several media, however, a long list of theoretical imponderables emerges; these have given rise to a number of diverse solutions. The possible relations between focalization and mediation clearly depend on which of these solutions one has espoused.

Let us start with Chatman since he is the prime exponent of the story and discourse definition of narrative, and the inventor, or at least popularizer, of the cinematic narrator concept. For Chatman, “point of view” (1986: 151–61) comes in three forms: perceptual point of view, conceptual point of view and interest point of view (1978: 152). Perceptual point of view refers to what a character sees; conceptual point of view refers to cognition and attitude; and interest point of view to the “passive state” (152) of being concerned, of practical interest, or life-orientation. Already in Story and Discourse, Chatman relates point of view to the story level: “point of view is the physical place or ideological situation or practical life-orientation to which narrative events stand in relation” (153; my emphasis). He clearly opposes point of view and voice: “Perception, conception, and interest points of view are quite independent of the manner in which they are expressed. [. . . ] Thus point of view is in the story (which is the character’s), but voice is always outside, in the discourse” (154; Chatman’s emphasis). Rather than seeing point of view constitutively as part of a transformation process, Chatman actually locates character’s point of view in the story, and allows the narrator a separate point of view which is separate from the action of telling, though still part of the transformation from story into discourse, I suppose.

In Chatman’s Coming to Terms (1990), the narrator is no longer allowed any point of view, but may have a slant, whereas characters’ point of view

characters’ consciousness would be global zero focalization (plus extradiegetic heterodiegetic narrative), possibly with minimal pockets of internal focalization, in Genette, but external perspective (and hence authorial narrative situation) in Stanzel.

8. In heterodiegetic narrative internal perspective coincides with the reflector mode; in homodiegetic narrative, internal perspective is just part of the dynamics of the first-person narrative situation.

9. In Genette, time of narration versus narrated time is subsumed under duration.
becomes a *filter* through which they perceive the narrative world (1990: 139–60). Chatman’s revised model foregrounds ideology, and it allows perceptual point of view only on the level of the characters: “I propose *slant* to name the narrator’s attitudes and other mental nuances appropriate to the report function of discourse, and *filter* to name the much wider range of mental activity experienced by characters in the story world—perceptions, cognitions, attitudes, emotions, memories, fantasies, and the like” (1990: 143; Chatman’s emphasis). Note that in *Coming to Terms* the point of view on the narratorial level is now subsumed under the “function of discourse” and not a stance superimposed on the narrational act. Focalization, perceptual and cognitive or ideological, therefore only relates to characters—there is no *external focalization* as in Genette (Chatman 1990: 145)! It has nothing to do with the point from which events are perceived but in fact seems to be equivalent to Stanzel’s reflector-mode: characters’ point of view is a filter through which the characters “experience” themselves and the world around them. Filter, in fact, “captur[es]” the “mediating function of a character’s consciousness” (144). It therefore emerges that the model which was most crucially responsible for entrenching the story/discourse dichotomy actually does *not* integrate focalization into it. In Chatman (1990) focalization does not arise from transformations between story and discourse, despite the explicit statement in *Story and Discourse* that it does: “Narrative transmission concerns the relation of time of story to the recounting of time of story [. . . ]: narrative voice, point of view, and the like” (1986: 22).

Let us now turn to Genette. In Genette, decisions about focalization for a whole text (what one could call macrofocalization, to distinguish it from Mieke Bal’s microfocalization in individual sentences), like the choice of homo- versus heterodiegesis, most probably take their origin in the author. (Genette rejects the construct of the implied author—Genette [1988: 136–45]—which/who would be held responsible for it by theorists like Rimmon-Kenan [1983] or Nünning [1989], who replaces the implied author by what he calls level 3 of communication, N3). If focalization is rooted in authorial decisions, it has no business with the mediational process (i.e. the transmission of story into discourse) because it would be located already at the level of the plot. Note that this conclusion crucially depends on definitional choices. Thus, the discourse is here taken to be the product of the narratorial process of narration, the words on the page. As soon as one moves into a different medium such as cartoon or film, the existence of a narrator and the descrip-

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10. Interest, renamed “interest-focus” (148–9), is now linked to the audience’s attention, wishing a character “good luck” (148).
tion of the “text” as the utterance by that narrator become less convincing propositions.

Once the concept of mediation is extended to media contexts, the theoretical problems multiply exponentially. One of these problems is to what extent focalization happens in the mediational process (see above) or is superimposed by the medium. This is an important question in film. One can, for instance, argue that, since film is a predominantly visual medium, in which the camera serves as a focalizer, film narrative is inherently focalizing so that there exists no zero focalization in accordance with Genette’s model (1980: 189–94; 1988: 121). Other theorists have argued that all films have external focalization since the default shot is one in which the scene is presented in an overview or bird’s-eye view which does not correspond to human vision. Subjective (internal focalization) shots are rare and require some manipulation: close-up shots, shot-reverse shot, eye-level shots that unnaturally cut off objects one would usually see as part of the picture, e.g. a shot taken from the perspective of a seated person looking at people passing by that cuts off people’s heads, or low-angle shots for individuals who seem overpowered by what is bearing down on them, such as children’s low-angle perspectives on the adult world.11 For film, Mieke Bal’s focalization terminology is even more useful than Genette’s since her distinction between focalizer and focalized allows one to contrast those shots in which the camera serves as focalizer and those in which a character focalizes events (Bal 1985). The latter are subjective shots. The waters become muddied, however, when the camera presents us with a face distorted by fear. This is clearly meant to be a subjective shot (in Bal’s terms of an invisible focalized, i.e. a character’s emotions), yet in the filmic medium this shot has to be visible, and it may be both the camera’s presentation of a character’s mind frame and the rendering of another character’s impressions of the fearful person. The camera’s pan from the scene as a whole to a character’s internal focalization corresponds to a shift from authorial narration to free indirect discourse or interior monologue; the already subjective vision of a character focusing on the emotions depicted or reflected in another character’s face corresponds to narrated perception (the observer’s impression of his/her interlocutor), and this impression may be objective in the sense that the visual medium would tend to show us the face of the fearful person as he/she really looked, but it might also be subjective (unreliable) in portraying the deranged or biased vision of the observer character (I do not have an example for this; but then I am no film specialist). The zoom on the

character’s fear-distended face would clearly mark a departure from neutral or objective camera shots, and it could be compared to an authorial or figural handling of the lens. Yet a close-up only becomes necessary in the framework of (authorial) wide-angle shots, since these do not allow the viewer to notice the expression on a character’s face (too small on the screen).

It is still relatively easy to determine whether or to what extent one can find equivalents of Genette’s three types of focalization or of Bal’s in films or cartoons; when it comes to plays, the problems proliferate, as we will see below. Moreover, once one starts to include other types of focalization models, the theoretical issues multiply even further. For instance, when using Manfred Jahn’s distinction between strict, ambient, and weak focalization (Jahn 1999), all films would presumably lie somewhere between strict and ambient, and some perspective camera-eye high-angle shots might even be regarded as weak focalization. The problem with this is that it entirely casts out subjectivity, which was of course the leading motive behind the introduction of focalization as a term designed to improve on the concepts of point of view and perspective. Another question is: to what extent can linguistic or ideological perspective, or affect, be rendered in film, and how does one describe the combination of visual, aural, and verbal elements that might result in similar effects? (I am here thinking of suggestive music hinting at a protagonist’s anxiety, or at impending danger; or of voice-over for interior monologue, usually combined with a close-up of the protagonist’s face.)

Drama poses problems of a different nature. In Stanzel’s paradigm (where there is no category of focalization), one simply has an immediate presentation of the story, with the admittedly unrealistic convention of the soliloquy or the aside. The audience apparently watches what is happening from their external perspective. (This description clearly leaves out questions of selection as well as the presence of metadramatic and narrative elements in drama.) If one tries to apply Genettean terminology to plays, drama would seem to have external focalization throughout (even more extensively than film), and again there is no good explanation for soliloquy (it could not easily be categorized as internal focalization). Drama therefore on the whole resembles early fiction in which the conventions allow characters to soliloquize, i.e. utter their thoughts out loud (rather than the narrative depicting their interiority in free

12. Jahn defines these terms as follows: F1 refers to the “burning point of an eye’s lens” (87), F2 to the object of focalization. In strict focalization, “F2 is perceived from (or by) F1 under conditions of precise and restricted spatio-temporal coordinates” (97). Ambient focalization, on the other hand, depicts F2 “summarily, more from one side, possibly from all sides” and “allow[s] a mobile, summary, or communal point of view” (97). Weak focalization is weak because it dispenses with F1, and thus with “all spatio-temporal ties”; there is “only a focused object to F2” (97).
indirect discourse or psycho-narration or interior monologue). Characters cannot focalize in drama, so, within Mieke Bal’s model, one has a consistent “narrator-focalizer” who focuses on the visible. I am not sure how she would deal with the soliloquies, though. Experiments in twentieth-century drama have tried to get around these genre conventions by means of a variety of techniques. Dreams and memories, in particular, are depicted on stage and externalize a subjective perspective of certain characters. Clues such as verbal repetition or a change of lighting, or simple inconsistency serve to alert the audience to a segment of memory or fantasy. (See, for instance, Tom Stoppard’s *Travesties*, Sebastian Barry’s *The Steward of Christendom*, and Christina Reid’s *The Belle of the Belfast City*.) However, these tactics are mostly used to present the contrast of a character’s mind rather than their focalized perception.

The relationship between mediation and focalization is therefore fraught with complications. The most crucial of these are the variety of models of focalization and the dissensus among narratologists regarding where exactly focalization “happens” (connected with the disagreement between different narratological models). Thus, if focalization is conceived of as vision of something (as in Bal), it can become part of the plot (a character focalizing another character); on the other hand, focalization conceived of as mind-reading (zero focalization) vs. internal focalization à la Genette locates the source of this technique with the author or narrator. Since the figure of a narrator does not necessarily exist in other media (again a point of dissensus), imponderables mushroom.

One of the ways out of this dilemma is to concentrate on the discourse in one particular medium, and to discuss what strategies are employed to create spatial perspective and to transmit insights into characters’ minds, or from within characters’ minds on their surroundings. Such a pragmatic approach will list the function of close-ups, zooms, shot-reverse shots and so on in film to indicate interiority and subjective vision. It will also discuss dolly-shots and pans to track spatial orientations of a neutral or subjective kind. (For instance, a film in which we see a character enter a house and then get a shot of the lobby and a pan up the staircase obviously represents the character’s viewpoint on entering.) In drama, such an analysis will tend to focus on gestures and soliloquy as indicators of characters’ interiority, and it will note that there exists no psycho-narration (looking into characters’ minds from a

13. All three plays are memory plays. *Travesties* (1974) focuses on Henry Carr’s memories of World War I in Zürich; *The Steward of Christendom* (1995) has its protagonist Thomas Dunne re-experiencing crucial moments of his life; and in *The Belle of the Belfast City* (1987), scenes from Dolly’s past help to explain attitudes and moods in the present.
quasi-extradiegetic viewpoint) in drama. (Clearly, postmodernist experiments such as David Edgar’s *Entertaining Strangers* [1985], where the play sports a narrator who psychonarrates characters’ minds in tandem with them [cp. Fludernik 2008: 370–71], need to be taken as exceptions to this rule.) Drama is also singularly lacking in spatial focalizing since it traditionally presents one setting from one particular perspective. Yet, again, recent experiments in dramaturgy and staging have discovered ways and means to get around these restrictions. Thus, looking into more than one space at the same time (e.g. the kitchen and Biff’s bedroom in Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman* [1949]; or several rooms in Tennessee Williams’s *Vieux Carré* [1978]) can allow the audience an “omniscient” (spatially omnipresent) viewpoint; filmic montage on a screen, on the other hand, may suggest a character’s subjective view of a narrowing tunnel through which he is climbing. Nevertheless, in contrast to experiments in temporality, plot disjunction or the dissolution of the boundary between the fictional world and fantasy, such spatial manipulations are not particularly prominent in the theater.

**THE NO-NARRATOR AND NO-MEDIATION THESIS**

In his book *The Rhetoric of Fictionality* (2007) Richard Walsh has reiterated the controversial no-narrator thesis which had already been popularized by Ann Banfield (1982) and has recently been revived by Sylvie Patron (2005, 2009). Walsh also proposes a no-mediation thesis, although he does not call it that; that is, he rejects the idea that there is one story which is then mediated into different manifestations in novels, films, ballets, and so on. This thesis takes us right back to Barbara Herrnstein Smith (1980) and her remarks on the multiplicity of different versions of Cinderella.

I do not want to engage with the no-narrator thesis here; Walsh is applying Occam’s razor even more aggressively than Genette did to rid himself of the implied author. Unlike radical no-narrator proponents, I myself have always held that there is a narrator persona when one has clear linguistic signs of a speaker’s (writer’s) “I” and “his”/“her” subjective deictic center (cp. Fludernik 1996: 169); authorial narrative of the *Tom Jonesian* kind with an intrusive narrator persona for me clearly has a narrator. Walsh’s phrasings are perhaps too hedged to indicate clearly whether or not he regards the narrator in *Tom Jones* as legitimate *qua* narrator. (I rather think he does, despite impressions to the contrary.14) Like myself, Walsh clearly “repudiate[s] the

14. See, for instance, his remark that there may be a “local effect” narrator, who then does
narrator as a distinct narrative agent intrinsic to the structure of fiction [. . . ]” (84), though perhaps for different reasons. Walsh intends to critique the notion that fictionality in fiction resides in the figure of an invented fictional speaker, the narrator, whereas I reject the obligatory narrator proposition because I need to see linguistic evidence for a speaker in the text and do not want to hypostasize the existence of a narrator for texts in which there are no such evidential markers.

Walsh’s no-mediation thesis proposes that, since in his model fabula is not prior to sujet, stories in different media do not transform a common plot (story) in different ways, but that each establishes their own fabula. He goes on to argue that sujets (discourses) in different media are medium-dependent (this in agreement with most narratologists) and that (in disagreement with the narratological community) plot (fabula) is likewise medium-dependent: “The idea of representation is not intelligible without a medium” (104–5). Walsh links this theoretical insight to the fact that stories abound both as objects of analysis and as tools of sense-making:

That is to say that, both across and within media, narrative representations are intelligible in terms of other narrative representations. Narrative sense-making always rides piggyback upon prior acts of narrative sense-making, and at the bottom of this pile is not the solid ground of truth, but only the pragmatic efficacy of particular stories for particular purposes in particular contexts. (106)

The first example that Walsh adduces for his thesis is Neil Gaiman’s Sandman cartoon, in which the reader needs to figure out that the two characters sleeping together in the central area of the cartoon page are dreaming the sequence of images on the bottom and top of the page: “The event is a product of narrative processing, an instance of cognitive chunking in which the mind negotiates with temporal phenomena” (111). Walsh’s second example comes from early film. He demonstrates convincingly that early film sequences are quite non-dramatic or plotless. His focus, however, is a film called The Countryman and the Cinematograph from R. W. Paul (1901), in which the naïve country person encounters a movie screen showing a train rushing towards the viewer. Since the country yokel cannot distinguish between the “space of representation” and the “space of exhibition” (125), he runs away—to the audience’s amusement. In this film, the frame, as Walsh claims, corresponds to the “concept of the frame”: “[. . . ] the frame is not a representational

not have to be presumed to exist for the rest of the text (2007: 81).
feature of the narrative transmission, but a rhetorical feature of imaginative orientation” (126). I take it that what Walsh means to say is that what happens in that movie can only be explained in a media-related way—and hence the “plot” is actually a function of the medium.

Personally, I do not find either of these examples convincing as support for Walsh’s thesis. Both rely on the conventions of the media in question, and both take the reader’s perspective to be central to the question of plot. One will of course agree that in some media it may be difficult to grasp what is the plot of the narrative and that certain conventions help one to do so (clearly, the convention of the flashback requires a learning process, too); it is also true that one will need to understand at some point that a represented object is not the real thing—“This is not a pipe” (René Magritte; see Foucault 1968/1986). But such conventions of representation apply to all types of media (including non-narrative ones) and not to specific media in specific ways.

Be that as it may, in the context of an essay on mediacy, mediation, and focalization, Walsh’s insights can stimulate some interesting conclusions regarding the conundra that we have been puzzling over. For one, the notion of mediacy does indeed appear to be equivalent to mediation if one sees it as a synonym for representation. The fictional world is represented, and it is most obviously represented in different medial forms: verbal (the novel or short story), performative (verbal or nonverbal, musical or non-musical—theater, ballet, opera), visual and non-performative (pictures, cartoon, film). It is now generally accepted that mediation through a storyteller occurs not only in novels but also in plays or cartoons (see Richardson 1988, 2001; Fludernik 2008; Nünning/Sommer 2008 and Schüwer 2009). Such mediation through a represented narrator persona (who is a character) is in fact a frame, and this frame may be introduced in a medium different from that of the inset—a character in film may be shown to read or verbally tell a story, a novel may describe what story a picture tells to the viewer (cp. Ryan’s category 5 of her areas of remedialization—Ryan 2004: 33). This would suggest that narration as mediacy and narration as mediation overlap: one either has a definite character as a narrational agent (in language or performance or pictures or operatic music or a combination of these); or mediacy is not personalized. Non-personalized mediacy can be conceived of as mediation through a medium. Representation would then appear as either person-related and subjective (there is a teller) or as impersonal and objective (medium-related).15

15. On a transmedial perspective that looks at narrative aspects common to several media, though in medium-specific manifestation, see also Rajewsky (2002, 2007) and Mahne (2007).
On the other hand, if one returns to *Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology* and cognitive frames that serve as agents of mediacy, one can also regard mediacy as medium-independent. Besides *telling*—a frame that calls up a narrative agent and hence the figure of the narrator—*Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology* also had the frames of *viewing*, *experiencing*, *reflecting*, and *action*. Each of these frames can be activated in various media, though not each one in each medium. Whereas mediacy in Stanzel or narrative transmission in Chatman is therefore constituted by mediation through a narrator (overt or covert, personalized or dissimulated), in *Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology* mediacy can, but need not, rely on the presence of a narratorial agent whether explicit or implicit. *Viewing* is clearly the most basic frame for all the visual arts, but subjective camera shots and symbolic techniques can also invoke the *experiencing* frame, and some rare close-ups with voice-over not only instantiate *telling* but may even call up the *reflecting* frame. The fundamental *viewing* frame operates for the audience’s experience of witnessing the fictional world on screen; however, it may also begin to overlap with the *experiencing* frame, since immersion into the filmic world occurs not only for characters’ consciousness but also for the audience’s spatial feeling of being inside the fictional world. *Action* of course plays a crucial role as a subsidiary element or subset to *viewing*, as it does in drama, painting, and cartoon.

*No-narrator* theories make perfect sense for painting and ballet; though even there one will be able to introduce the figure of a teller. The point is that a teller is an optional element in all media where the main protagonist does not function as the narrator. The *no mediation* thesis makes sense only to the extent that one treats the medium as primary so that there is no medial choice on the basis of a plot, resulting in a film, text, picture, etc. One must here be especially wary of introducing arguments from remedialization into the analysis. Remedialization can, however, point to characteristic advantages of one medium over another. It is certainly the case that, in the interest of a maximally effective narrative, the discourse in any medium is extremely selective in what it renders and how. This starts with length—a filming of a novel will always have to be shorter and therefore highly selective. The veracity of a film will focus not on reproducing the extensive dialogue from the novel in toto but on providing the “feel” of the novel, evoking the characters, the atmosphere, the mood of the text. It will introduce, say, sequences of landscape description and cloud formations in cheery or dark weather to call up the gaiety or bleakness of the characters’ lives, and it may also do so simply to add a visual aesthetic quality to the film which may or may not correspond to the style of the narrative in the written version. The point of a remedializa-
tion is not necessarily a one-to-one correspondence between a plot element and a rendering of it in the original novel and the later film, but an independent play with the material of the novel, whether that material belongs to the plot or to the discourse. A good film will make use of the specific potential of the filmic medium for a particular scene or a particular effect which is part of the artistic design of the film. As a result, the plot of a filmed version of a novel will inevitably turn out to differ in part from the plot of the novel itself, though for the film to be a reasonably reliable remedialization, these plot differences need to be kept within bounds; after all, the film most often wants to be recognizable as a film version of the novel.

What this suggests theoretically is that, for any narrative token in and by itself, no mediation need be assumed; there is no separate layer of additional effects or processes added on to a prior plot that would convert a story into a medialized version of discourse. Mediacy—how the medium presents the fictional world—may be conceived of as medium-independent, though it will of course be medium-inflected in its specific manifestations. When it comes to remedialization, however, there is a prior model that orients the new version of the story, but very rarely is the remedialized version a faithful translation of the original. Like all good translation, a filming of a novel or a dramatization of a short story or a novelistic rewriting of a TV show need to concern themselves with an individual perspective and design, taking from the original only what allows them to fulfill their vision. Hence, the no-mediation theory of narrative makes as much sense as does the no-narrator theory.

**CONCLUSION**

In this paper I have tried to find connections between the concepts of mediacy, mediation, and focalization in the classic narratological paradigms. What the comparison has underlined is, to begin with, the dependence of all of these terms on the story/discourse dichotomy. Both Stanzel’s concept of mediacy and the process of mediation in the sense of transforming deep-structural plot into a medium-related surface structure rely on the idea that im-mEDIATE representation of story is impossible. In Stanzel’s case, this is the logical consequence of his contrasting of drama and narrative; im-mEDIATE representation supposedly exists in drama. The assumption that all narrative undergoes a transformation into medial manifestation clearly rules out im-mediacy from an axiomatic perspective. Yet again from Walsh’s representational perspective, all narrative is a representation of plot or of a fictional world and hence by definition medialized. Im-mEDIATE telling does not exist.
A second important point that emerged from the discussion is the crucial question of narratorial transmission in relation to mediacy and mediation. Stanzel’s mediacy and Genette’s conception of discourse as the product of a narrational act both place the (verbal) narrator and the process of telling the story at the heart of their conception of narrative transmission (to use Chatman’s phrase). However, Stanzel allows for the illusion of im-mediacy and can be argued to imply the existence of a variety of mediational options (by means of telling, by means of reflecting; or by means of the three narrative situations; by means of generic molds such as the editor, the diarist, etc.). By contrast, Genette’s emphasis on the narrator (overt or covert—to use Chatman’s terminology) locates what in Stanzel’s model would be the illusion of im-mediacy in focalizational choices in conjunction with the category of voice (internal focalization roughly corresponding to reflector-mode narrative; zero focalization to the authorial narrative situation; and the alternation of external and internal focalization typical of first-person narrative). In Genette, therefore, focalization is clearly distinct from mediacy or mediation. In privileging the act of narration, Genette’s narrative transmission remains a non-medialized mediacy.

The problem of narratorial presence or absence plays an even more crucial role in discussions of mediation. Film has been the prime example of a medial narrative for narratologists. Chatman’s cinematic narrator and the French term *auteur* in film studies have tended to dominate this discussion. However, as we have seen, the hypostasizing of an obligatory narratorial agent in film, drama, ballet or cartoons lacks any kind of logical or textual evidence, except perhaps in some kinds of plays, where the stage directions echo novelistic conventions of narratorial commentary (as they do in the work of George Bernard Shaw, for instance—see Fludernik 2008). A narrator figure can, as I have shown, be introduced into narratives in almost any medium; but such instances of voice-over, stage managers or cartoon-drawers depicted in the margins between cartoons are rare and tend to emphasize the fact that in these media most often there are no such teller figures. This would suggest that narratorial transmission is a specific kind of mediacy, and—as I suggested—that the medialized renderings of a fictional world can be analyzed as deploying a variety of cognitive frames in combination, though with one cognitive frame dominant over the others, depending on which medium one is dealing with.

In this essay I have also proposed that one distinguish between mediation and remedialization, since the two are often thrown together (as in the exchange between Herrnstein Smith and Chatman). The controversial questions all relate to mediation *qua* narrative transmission. Chatman’s answers
to Herrnstein Smith rely on the linguistic, in fact, Chomskyan, model and analogize the deep structure of transformational grammar with the story of narratives. However, this analogy is wrong. Chomsky’s deep structure is grounded cognitively as a prototype of syntax; the transformations that result in the surface structure of sentences explain departures from the ground figure. By contrast, where narrative is concerned, the transformational rules are not the point of the exercise at all; what narratologists are keen to examine is, for instance, what the chronology of a story is when the discourse turns out to be full of flashbacks and ellipses. No “rules” apply between the two levels—it is not the case that a particular chronology always gets rearranged in a specific manner; nor does it make sense to hypothesize the existence of a transformational rule to explain a flashback as $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$ transformed into $A \rightarrow C \rightarrow B$ since that very reversal of the reconstructed plot elements $B$ and $C$ is what the concept “flashback” already denotes. Compare the passive transformation, in which the syntactic reshuffling results in a semantic effect (active $\rightarrow$ passive). The theoretical existence of a deep structure and of transformational rules makes sense from a methodological perspective where syntax is concerned, but it does not clarify issues in the same way for narrative or narratology. As in Genette’s category of voice, the deep and surface structure model in narrative uses a metaphor in order to talk about patent versus latent structure, for instance in relation to chronology or order.

One can take these arguments a step further by exploding the notion of focalization as a process that occurs between the deep and surface structure. As I demonstrated in the section on Mediation and Focalization above, even Chatman himself vacillated on the issue and seems to have ended by adopting a theory that locates point of view independently on the narratorial and plot levels. While it makes sense to reconstruct a chronology in interpreting texts that deliberately disguise that order of events, one cannot convincingly argue that the plot inherently has no focalization. At best it could have zero or external focalization, which might then be shifted into internal focalization in some passages. The problem is that if one defines focalization as access to interiority, then the deep structure of the story would simply be the bare plot sequence without any stylistic elements and human details (The king died and then the queen died). By adding “of grief” we already add not just the cause of the queen’s dying but the experiential parameters of the story, and then the discourse can only be said to elaborate (rather than add) aspects like focalization, description, dialogue, etc. If, on the other hand, focalization is defined as “who sees,” the plot must be a neutral version in which nobody sees and the discourse would add who is doing some seeing. This is of course how focalization and Stanzel’s mediacy have traditionally been understood. Yet
the point of this seeing is not whether (factually) a character was there to see and note an occurrence; the point is whether the narrative “sees through the mind” of a character or whether there is evaluative slant (Chatman) on the story world. The decision taken in narrative mimesis is therefore that from which perspective the telling or representation is to be modulated, which takes us right back to the question of mediacy, i.e. whether we are to be presented the fictional world through the voice of a narrator or character (in Walsh’s view, a narrator would be a character) or through the consciousness or filter of one (or several) characters (in succession). In this case, focalization and mediacy would collapse into one another, as they do in Stanzel.

One final point on this issue. All of these discussions assume that one can indeed establish a chronology and a realistic, consistent fictional world “out there.” Although readers will expect to find such a world, experimental texts may deliberately foil their attempts to establish it. Nevertheless, technically innovative texts frequently do include, for instance, passages of internal focalization. Yet, since in these texts there is no determinable deep structure on which to apply focalizational transformations, the existence of such focalized passages must then be laid at the door of the author (reader, note, this is tongue-in-cheek!), and an analysis in terms of mediation and transmission desisted from. We will take the foregoing argument as yet another piece of support of the Walshian no-mediation thesis.

What we have been struggling with is the incompatibility of axiomatic narratological assumptions. The problems discussed in this paper are perhaps quite arcane; to raise them may—metaphorically speaking—reflect nothing but narratologists’ inevitable critical urge to read metaphors literally, which puts them in danger of drowning in the theoretical waves that they have provoked.
REFERENCES


